

Greg Carroll R.I.P.



The music industry this month mourns the tragic death of Greg Carroll, one of its most popular and accomplished sons. Carroll was a charismatic personality who made friends easily, and never forgot those friends. No matter where he was in the world during his travels working for U2, he'd phone up his friends and relatives in New Zealand to say hello.

Carroll, who was 26, was killed in Dublin early this month when the motorcycle he was riding was struck by a car. For the past two years he had been working as a permanent member of U2's production team; on the band's recent short tour of the United States, he was promoted to tour manager. Carroll was such an integral part of the U2 "family" that Bono Vox, drummer Larry Mullen and several other U2 personnel travelled from Ireland to Wanganui for his funeral at the Kai-Iwi marae.

"We had to come to New Zealand," Bono told Colin Hogg at the funeral. "We felt we had a duty to our friend and workmate. To see that he came home with honour."

It was with the Wanganui band Blonde Comedy that Greg Carroll's career in music began in 1980. "He rang us up and said 'Hi, do you need a soundman,'" says Anthony Johns, lead singer of Blonde Comedy and now with National Anthem. "We didn't, really, but he was such a personality, so funny, that he had to be part of the band." Carroll was always included in the band's photos, "because he looked so much better than the rest of us."

When the band shifted to Auck-

land in 1983, Greg became well-known for his quick wit and fast work. He worked for the sound company Oceania, and often did the sound at Mainstreet. "He was so fast, and such a perfectionist — always giving the audience their money's worth," says Johns. Support bands always got just as much effort spent on their mix — occasionally Carroll's sound got better reviews than the bands — but woebetide any support band that didn't want to celebrate afterwards.

Greg met U2 during their 1984 tour. "He was just one out of 100 workers there, but the band saw the way he handled the crowd," says Dave Major, also a member of Blonde Comedy. "He was always very cool when the heavies got heavy, and the band were very impressed." U2 invited Greg to stay with them when the band went on to Australia, and later to become a permanent part of the U2 team. "Bono and Greg ended up best friends," says Johns. "He was instantly likeable." When U2 played on *Live Aid*, Greg was seen on screen protecting Bono from the crowd. In Wanganui, Bono revealed that it was pre-arranged for Greg to come on stage, so that all his friends back home could see him.

All the time he was overseas, he was constantly phoning home; "He had a great love for people, and he used to ring to say that he hadn't forgot them," says Major. On the day he died, Greg had called his parents; as they were asleep, he said he'd call back later.

Greg was given a three-day tangi on the Kai-Iwi marae near Wanganui. Mourners slept in the room where his body lay, and there were many eulogies and speeches calling upon Greg's ancestors to welcome his spirit. Greg was a dedicated member of the Ratana Church, and the local Ratana choir was led by Greg's uncle Dalvanus Prime, who played a major role explaining the tangi to those who didn't speak Maori. At the burial, Bono read a poem he'd written for Greg.

"Afterwards, there was a 'last supper' at the marae," says Johns. "It was Greg saying thank you to the people who had come, and a time of celebration." Both Johns and Bono were called upon to sing; Bono, accompanied by Gavin Buxton of the Ponsonby DC's on

violin, sang 'Let It Be' and 'Knocking on Heaven's Door'.

Next morning, Bono and Larry Mullen visited the Ratana temple in Wanganui before flying to Auckland to catch their planes home. Bono travelling via Nicaragua where he was to visit as part of an Amnesty International team. U2 plan to hold a memorial service in Dublin later this month, and to send a representative back to Wanganui in a year's time for the traditional unveiling ceremony.

Chris Bourke

Film Absolute MacInnes

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Director: Julian Temple

Colin MacInnes's novel is a shrewdly-penned celebration of the high craziness of London in the late 50s, without ignoring the darker side of life that lurked beneath the pop veneer of skiffle and Shapiro. "My lord, one thing is certain," comments the young hero of MacInnes's novel, "they'll make a musical one day about the glamour-studded 50s," and now, with *Absolute Beginners* — *The Musical* (for so it is titled), Colin's prediction has come true.

Julian Temple, the man who gave us *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* a few years back, paints the late 50s in broad strokes, the brash, gaudy colours being the perfect complement and setting for the restless energy on screen. The opening five minutes are as brilliant as that of any musical, choreographed to the last twitch or grimace, the camera diving in and out of fantasy Soho, not too far in spirit to Coppola's Las Vegas.

Needless to say, *Absolute Beginners* is a very stylised film; so much so that when feet return firmly to the ground and hero and heroine have "serious moments", it goes distinctly flat. A lot of the subtlety of MacInnes's writing is sacrificed. The social deterioration building up to the final riots is carefully gradated in the novel whereas on celluloid we're treated



Marcy invites Paul home and his nightmare begins... Rosanna Arquette and Griffin Dunne in Martin Scorsese's *'After Hours'*.

The crazed logic of Martin Scorsese's *After Hours* may give you, amongst other things, the chance to hear Kate Smith singing 'I Got a Girl (in Kalamazoo)'. *The Adventures of Algie* offers a glimpse of early NZ film-making, although contemporary NZ short films may take some tracking down on the programmes. Whether *Hail Mary* will live up to the controversy that surrounds it is a moot point, but one hopes it doesn't obscure the very real virtues of two other excellent French films, *Vagabonde* and *Full Moon in Paris*. Certainly the best festival selection for years.

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Fourth Man. The moving documentary *Before Stonewall* gives you, amongst other things, the chance to hear Kate Smith singing 'I Got a Girl (in Kalamazoo)'. *The Adventures of Algie* offers a glimpse of early NZ film-making, although contemporary NZ short films may take some tracking down on the programmes. Whether *Hail Mary* will live up to the controversy that surrounds it is a moot point, but one hopes it doesn't obscure the very real virtues of two other excellent French films, *Vagabonde* and *Full Moon in Paris*. Certainly the best festival selection for years.

David Bowie's name might be the box office draw, but the impression he leaves is not a strong one. You leave the cinema remembering Eve Ferret's busty and boisterous Big Jill or Tenpole Tudor's manic Ed the Ted... but then often it is the smaller roles that linger most vividly in the memory.

William Dart

Absolute Beginners
by Colin MacInnes
(Penguin, \$9.95)

Let's whizz through a bit of the background to inform those of you who have been on Raoul Island for the past six months.

The Film: 1985 was British Film Year, in name anyway. What actually happened was that the amount of publicity increased totally out of proportion to the amount of product. *Absolute Beginners* is a victim of that process.

The Author: Colin MacInnes, journalist, homosexual, six feet six inches high, anarchist sympathiser, a difficult man who alienated and made friends in equal measure, born into a talented and broken family that grew up in Australia. He discovered trends in London as they were happening — "teenagers" was one.

The Book: London is in summer and the dead-weight of the post-war British way of life is being manfully avoided by our young (19) hero. He is in love with the promiscuous Crepe Suzette. Through his eyes we see a "teenager's" (glamourised) world. Pre-Beatles, was there life? This novel says yes.

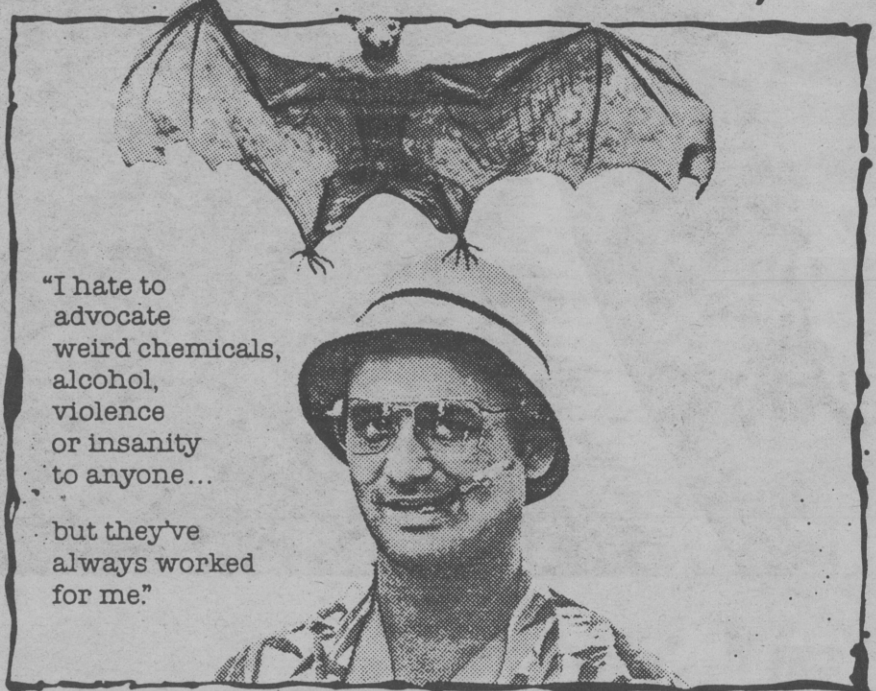
Halfway through the book, it is hijacked by the race riots (which actually happened when MacInnes was writing the book). "Teds" and white combined to beat up on "cats" and blacks. Trusty Vespa running hot, our hero gets in the thick of it. And at last gets to make love to Suze. Ah, young love!

In truth, the book is a journalist's view of a phenomenon, and not the best of his novels. Indeed, his best work was done in articles for the quality weeklies. But this book... a book about London, England in the 50s, teenagers, Napoli (his name for the slum area he lives in: Notting Hill, Shepherd's Bush), and having a ball. Good enough for the Next Big Thing.

Michael Howley

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