

'CHILLS' FROM PAGE 18
 Star, Genesis or Little Feat. It was the Partridge Family. This is the one we don't talk about, the one that speaks within us. This wasn't like the sophistipop of the 80s. This was ... naive.

A generation in this country had its very pubescence mapped out by 20 Solid Gold Hits, volumes one to 12. Were YOU too young to quite understand Grunt Machine? Martin Phillipps, blessed of a mental condition called Poetic Memory, has embraced the experience in Apollonian terms, shining and haunting, while the likes of the Sheets (probably the most complete and terrifying visitation we have witnessed) grab right at the oily heart of it. They cover 'Cover of the Rolling Stone.'

Feb 22 De Pul, Uden

Uden is miles from anywhere, even, as we'll later discover, from the hotel for the night. Stuck amid miles of lookalike flatlands, with only the occasional twisted perspective of water stacked up above the road to relieve the tedium of travelling there. There is fluid on the lungs of rural Holland.

The venue is signalled by the presence of a huge truck, and another one, outside it. The trucks belong to the Damned, with whom the Chills share the billing at tonight's "festival."

The Damned's crew seems to number about a dozen and they have already set up a PA that seems way too big for the club. They have set up the stage too, which is mostly occupied by Rat Scabies' star drum riser and flashy kit. It is made clear that the kit will not be moved and Caroline's has to be set up at the side of the stage. These men are proper roadies — coarse, a little gutty, good-humoured with each other. They mostly ignore the Chills, with the exception of the guitar roadie who is genuinely helpful, making adjustments to Justin's bass.

There's been a slight bolshiness within the Chills to do with blowing the Damned off the stage, and when the soundcheck comes they blow through two of the newer songs, 'Rain' and 'Dan Destiny and the Silver Dawn' very confidently and impressively. This proves to have certain repercussions later on ...

Dinner at a long table at a nearby restaurant is subject to yet another exhibition of loony Dutch catering, with the kitchen staff presumably deciding the order in which dishes are brought out on the roll of dice ("Soup now? Nah ... desert and salad ...").

The audience back at the club seems divided between music fans and goths. Goth is a classic English youth cult, in the same tradition but

more middle-class in orientation than, say, teddy-boys or mods, that has caught on big in Holland. Like many such youth cults, music is utilised more as an interpretation of a dress code than in its own right. The look is dark and vampiric, accessories lightweight arcane and the momentum is hippiewards.

Musically, godparents Robert Smith and Soux-sie have been largely supplanted by the retard metal of the Cult (who have, at least, stopped pretending to be American Indians) and the astoundingly silly romanticism of the Mission. But Goth has also adopted, as its bunch of good blokes, the tired old Damned, whose lead singer Dave Vanian has been doing vampire chic since 1976.

Anyway, so a few goth children repeatedly demand to hear the Damned throughout the Chills' set and things get a tiny bit needly. The result is a gig the band don't enjoy, but consequently play with such a bad-arse feel that it's good listening. The tone in Martin's voice when he snaps "This one's for all the goths," before a song is a rare and thrilling one.

By the time everyone reassembles in the dressing room things are coming clear. The Damned's crew are notorious as Chelsea FC fans and it appears there have been one or two, er, professional fouls this evening.

For one, it has just been discovered the bands had equal billing for the gig and should have had equal stage rights rather than having to climb around the Damned's constructions. For two, Andrew was quietly advised to check the EQ settings on the PA and found they had been altered since soundcheck, so had to scramble to reassemble a decent sound during the first few songs. Nebulous things, but they taste bad in the mouth.

But now the Damned are on. The Damned have not used a dressing room, but have pulled up in their heated bus just before showtime and leapt through the side door, made-up and dressed, onto the stage. When the gig finishes with Rat Scabies donning guitar for 'Pretty Vacant' (yes ...) they will scoot out and back onto the bus, where they presumably sleep. Their gig is the same loud theatre as their Auckland gigs a year ago and the young man on the Emulator still plays most of the music, no matter how much the bass player jumps and grins. Still, it's easy that way.

So, ships in the night. Two very different tours of Europe these; one where it's all new and different and upwards and one that barely touches down. God it must be boring being the Damned.

Part two in May *Rip It Up* — A day off in Sin City ... the 70s are rising ... 'Ya Ya Ya' in Gronigen ... Waakzaamheid and home.

Film

PLATOON

Director: Oliver Stone

Although it's now 15 years since the USA finally removed their military presence from Vietnam, the scars have not healed on either side. In the late 70s, films like Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and Hal Ashby's *Coming Home* made an attempt to show the horror of the war and the problems of its civil aftermath. Oliver Stone's film, based on his own experiences, aims at portraying the nightmare that was Vietnam through the eyes of a raw recruit.

Chris (Charlie Sheen) has enlisted himself through a combination of misplaced patriotism and late 60s rebelliousness. As gut-wrenching as the battlefield turns out to be, Sheen soon finds out that the conflict between the Americans themselves is just as savage. As Stone's voice-over comments towards the end of the film, "We fought ourselves; the enemy is in us." This is shown most dramatically in the struggle between the brutal, macho Barnes (Tom Berenger) — a prototype for all Rambo's — and the lithe, idealistic Elias (Willem Dafoe). It is a struggle carried out, like the war itself, in an arena where life means little, and conventional concepts of morality count for nothing at all — living in Death row, an existence made bearable through either dope or booze.

In a world where the philosophy of survival is "keep your pecker hard and your powder dry," life is brutal and Stone's film has its shocks, the most appalling being some vicious attacks on Vietnamese civilians in the first part of the film.

By definition, being a "war film," there's plenty of action in *Platoon* and Stone choreographs it with consummate ease, particularly in the brilliant fast tracking shots in the jungle scenes, climaxing in Dafoe's headlong rush to his death, slowly peppered by the bullets of the pursuing Viet Cong. Yet, because of the intense dynamism of these scenes, the more reflective moments are all the more moving, and Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings' seems to grow in poignancy as it recurs with

each of these sequences.

The question remains — is *Platoon* the ultimate commentary on the Vietnam war? Although I don't feel it has the intellectual weight of *Apocalypse Now*, the recent success of Stone's movie in the Academy Awards would seem to indicate it is a timely release. As one American critic has commented, this film should be essential viewing for anyone who thinks that war in Central America would be glamorous, desirable, or even sane ... but have Ron and Nancy seen it yet?

William Dart

THE COLOUR OF MONEY

Director: Martin Scorsese

Robert Rossen's 1961 film *The Hustler* is still an extraordinary achievement, with Paul Newman's portrayal of Fast Eddie, one of the classic American anti-heroes, a character whom the director described as being flawed by the need to "win before everything else."

Twenty-six years on, we meet Eddie again in Martin Scorsese's *The Colour of Money*. He's now in the liquor business and sets up a scheme to take a talented young pool player Vince Guardis (Tom Cruise) on a pool hall crawl to big times in Atlantic City. The years haven't changed Newman's philosophy of life much — at one point he remarks to Cruise that money which is won is twice as sweet as money earned.

Scorsese tackles his subject in a different way from what Rossen did, developing the relationship of Newman, Cruise, and the young man's girlfriend, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, in what amounts to a pool hall road film. Rossen showed relatively few games, but treated them in some detail; Scorsese, plotting the trio's journey to the Mecca of Atlantic city, shows a good few, many represented by a few desultory shots and the inevitable handing over of money. In some, however, Michael Ballhaus's camera is allowed to embellish the contests with hurtling zooms, quick pans, sped-up motion and extreme close-up shots, to highlight the obsessional quality of the game.

Ballhaus's camera isn't the only virtuoso turn. Perhaps Newman's character looks a little well-preserved for what the real Fast Eddie might have been after a quarter of a century, but he gives

a beautifully timed performance, especially in his scenes with Cruise, and the marvellous gambit at the bar with Helen Shaver, all close-ups and slyness. Cruise, though a lighter weight than Newman in the acting stakes, brings just the right cocky exuberance to his role, including a marvellous scene in which a pool-table turn becomes a compendium of various pieces of Americana, from majorette baton twirling through break-dancing to Kung Fu, ending with Cruise holding the cue stick behind his shoulders *a la* James Dean — all to Warren Zevon's 'Werewolves of London.'

Robbie Robertson's soundtrack starts promisingly over the credit titles and soon dissipates into rock muzak (in spite of the Gil Evans orchestrations) but there are other musical bonuses — the alert might notice Iggy Pop in a brief appearance as one of Cruise's conquered opponents, described in the credits as "Skinny Player on the Road."

William Dart

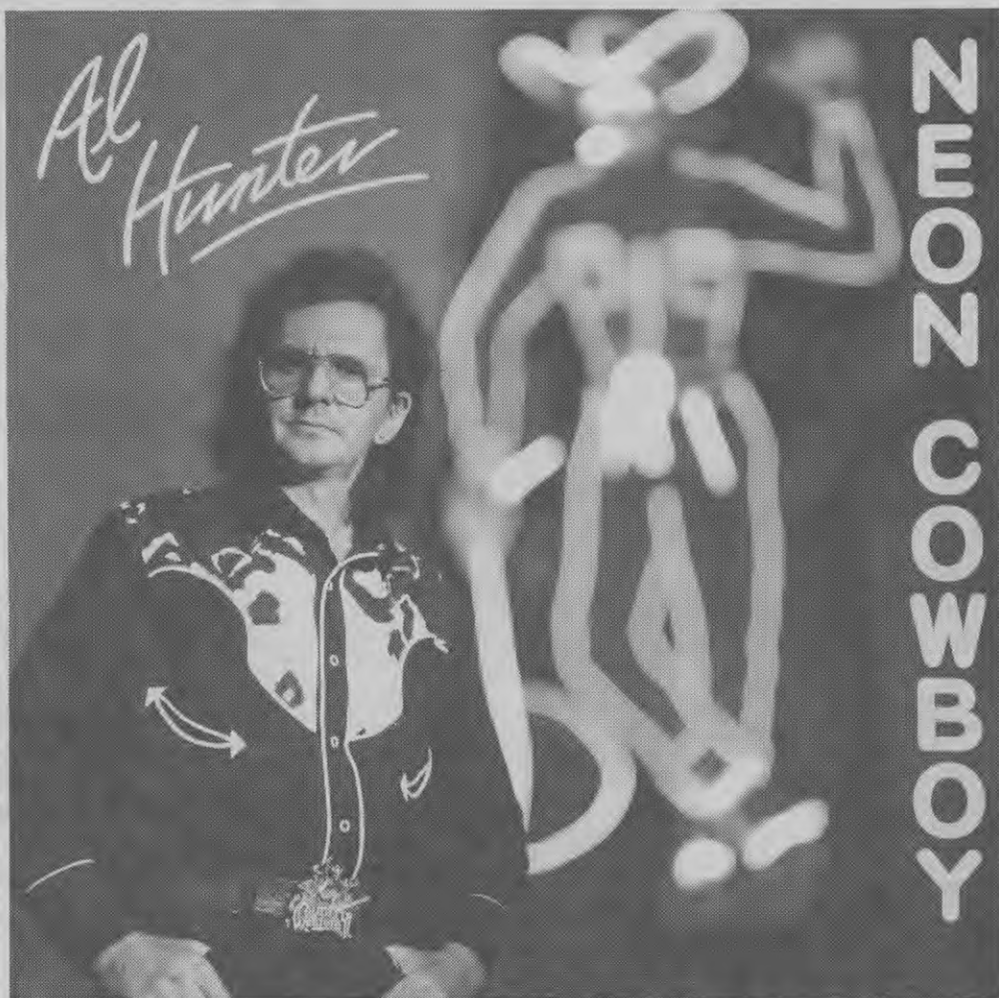


Feel the Energy

Wanting to inject some of his inimitable energy into the local live scene — and keep busy until the DD Smash album is recorded in June — Peter Warren is putting a band together for a tour playing "uptempo dance music, neglected DD Smash songs, and New Zealand classics." In the band will be ex-Legionnaire Andrew Langsford, Andrew Bowden (a NZ guitarist from Sydney), and Dance Exponent Dave Ghent. Their first shows are at Wildlife on May 1 & 2, and the "Feel the Energy" tour will run through May, including some underage gigs. Then Warren will record two of his own songs for a single. Oh, the band's name? Rooda — what else?

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