

Live

While the Cat's Away Gluepot, November 29

Cover bands and brewery sponsorship, two concepts you could say forced on New Zealand musicians this year by economic necessity. For a couple of hours at the Gluepot though, the reservations were put on hold as five women and their backing band stormed and swaggered through a show of hits and myths with rampant professionalism.

The five "mice," Anne Crummer, Debbie Harwood, Dianne Swan, Margaret Ulrich and Kim Willoughby, are all well versed in more traditional rock line-ups, ie: those dominated by men and original music. Out of that format these women grabbed centre stage with what seemed to be even greater confidence and charisma. Their waggish good humour and obvious delight in what they were doing converted even a hardbitten cynic who was prepared for a dreary run-through of tired old hits, the kind of thing you can get anytime, simply by turning on the radio.

As it turned out, the show couldn't have been much further removed from the woeful wireless, especially with its high New Zealand music content. Out they came... 'Bold as Brass,' 'Counting the Beat,' 'Gutter Black,' 'I'm in Heaven,' 'Just Another Boring Day (in the Amazon),' 'Be Mine Tonight,' and a sensational version of Dave Dobbyn's 'Guilty,' the response to which should encourage the inclusion of more slower-paced, bluesy numbers in future shows. For me the musical highlight was a steamy, seamless 'Lady Marmalade.' The unaccompanied version of 'Fire' also stood out, the vocal dynamics were... dynamic, but really the whole show never dipped below playful proficiency whether it was the classic ('Shaky Ground') or the totally wretched ('Club Tropicana'). All the vocals were good and when the famous five frontal attack wound up, even heads at the back of the packed bar were turned, no mean feat. The band seemed a bit tentative at first but soon got into the swing

of things, tireless drummer Wayne Bell keeping the show on an even keel throughout.

The only thing that did get tiresome was the frequent plugging of the revue's sponsor, the newish lager beer from Dominion Breweries. That these vocalists have to depend on singing commercials for their livelihood is perhaps bad enough indictment of a musician's lot, but to see talent selling itself so short on stage is another thing altogether. DB has got enormous goodwill publicity from *When the Cat's Away*, you couldn't put a price on it, so my advice to the musicians involved is next time get a lot more money up front or don't be so keen to push the brewery product down our throats.

That gripe aside, it was a great show, thoroughly professional and a pleasure to be a part of. Hopefully the huge numbers of punters who turned out will now be encouraged to support the women when they return individually as parts of other line-ups. Hopefully, despite the success of this venture, those involved will still be keen to try something new and original. No matter how good it is, we don't need another covers band.

Mark Everton

Suicide Camden Palace, London, Oct 30

Wow, everyone's turned up to hear the legendary Suicide, just reformed and playing their only London gig. Dozens of homogenous goths, who call the Camden Palace home, arch their teased tresses over each other, the boys foppish and laddish and the girls strange and elaborate. Other youth cults drift across the club in small packs. One particularly striking cult seems to be based on Bobby Gillespie, ex-J&MC drummer, but unfortunately it numbers only three immaculate members. And one of them could be Bobby Gillespie. A thin man with a smile so faint it's almost subliminal sits staring out through wide, watery eyes, while his girlfriend's head rests in his lap. Reps from the junkie community, natch.

At well after midnight a stage crew member is arguing animatedly with two club bouncers, large, ugly middle-aged men in cheap

suits. He apparently loses the argument. He throws his hands up in the air and strides off looking unhappy.

After a joke of a support band, Alan Vega and Martin Rev shamble onto the stage like a comedy act, a sort of Hispanic Blues Brothers. They mess around and bump things, Vega moves his miked stand and drops the mike. BOOM. Vega says a cocky hello and then it's LOUD. Loud enough to make your teeth hurt.

Being (a) rock 'n' rollers and (b) legends, Suicide can dwell on their golden oldies with impunity and Vega takes great pleasure in announcing that the second song is 'Rocket USA' before Rev pushes a fader and a skullcrushing rhythm track comes in. Somewhere in it and subsequent noises Vega finds his own rhythm and scoots along making up words. The collective noise shrieks and pounds and the bouncers at the side of the stage scowl fiercely.

In between songs, Rev will walk over to the other side of the stage in his ski glasses and silly hat, and then walk back again. Then maybe do it again for good measure. Vega uses the opportunity to run off at the mouth, sometimes getting lost in his chat. Someone in the audience points out to him that he is fat.

"Yeah," he says, looking down at his paunch and shaking his godawful permed head of hair. "But it happens... I mean you wanna go out joggin'? I promise you guys I'll go out joggin' in 10 years maybe..."

The current wave of hard electronics makes now a logical time for Suicide to re-enter and, sho' nuff, Vega tumbles into a wayward spic rap about a minute into 'Fast Money Music' — it's an expletive attack on the people who make da money in music and the bouncers look like they feel it's directed at them, which it quite probably is. A heavy glass pint flies across the stage and hits one in the stomach. He goes to sort out the offender, but for some reason his colleague holds him back.

They hold back even when audience members are allowed to scream into the long-suffering microphone. Rev playing with the screams on his desk before they squall out of the PA. Objective reasoning becomes difficult in the

face of the continued sonic assault and you just get carried with the shrieking peaks of it. Or the moments in the "ballads" when Vega warbles disarmingly through the holes in the sound. In between sometimes it's loud and dull.

But the new Suicide, astonishingly, still have that rare unpredictability foamed over in days of yore, an important constituent of which is the constant potential for imminent disaster. Vega knows it and just smiles sheepishly when Rev cuts a song out from under him or another pint pot flies before the cries for an encore can even get together.

On the whole, Suicide are a hell of an experience, with lots of Experience and no little hell. But, like life, it's fun as well as scary. Yeah, lotsa fun. Current electro music tends to stress qualities of superiority and infallibility and does it well; for others electronics give vent to ingenuity. But still no one has managed as well as Suicide to invest sequencers and samplers with the quality of humanity.

Russell Brown

Genesis, Herbs Western Springs, Nov 23

High expectations were politely laid to rest in a concert that had its moments, but not enough to satisfy the appetite of 50,000 hungry devotees. Phil Collins the entertainer, comedian and vocalist alone was unable to tickle more than a moderate response from the crowd, who were quick to settle early into the group's two hour set.

Tony Banks's keyboard and synth work took up much of the space, bordering on the tedious and indulgent manner of mid-70s techno-rock. Eat dirt Rick Wakeman. Even the guitar work, when it was heard at all, sounded very synthesised. Drummer Chester Thompson took the night away with a very precise and punchy performance. You'd be a hot drummer too if you worked for Phil Collins. Sadly, when these two very prominent percussive forces did a drum duet, they did little more than play the same patterns in time — and something less than impressive at that. 'Home By the Sea' received the hottest response and reflected the band's strength in slow ballad and moodier styles. They really didn't have

the flair when it came to rocking out.

But it was a night for lights and dry ice. The energetic Collins leapt up and down the stage, left and right, often in biblical gesture. At times I wasn't sure whether I was witnessing Jesus Christ Superstar or a world expo on state-of-the-art lighting. I look for spirit in a live performance — the humanising flesh and blood element of the forerunning video and vinyl. I didn't feel overly spirited and nor did many of the crowd as they made for the gates well before the encore.

Support act Herbs tried hard to get the crowd on their side but left it a little late with vocal lines from the very popular 'Silence of Heaven.' Nevertheless they gave a very warm and appropriate slice of their harmony-based style, completing the package with some very smart shifts in accent and rhythm. And yes... they had spirit.

Barry Caltcheon

Simple Minds, Dance Exponents Logan Campbell Centre, Nov 9

It was a confident, strutting Dance Exponents who opened the final concert of Simple Minds' world tour. Jordan was in fine voice and good humour, particularly on 'If Only I Could Die,' but Chris Sheehan is in danger of losing the band's goodwill by over-indulging himself on the guitar effects. The keen audience response to the 'I'll Say Goodbye' singalong shows what they like to hear from the Exponents, but with a final melodramatic fling of Dave Ghent's guitar into Eddie Olsen's drumkit, the band shows signs of taking their audience for granted.

Jim Kerr, on the other hand, is a master of communicating with the audience and the grand gesture which reaches everyone in the hall. He leaps about in laddered tights like Ian Anderson, swoops and waves his arms like a sorcerer, and performs "laying of hands" like a politician or messianic preacher. And, through his charm, he gets away with it. However the major disappointment of the concert was his voice, fatigued and croaky after an arduous world tour; perhaps a week's holiday once the cracks started to show would have been better for

all. 'Promise You a Miracle' showed the possibilities of the voice; 'Don't You Forget About Me' was a disappointment though, with the low vocals hidden by the heavy bass.

That said, Simple Minds remain the stadium spectacle, with every song an epic but with enough crowd-pleasing moments to sustain their interest. On one side, flamboyant drummer Mel Gaynor was trapped in a cage that held innumerable cymbals and toms; on the other, Michael McNeil provided colourful, driving keyboards, particularly on the showpiece 'Book of Brilliant Things.' Charlie Burchill's guitar was always clean and tasteful, with lovely harmonics on 'Ghost Dancing.' The grand anthems tended to drift to an end however, and the concert was given a lift when, during 'Once Upon a Time,' chesty wailing was heard from the wings.

Enter Robin Clark, the black female vocalist who stole the show. An imposing figure, like Mr T in a wonderful leather outfit festooned with tassels and jewellery, she was given centre stage during the duet of 'Alive and Kicking,' the peak of the concert. To finish, there was a quick letting down of hair during the encores. While 'Jumping Jack Flash' was inappropriate, Sly Stone's 'Thank You Fallettine Be Mice Elf Again' and 'Dance to the Music' provided a funky, triumphant end to Simple Minds' third visit and lengthy world tour.

Chris Bourke

'RUMOURS' FROM PAGE 6 Iective Lowlife featuring Eugene Butcher and friends.

Robin Banks (ex-Roco Coca) has returned from Australia with Dale Monaghan (ex-Mockers) and Greg Mannering (ex-Rodgers), and all three hope to have a drummer and band together shortly... the AEB have resurfaced as **Borderland Productions**... War of the Bands finalists **Amez-Amez** have taken over a residency at the Papanui... **Robyn Bern** is organising this year's "Summertime," anyone interested in participating can contact Robyn at the Chch civic offices... the **Camelias, Scatter** and the **Prodigies** have all been in the studio, and **Murder Inc** will record a record in January for Rational... and that's it for another year. Merry Christmas to all!

John Greenfield

ALCHEMY Live DIRE STRAITS



Includes live recordings of
Sultans of Swing,
Romeo and Juliet,
Turn of Mind
Colour 90 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



Two hours of live
entertainment including 18
mins extended version of
Purple Rain
Colour 120 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



One of the original and
best heavy metal bands live
in concert in front of
300,000 people
Colour 90 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



Includes Shout - Hear over
Heels, Everybody Wants
To Rule the World, I Believe
Colour 78 mins Dolby
Stereo HiFi RRP \$59.95 + GST



It's the hottest rock film
you'll see this year.
They will rock you.
Colour 90 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



The eagerly awaited sequel
to 'What we did on our
holidays' including Shout
to the Top, Colour 30 mins
Dolby Stereo HiFi RRP
\$59.95 + GST



Includes the smash hit
tracks Blue Eyes, Empty
Garden & I'm Still Standing
Colour 16 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$39.95 + GST



Neil Young in a stunning
live performance including
Cinnamon Girl and Hey
Hey My My, Colour 60 mins
Dolby Stereo HiFi RRP
\$59.95 + GST



Turn up the sound! Turn
down the lights and listen
to the world's greatest rock
guitarists
Colour 60 mins RRP \$59.95
+ GST



Includes cuts by Venom,
Nazareth, Whitesnake, Ash,
Heavy Petting, Warlock,
Running Wild & Tyranus Place
Colour 50 mins HiFi Stereo
RRP \$59.95 + GST



Includes Body and the
Beat, April Sun in Color &
Are you Old Enough?
Colour 50 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



Everyone's favourite duo
finishing during a recording
session and includes
interviews, a music
video, Colour 30 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$39.95 + GST



Recorded live in the intimate
surroundings of Ronnie Scott's
Club. One of the best perform-
ances from Art Blakey
Colour 38 mins Dolby Stereo
RRP \$59.95 + GST



Dio Live in concert
including Stand up and
Shout, Don't Talk to
Strangers and Holy Diver
Colour 60 mins Dolby
Stereo HiFi RRP \$59.95 + GST



Features The Rolling
Stones, Ray Charles and
the Ineders and many
more 15 hits of the 60's
Colour 45 mins RRP \$59.95
+ GST



A live concert filmed in
1985 featuring Disciples of
Soul, As Above & Far,
Beyond the Sun
Colour 90 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST



Recorded at the Sydney
Entertainment Centre
24/4/84. Features I've been
to Bali Too, I was only 19
Colour 50 mins Dolby
Stereo RRP \$59.95 + GST

**LOOK WHAT'S NEW ON VIDEO
CASSETTE THIS CHRISTMAS**
MUSIC • MUSIC • MUSIC • MUSIC
Every taste catered for from BBC/Polygram,
the internationally recognised leaders in
Home Entertainment.
Watch for New Monthly Releases distributed
in NZ by Kerridge Odeon Amalgamated
Video

Available at the following BBC/Polygram specialty stores:-

WHANGAREI Video Station - 15 James St AUCKLAND Sunnybrae Video - 49 Sunnybrae Rd Northcote, MacGregor Hay Limited - 218 Great South Rd Manurewa, Electric Dream Video Company - 24 Queens Rd Panmure, Glamuzina Video Library - 4345 Gt North Rd Glendene, Electric Dream Video Company - 415 Mt Eden Rd Mt Eden GIBSON Video Station - 116 Bright St, Yachting Magazine at Gisborne HAMILTON Quills Video Mart 750 Victoria St Hamilton HASTINGS Video Vault - 311 Heretaunga St, West Hastings NEW PLYMOUTH 221 Video Club - 180 Devon St East New Plymouth

PALMERSTON NORTH Porter Video Porter Sq Palmerston North WANGANUI DJ's Video Library - 1 Victoria Avenue Wanganui LEVIN Video Centre - 7 Bath St Levin MASTERTON Wairarapa Sight and Sound - C/- Hi Vid Theatre Chapel St Masterton WELLINGTON United Video Hire Limited - 31 Courtenay Place Wellington, Cyclops Video - Hillary Court Naenae Wellington, Johnsonville Video Centre - 11 Broderick Rd Johnsonville Wellington NELSON Video Club - 23 Alma Lane Nelson CHRISTCHURCH Quills Video - 904 Colombo St Christchurch, Noel Leeming Limited - 575 Colombo St Christchurch, Mr Movie - 319 Stanmore Rd Christchurch DUNEDIN Basil North Ltd - 128 Gordon Rd Mosgiel, Southern Video Hire - 115 George St Dunedin INVERCARGILL Video Corner Avenal - Cnr Dee and Fox Sts HOKITIKA Graham Electronics - 101 Revell St Hokitika