

The Builders **Birdsnest Roys** Windsor, May 4.

The last time I saw Birdnest Roys (with Tall Dwarfs) I wasn't as Roys (with Tall Dwarfs) I wasn't as mightily impressed as those around me, but last night they presented a set that had improved to the point where they extracted yelps of appreciation from a packed Windsor. Anchored by some hard drumming and jaunty bass, the Roys' double, sometimes triple, vocal attack gives power to their sound, when, as happened on almost every song this night, the melodies and harmonies hit their mark.

The first of the Builders' two sets began shakily and they were unconvincing, only just held together by Greg Bainbridge's furious bass. Mr Direen was elsewhere until kickstarted into action for a tortured 'Look East' and a

thunderous 'Sunday News'.
The second set was a vast improvement on the first. The sound had been worked out after earlier problems and the music was punched out with real force. Time



Bill Direen, Bilders, Windsor Castle.

and time again, Direen seemed vague and disinterested, unsure which songs to play next, and bass or drums would shatter his indecision by launching into a song, causing him to rise like Lazarus, wind up his guitar, hurl himself into the music and sing with both passion and humour.

passion and humour.
This Jekyll and Hyde caper reached a zenith when he muttered something about Johnny Devlin's shoes and then proceed. ed to tear up whatever song it had previously been, taking the band with him.

Highlights of the set were a funky 'Alligator' and a blistering song called 'Accident', which ap-

proached pure white noise.

The impression I was left with was of Bill Direen being constantly dragged, if not kicking, then screaming into the music and firing out brilliant, manic cameos. I don't think he always matched the mammoth energy of the band, but when he did it was a peerless when he did it was a peerless performance. **Hamish Coney**

This Kind of Punishment Expendables

Gladstone, May 4

I here present you, courteous reader, with the record of a night spent with This Kind of Punishment and the Expendables. I trust

that it will prove not merely interesting, but in a considerable degree, useful and instructive. In that hope, I shall begin

Nothing, indeed, struck one more than the passivity of the crowd. It was hellishly quiet. This Kind of Punishment, as if aware of the predominant lethargy, sequestered themselves from the general mass, declining to claim fellowship with the audience. That they eventually did after several they eventually did after several delays was to their credit. And yet they remained distant, perhaps by natural instinct, from the public. They courted privacy, daring to to violate and forcibly reproach the inactivity. Their sublunary noises echoed Wire (circa *Chairs Missing*) industrialism, the minimal and the primitive, of dadaist theatre

For the most part, TKOP, offered variation, alternating instruments amongst themselves. Yes, there were times in the set when mere spirits were uncommonly raised, the pulse was improved, the health was better, but, dear reader, they were few. Where Children's Hour and Nocturnal Projections irritated with palsying effect, TKOP

resembled, if nothing more, the gloom of a distant eclipse.

I foolishly held the belief that the Expendables might chance to bring to the task the greater and more consistent energy that TKOP had maintained. Sadly, they lacked

a stronger constitution. Jay Clarkson dominates a band that has now succumbed to stasis. Only Anthony Nevison on guitar offered invigoration from such an empty

The sybaritic pleasures they once offered lay dormant. The lovely Take Those Cold Eyes Off Me' now sounds comfortable, the spine completely shattered. A clangorous version of 'Ghost Riders in the Sky' finished their set, but the feeling was that the once unmistakably delicate and exquisite nuances this band pos-sessed seem lost, a flame which is now a steady and perishable

S. John Townshend

Sneaky Feelings, 27 Lost in the Cracks

Clyde Quay Tavern, March 9.

I hope I got the name of 27 Lost in the Cracks right. The 27 were actually four — guitar, bass, drums and vocals. Bass and vocals tended to run the show. Music was fairly derivative, despite an air of experimental chaos. They sounded best when they approached the Siouxsie and the Banshees sound and played around with it. But the numbers were far too short and the breaks too long.

They were different. Vocals belonged to a well-trained, versatile voice, which in turn belonged to a

woman in red and black, but the operatic turns were a bit much.
Bass was thumped out by a gyrating puppet in a satin shirt. Guitar was not used to full effect and was sometimes lost altogether. Drumming was simple and light. 25 seemed mable to build up a flow.

ming was simple and light. 27 seemed unable to build up a flowing rhythm and sustain it, and often lost the audience with their self-indulgent theatrics.

Sneaky Feelings' music was soundly based on an interplay of soft melodies. They are a four-piece — two guitars, bass and drums — from Dunedin, with four and a half years on the road and in the garage and an album called Send You to their credit. The two talented guitarists, Matthew Ban-

Send You to their credit. The two talented guitarrists, Matthew Bannister and David Pine, did most of the singing in this enjoyable show. A number of songs impressed me, but the titles were lost in the applause. The album doesn't seem to be available in Wellington, or has fold out. However, much of the music tended to disappear into a wash, or purple haze, of into a wash, or purple haze, of meandering sounds that ran into each other. They lacked incisive-ness, contrast and vocal assertive-ness. A sameness about many of the songs also drew away some of their impact. Quieter songs reminded me for some reason of Pentangle; the faster numbers of a less urgent Clean. Otherwise, a CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



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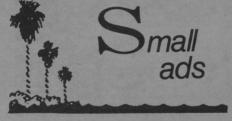
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