live

'LIVE' FROM PAGE 22 warmed the crowd up — the hippies were out doing their Kate Bush and Stevie Nicks imitations by the 4th song. The harmonies came through nicely and the antinuclear theme was set in motion with authority.

John Grenell (Hore) had the mumps so we were given Brazier, McArtney and Lyons (Hi there Sailor...) doing a Robert Johnson song, slide guitar and all, definitely one of their less offensive performances. The acoustic versions of 'Gutter Black' 'You Bring Out The Worst in Me' and 'Fugitive' were superior to the usual band treatment.

A Greenpeace rep came on to a warm welcome and reminded us in a few words what Greenpeace stood for; non-violent direct action against unnecessary pollution of worlds ocean atmosphere; preventing the abuse of critters such as porpoises, sea lions, whales and turtles. He received a big cheer when he stated that "N.Z. is a nuclear-free

Graham Nash borrowed a few of

and began with 'Military Madness'. This was the most up-tempo the man would get today. 'Just Before I Go' (old CS&N song) saw the mood shift into that syrupy, edgeless sort of feel the ecologically minded seem so often to gravitate towards — lots of tinkling electric piano. Boy is this West Coast music. 'Magical Child' — a song for his first born Jackson (so they are old buddies?).
This man is supporting
Greenpeace and he loves children
too, but why so wistfully? To close Nash moves back on to electric guitar for 'Teach Your Children' and gets the audience clapping and

singing along.
The Topp Twins were their usual dynamic selves. A varied set dynamic serves. A varied set beginning with their Rainbow Warrior song, then into 'Country Music' — All their songs went down well, 'Radiation Burns' taking the tone from fun to the forlorn with great skill. What a beautiful, scary song

The crowd surges forward. Jackson Browne's on stage. This is West Coast music enlarged upon and by one of its originators. Even with the band playing full-on you can make most of the lyrics

'Candy' is from the new album Lives in The Balance. There's quite a bit of screaming guitar and lots of deep dark sounds coming from various sources, very dramatic. A duo from Nash and Browne follows. Very political.

Into the old stuff now with 'For Everyman' from his first album. No cheers — mostly newer fans here. On 'Late For The Sky' Jackson honours us with a mistake. He forgets a whole verse. "I guess this song is a lot older than I realised... he confides.

Jackson was much more of a performer than I thought he would be. The long and very effective introductions to some of his song and his political declarations drew us in - "I love my country and it grieves me to see some of the things it's done" — and to NZ — "Keep on with it, it means a lot to people in the United States. Gives us some hope." Fist up desperately sincere, he closes with 'Running on Empty'. It's been a long set, \$18.50 worth for this

The very likeable Neil Young is into long political speeches also, only heavily tinged in ironies, quite humourous. Neil and his guitar fills the stadium. He achieves a crazed intensity as a song builds then delights the crowd with off-the-

cuff endings to songs.
'Come A time' — the people around me have lapsed into spontaneous song on the first

verse. He dedicates 'Sugar Mountain' to all the kids at the gig. I never before realised that the strange percussive thumping sound on some of his records was actually his strumming hand against the body of the guitar. When he leaves the stage the

urging of the folks to come back on is very genuine. And so "hey

It's late twilight and so now lights are in on things. The crowd is ready for Split Enz, especially after Tim Shadbolt's teasing

'History Never Repeats' is good opener. On 'Six Months in a Leaky Boat' Noel Crombie does a whistling break — not like Val Doonican but like a budgie — and Tim gets the pioneer spirit going by conducting a sing-a-long at the songs end. They're looking out over a Sea of Waving Arms — a friendly sea. A fitting end for a show dedicated to the Rainbow

J. Hickling

McGarrigle Sisters

Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington, March 12

The McGarrigles are two Canadian sisters in their mid-30s, whose songs have been covered by dozens of artists including Maria Muldaur and Linda Ronstadt ('Heart Like a Wheel'); recently they toured the United States with Dire

McGarrigle music is unique, but also eclectic — it borrows from influences as unlikely as Stephen Foster ballads, 17th century French chansons and traditional folk laments. The sisters manage to apply these influences to thoroughly contemporary topics as they examine the feminist conceptions of love, racism in the southern US, childhood in the 1980s and the human condition

Their New Zealand debut as part of the Wellington Arts Festival seemed jinxed at the start. Through no fault of their own the sisters were almost half an hour late, and an elderly gentleman with his fur-clad wife began the slow hand-clapping. They left not long after the concert began, discouraged by the volume of the performance. It's intriguing to speculate on why such people would turn up at a show like Kate and Anna's, and there were quite a few superannuitants there.

There were also the folk contingent, yearning for the early songs
— songs like Kate's clever infusion of love into chemistry, 'NaCl', Anna's serenely charming 'Complainte Pour St. Catherine' (the patron saint of single women), and the unforgettable 'Talk To Me of Mendocino'. But the sisters had just completed an American tour which consisted entirely of acoustic performance. They had brought a band with them to Aus-

tralasia and they wanted to rock. There was nothing wrong with that, and some of the new material which formed the bulk of the concert was fine, but there were flaws. The drummer was too loud, the guitarist was both loose and loud, the electric violin tended to drown out the sisters' piano and accordian contributions.

It's praise worthy that Kate and Anna are committed to experimentation, but often the result is that a bunch of men behind them do their best to annihilate the subtleties of the music. Still the songs themselves are pretty indestructible, and the McGarrigle harmonies were as glorious as ever. Even the folkies were won over in the end, and there were three encores.

The McGarrigle's approach to their career has been one of goodhumoured aloofness from the pop maelstrom, and consequently they have become reluctant cult celebrities. But if you're lucky enough to come across a Kate and Anna McGarrigle record in the sale bins, snap it up.

Jim Mora

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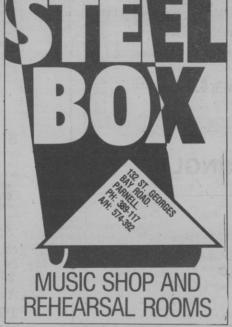
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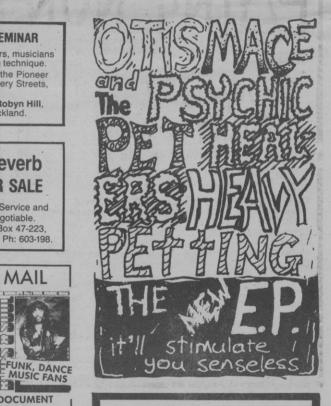
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