

Video

Repo Man (CIC Video)

Otto (Emilio Estevez) loses his supermarket job and girlfriend and wanders the LA wasteland singing Black Flag's 'TV Party', where he meets Bud (Harry Dean Stanton) who tricks him into becoming a "repo man" — an intense profession of legal car stealing, with the basic tenet being "ordinary people, I hate them," says philosopher King Bud. So begins a great mix of social satire, science fiction, comedy, punk rock, government conspiracy and parody, that matches any teen flick that Roger Corman ever conceived.

Things get real "intense" when the repo man begins searching for a Chevy Malibu with a boot stacked with rotting aliens driven by a lobotomised nuclear scientist. They have to find it before the secret service, a metal-handed woman scientist and Chicano cut-ups the Rodriguez Brothers.

Set against the seedy underbelly of LA, a world of liquor stores, empty supermarkets and red-lit nightclubs. Peopled by winos and mohawked punks on a crime wave, who secretly long for a safe world of mobile homes and children.

Alex Cox packs his film with lots of interesting incidentals, like the Circle Jerks playing cabaret, the Untouchables as a family of scooter-riding black moods, and a liquor store hold up that parodies *Taxi Driver*.

A great film that deserves more than cult status, dripping with fun

and excitement that just won't quit.

Kerry Buchanan

PS: Turn the soundtrack up for some great music from the Plugz, Black Flag, Iggy Pop and Fear.

Mask (CIC Video)

True story of Rocky Dennis (Eric Stoltz), born with lionitis, a figuring disease that occurs one-in-22 million births. Raised by a strong mother (played by Cher in an award-winning role) in the outlaw communities of bike gangs, Rocky is accepted in the world of Harleys, patches and Budweiser. But his problem lies in the "normal" world of school and up-right citizens.

Rocky wins on his own terms, and director Peter Bogdanovich doesn't sink to cheap sentimentality to show his struggle. Sure there's plenty of pathos but the film doesn't bathe in it. A nice simple film highlighted by some stellar acting from Cher (who proves that *Come Back to the Five and Dime* wasn't a one-hit wonder) and Eric Stoltz in a difficult role.

Kerry Buchanan

Warners kick off an excellent month for video releases with the latest two from the *Mad Max* series, *Mad Max 2* and *Beyond Thunderdome*. Also out are two classics: Steve McQueen and film's most famous car chase in *Bullitt* and the legendary John Ford western *The Searchers* in which John Wayne hunts down Comanches who have kidnapped Natalie Wood.

From *Roadshow* comes *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein*, starring "swooping bats, severed limbs and gibs of livid human entrails" — and Joe Dallesandro, of course; *Experience Preferred ... But Not Es-*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

Leavin' on the Midnight Train to Gotham City

What did the country's busiest horn section decide to do with their time off? They formed a band of their own — a hobby band, in which the musicians could play their favourite music which they never got to play on their professional jobs.

The Gotham City Express was formed 18 months ago by that high-profile pair, the Newton Hoons. But in that time they have only played eight concerts — because the members of the band, being professional musicians, are all very hard to pin down on the same night off. Among the impressive line-up are singers Annie Crummer and Kim Willoughby, bassist Billy Kristian, drummer Lyn Buchanan and guitarist Gary Verberne.

"The idea of the band was to have a part-time blow," says trumpeter Mike Russell, partner of saxman Chris Green in the Newton Hoons. "There were certain types of music we'd never done, so we rang up some other musicians to see if they were interested." The jam session worked so well, and was so much fun, that they decided to do the occasional gig, playing "the sort of music musos listen to"; *Tower of Power*, Jeffrey Osborne, Gladys Knight; each of the band chose a song they'd always wanted to play. The name of the band also reflects their interests. Russell, a *Batman* freak, was watching television one day, saw "Gotham City" on the screen, then his eyes drifted to a Tom Scott's LA Express record. "Holy Moniker, Batman!" he cried, "I've got it!"

Now, the band have recorded an album, the *Gotham City Express*, and they were recently filmed to ap-

pear on *12 O'Clock Rock*. So the Express will keep on rolling: "There's so much interest that we'd be doing ourselves a disservice if we didn't keep going," says Russell. "But we'll continue it on this basis — a 12-piece band isn't viable, the Newton Hoons don't want to be pinned down — and I'm sure the others, who are also freelancers, have the same feeling."

It may be a while before the next Express gig, though, as three members have recently gone to Australia: singer Peter Morgan, pianist Lar-

ry Martinez, and Gary Verberne (who has gone to join DD Smash). "But it's amazing," says Green. "Out of nowhere will come a great player. For example, Larry was playing at the Casablanca club, a place I hadn't heard of, and he blew our socks off. There's a reservoir of talented musicians just floating around."

Russell agrees. "That's been one of the best things about this band — discovering these hot players, tucked away in places like Napier or Gisborne. The diverse background of the band, different nationalities and cities, has given it its distinctive sound."

"It's also given some musicians a chance to prove what else they can do," says Green. "Lyn Buchanan, who's known in Auckland as a four-on-the-floor rock drummer, was playing funk and jazz in Christchurch for years. Gary's the same — he can play anything from heavy metal to jazz."

Gotham City Express features eight of the tracks the band play live — was recorded live in the studio in a six hour session. "Most jazz albums are done live," explains Russell. "What they're after is the feel. Rock has got away from that with all the mass production. There's a trap of doing too much in the recording studio, so that the product they end up with isn't them — they can't play live what's on the record. This band could go out and do it tomorrow."

The *Gotham City Express* has been a beneficial burst of energy for the Newton Hoons. "Playing sessions, things can be very impersonal," says Green. "There's also a limit of the input you can make when you're working for others."

Russell: "We've shown ourselves that if you get the right people and the right material, you can achieve anything. You don't need all that technology."

Chris Bourke



The Gotham City Express: Back row, from left: David Colven, Chris Green, David Woodbridge, Mike Russell, Chris Nelson, Lyn Buchanan. Front, from left: Larry Martinez, Annie Crummer, Peter Morgan, Martin Winch.



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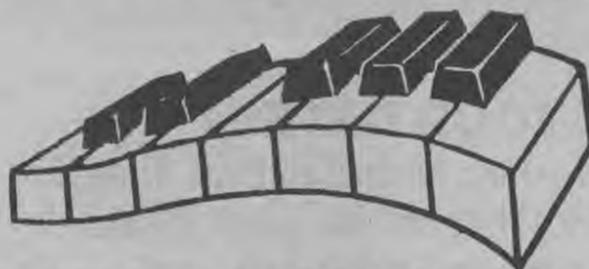
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