

Rumours

UK & USA

Elvis Costello and the Attractions are already recording their follow-up to *King of America*, and more touring is a possibility, says manager Jake Riviera: "We can play live, have done for 10 years and probably will do again. We're just millionaires, having fun." ... Small countries are full of New Order fans, Factory Records man Tony Wilson told NME: "New Order have four gold albums, right. Three of them are from New Zealand, and the other one is from Ireland ... print that, it deserves to be said."

Elton John plays piano on Wham's last single, 'The Edge of Heaven', while Joe Jackson tickles the ivories on Suzanne Vega's 'Left of Centre' ... the Art of Noise have teamed up with Max Headroom for their 'Paranoia'.

Joe Strummer was fined 200 pounds and banned from driving for 18 months after he was caught speeding and swerving from side to side. A breathalyser test showed him to be more than twice the legal alcohol limit ... Hugo Peretti, composer of many hits such as Elvis Presley's 'Can't Stop Falling in Love' and the Tokens' 'The Lion Sleeps Tonight', died recently aged 68 ... Marc Almond has resurfaced with an EP of seven cover versions, including Procul Harum's 'A Salty Dog' ... and Dave Stewart and Barbara Gaskin, following

their success with 'It's My Party', have released another cover, Little Eva's 'The Locomotion' ... the Damned have released 'I am So Bored', recorded live at Captain Sensible's 1977 birthday party.

Britain's Radio One has told its DJs to talk less and play more music; however they've re-introduced the dreaded playlist during the day ... Bob Geldof, fresh from the recent *Self Aid* concerts-for-jobs in Ireland, has published a 352-page autobiography entitled *Is That It?* ... Phil (Quadrophenia) Daniels is the snooker-playing hero of the new musical film, *Billy the Kid and the Green Baize Vampire* ... Angie Bowie is touring Britain with her band O Wow ... Joe Leeway has left the Thompson Twins for a solo career ... finally, after years searching for a drummer whose surname started with "P", ELP have released an album: *Emerson, Lake and Powell*.

Auckland

Jesus on a Stick is the first of a bi-annual comic series to be published by Chris Knox. Printed on quality A4 paper, it includes contributions by such esteemed illustrators as Knox, Fane Flaws, Hamish Kilgour, Martin Philipps, and Chad Taylor. Send \$3 plus \$1 p&p to: *Jesus on a Stick*, 2 Hakanoa Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland. A concert to launch the comic will take place on Thursday, June 19 at the Windsor Castle. It will feature the only NZ appearance of the Tall Dwarfs, Goblin Mix, Headless Chickens and others. The

price of admission includes an issue of the comic.

Nick Smith's debut EP, *Flanker*, is being released in a couple of weeks by Real Groovy Records through Flying Nun. It comprises five songs featuring the talents of Brett Orams, Jason Martin and Mike Sheells ... the *School of Creative Musicianship* is looking for a musically minded or playing journalist to write informative pieces about music and musicians for their newsletter. If you're interested contact Taura or Lena, phone 768-115.

Herbs have been invited to attend the Hiroshima Peace Concert in Japan in August by an organiser who saw them at the Rainbow Warrior concert at the recommendation of Neil Young ... the Genesis concert this November will be restricted to Auckland, as it's alleged to be the biggest production ever seen in NZ.

Since leaving NZ the Bats have played three London gigs: Dingwalls, the Kingshead in Putney and the Kingshead in Islington. Four songs have been recorded at the 24-track Point Studios in London. The band is now in the Netherlands, having played three gigs in Germany: Nuremberg with Alex Chilton, Frankfurt with House Martins, and Berlin at the Loft with the Screaming Blue Messiahs.

Limbs will premiere their new 40-minute work *Tarawera* in Los Angeles next month; the dance is inspired by the 1886 eruption that destroyed the pink and white terraces.

Chris Bourke

Film

THE COLOUR PURPLE

Director: Steven Spielberg

Alice Walker's Pulitzer prize-winning novel seems a strange choice for the man who gave the world Indiana Jones and ET. The book relates the struggle of a group of black women to assert themselves in a small Georgia environment between 1909 and 1940 — its chief virtue, a tremendous clarity and single-mindedness in relating this theme; its chief failing, a tendency towards the folksy.

In the screen version, the hard edge of Walker's novel has been considerably blunted, most irritatingly by the sumptuously kitsch photography of Allen Daviau and the jarringly inappropriate score by Quincy Jones (one of the film's co-producers). Clearly, a simpler approach would have been better and one might even dare to suggest that Spielberg would have made a better translation of the novel back in his television days.

Even so, one is almost forced to admire the adroit manner in which the director marshalls the energy of its production: apart from a few longeurs, it carries the weight of its 152 minutes running time fairly well. Stylistically, it works best when Spielberg relinquishes any attempts to be overly "arty". Sometimes the montage effects work beautifully — the set up for Sofia instigating the Jook Joint brawl is one instance, but too often, as in the cross-cutting between So-

fia's remonstrating with Celie and Harpo's explanations of the source of his black eye, it seems overly contrived.

The humour is also sometimes crudely drawn, reminding one of Spielberg's miscalculated 1941. How else could one explain the extended sequence in which Miss Milly (one of the few, and invariably lampooned white characters in the film) drives her car berserkly around the town.

Carrying over from the original novel, there is also a disturbing imbalance between the female and male characters: Walker obviously has little sympathy for the latter. Danny Glover's Mister is (apart from his final change of heart) a seemingly irredeemable villain and Willard Pugh's Harpo seems little better than a village idiot, his falling

through roofs becoming something of a running, or should one say, falling joke.

But then, accomplished as the playing might be, the women also register as strangely one-dimensional. Whoopi Goldberg, as the put-upon Celie, cowers for most of the film. Oprah Winfrey's Sofia alternates between the hearty and the comatose whilst Akosua Busia's Nettie glows with a never-ending supply of positivism. Margaret Avery, playing the visiting blues singer, Shug Avery, lends a little astringency to the film with her acerbic wit and style, although the scene in which she rediscovers religion and leads the singing crowd from Jook Joint to church is as silly as anything MGM could have dreamed up in its heyday.



Shopping for liquor, *Repo Man*-style. Alex Cox's acclaimed 1984 film is included on the programmes of next month's Wellington and Auckland film festivals. Also of interest are Laurie Anderson's *Home of the Brave*, Alan Rudolph's *Choose Me* (with music arranged by Luther Vandross), and Martin Scorsese's latest, *After Hours*. Starring Rosanna Arquette, it's a screwball comedy (apparently) with music ranging from Mozart to the Monkees.

Wellington's film festival starts on July 11, Auckland's a week later.

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