

Live

'LIVE' FROM PAGE 34
mid-60s soup a la Dunedin. If Mr Bannister's quick humour and some anger could be introduced into the music, this would add another dimension.

The moral of the evening was not to eat hamburgers before going on stage.

Clifton Fuller

Skeptics

Gladstone, April 3

The hole works from the Skeptics. Live from Palmerston Cheese via Dunedin and Timaru. Christchurch voyeurs reluctant to participate in pagan orgy. Stayed away in droves. Read this as 'must be a good gig.' Preliminary noise courtesy Bohemians. If it is going to happen, in time it will. At last. We have arrived people. This is it.

The main act. The fab four on stage under lights. Onward and inward. Critic offers provoking clues. Enthusiastic, primitive, decadent, boring, free, lyrical, abstract, monotonous, colourful, dramatic, theatrical, unco-ordinated, humorous, loud. Some guitar lines awe-inspiring. A hundred origins represented with six strings. Bass not helped by muddy sound. No real exertion, no sweat, the wild beast tamed. Drums trying for more. Guitar and bass not listening enough. Concern for overall sound needed. Singer talks too much. Professional Axemen. Spirit of a Bauhaus birthday party during the children's hour. Music to do all things to. The gauntlet of life experience. Palmerston fortunate to have Skeptics living and seething in their midst. Scant touring opportunities missed. Does nobody care for the spirit of all music regardless of its origin or whatever "click" it is of. YFC broke up/vanished. Who dares venture in this land of extreme thinness, i.e. narrowness, i.e. small-mindedness.

Memory lingers. Syd Barrett joins hands with Can as misplaced neoteric tribesman coming down the Milson Line straight for the jugular. Victim is killed by his greatest hero, naked for lunch. Danke Schon.

Daniel Newnham

Battle Of the Bands

Massey University, Palmerston North, March 10

To participate in war? Hmmm ... well, it's all over now, mutilated brains are the sole surviving reminder of Massey's first Battle of the Bands. The highly organised extravaganza started at midday with a surprise performance from Netherworld Dancing Toys. Obviously in fine form, even if it was the morning after their gig and everybody's head was going thump ... bump ... thump ... bump.

The variation in styles and performances of the eight bands who played was immense — which must have made the final judging very difficult. Palmerston North synth-based band the Manne-

quins had the privilege (?) of being the first to exhibit themselves on stage. Although their performance was to some extent experimental, I found their set highly unoriginal and lacking in creativity. The Remarkables (formerly the Wait) followed with an incredibly tight set. Not at all dependent on an overseas sound, they have developed an increasingly light and flowing performance.

The Wairapa announced its existence in a talented young group called the Venues. Although they're perhaps a bit too 'classical' in sound, their vocalist, Jane Clarkson, has one amazing voice (unfortunately not on top form). The group which in my mind should have won hands down, but didn't, were New Plymouth four-piece Loving Homes For Rotting Gnomes. Influences were a cross between 60s psychedelia and mid-70s punk bands. Their stage performance is something in itself! From the experimental to the hilarious — in fact Dosage B strike me more as musical comedians than serious musicians. The

Palmerston North three-piece received more reaction from the crowd than any other band, mainly because of their satirical remarks and humorous actions.

Laughed at by the majority were the Flaming Stars, all the way from Gisborne. One absolutely superb song titled 'Smack in the Jellimeat', but otherwise the songs just merged into one. Medicine Men, from Wanganui, possibly the most experienced musicians, came up next. They created quite a stir, blasting forth with a heavily blues-influenced sound. Last up came X-pose from Fielding. If there is anything you can define as "basic rock", these guys were playing it.

So it came time to pick the winners. My choices would have been Loving Homes For Rotting Gnomes, the Remarkables and Medicine Men, in that order. The judges left me slightly flabbergasted by choosing the Mannequins as winners, the Remarkables second and Dosage B third. Hmmm ...

A great afternoon of entertainment, however, with Radio Massey broadcasting the whole show live over air in orgasmic stereo FM sound!

D.W.L. Reid

Scorched Earth Policy The Puddle

Clyde Quay Tavern, March 22

Lights disappear behind the mixed up words of a performing audience; I am the audience. Five dollars and half a pint of lager. Scorched Earth Policy are up from the suburban wastelands of Christchurch to entertain the bohemian Wellington underworld gathered at the Pulse. Six people on stage — two guitars, bass, drums, keyboards/violin, vocals. Sound carried by fast, vigorous drumming, plus bass. Develops into a shrill, chaotic storm — a cry from the heart of the South. They wander in from the street. Where do they all come from. Politely catch the rhythm on the edge of

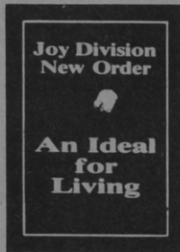
the table. Woman on quiet, jangly guitar seems to run the show. She also plays bass, drums, keyboards and sings. Other vocalist is tired, bored Ian Curtis-like. Try not to see the dazed people collapsing on the dancefloor. Lead guitarist mad on improvised distortion. Songs that catch my notebook — the broken 'Since the Accident'; the flowing 'Passing Game Of Passion?'; the thunderous rising and falling guitars number 'Turn Your Eyes Away'. Covers from Paul Revere and the Raiders to the Clean. She turns her eyes away. Dust to dust — name of an EP. Three years later the Puddle appear on stage. From Dunedin, it is said, featuring the famous woodcutter George Henderson, who sometimes plays with the Great Unwashed, on guitar, keyboards and vocals; Lesley Paris on drums; Ross Jackson on bass. The garage, page four. Thoughtful, studied, intimate. Quiet intensity bewilders the audience. Lures my half pint of lager into dazed deep-thoughtfulness. Looking for another guitar — rhythm to counter bass and drums — and stronger vocals. Experiments in ice skating. An answer to Cream. Musical framework provides the freedom for George to show everyone how good he is on guitar. He is very good. Scorched Earth return to blaze away between crawling around the stage and swapping axes. Rough but sombre. Review of a reviewer's sickness in end of week nights listening to bands. Time to trade in the typewriter for a guitar or one-way ticket south.

Clifton Fuller

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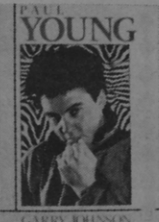
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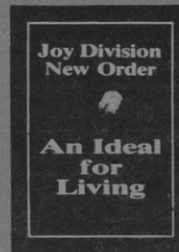
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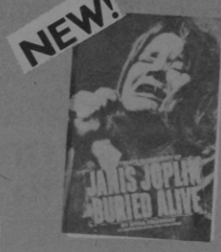
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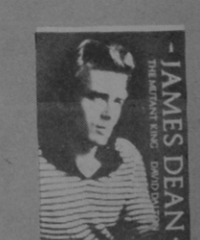
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