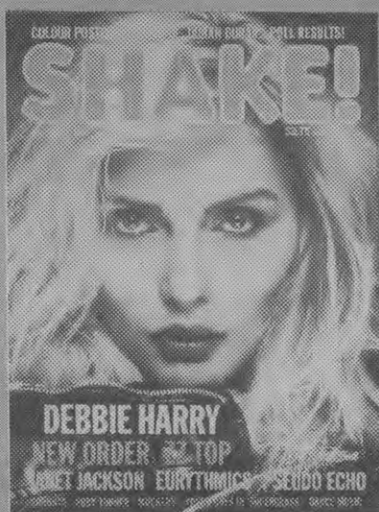


NEW ORDER ZZ TOP EURYTHMICS RUBY TURNER DEBBIE HARRY BILLY IDOL JANET JACKSON YOUNG ONES IN SUPERGRASS PSEUDO ECHO



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Live

Rheineck Rock Festival
Palmerston North
Showgrounds, March 28

"At least it didn't rain." Thus spake Scabies of the Damned before they launched into another hard-driving rock song.

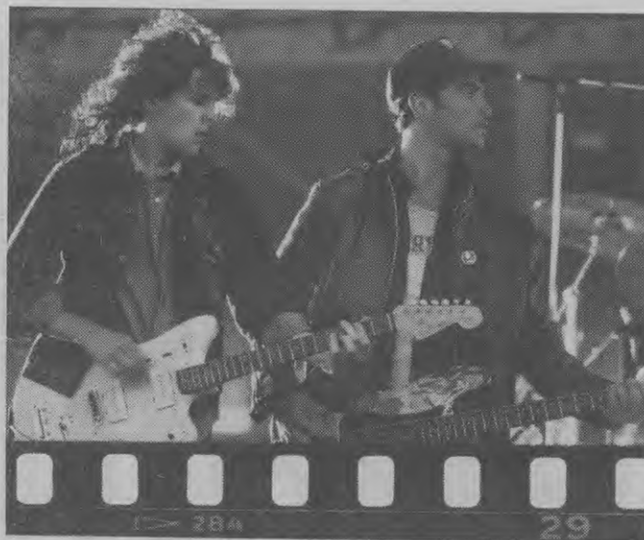
Well Ratty it was sunshine for all of the afternoon and the light-breeze-that-was died just before the air force did a flypast. The crowds weren't there, perhaps it was the boredom/fear of a drunken crowd which kept them away — they need not have feared, there was an alcohol ban on which tempered things nicely.

The Event — the afternoon starts timely with three bands from Meltedown Records. The first, the End, have no problem in dedicating each song to someone or something, proving you too can be roadweary in Palmie. 'Locked' stands out — those hills do crowd! Cement Garden follows. Again from Palmie, these lads show that music exists in the in-land. 'Sunday Morning' is a winner with its melancholic, wistful rolls. Bliss.

'Too Slow to Go' shows that the Pterodactyls are in tune. The Auckland band burlesques their way through a set with some brave bass playing during 'Germs' and 'Cockroaches'. Meaningful stuff from the city of the white ant. Three Leaning Men do not thrill. Abrupt chord changes, art rock stuff. This band sure isn't here to win friends, their music barely accessible — a poem to Vince Martin saves the day with a wonderful 60s Doors feel.

Vroom go the jets and the Bats follow suit. The charming four-piece outfit headed by Robert Scott and driven by Paul Kean proved a highlight with counterpoint harmonies, rolling beats and people are dancing! 'Made Up in Blue' is great, as is 'Block of Wood' and 'North by North' is a fitting finale.

With the arrival of Jordan Luck and his Dance Exponents the crowd really take off and Jordan has them singing and waving hands, "even though I'm blue." The sound tends to merge though, with the bass player thrashing each song into a thumbs'n'thud exercise and guitarist Chris Sheehan, although proving that he can



Dance Exponents Chris Sheehan, Dave Gent.

play, attacks each song with a mallet of sound. 'Victoria' will survive through anything and 'Where's Harry Ratbag' is one song where everybody enjoys themselves.

It's never too late for Herbs, and the audience are treated to a beautiful mixture of soft, easy rhythms, quite different to the rock'n'roll order of the day. This band deserves their cultural ambassadorship of last year, albeit honorary. 'Nuclear Waste' and Taj Mahal's 'Everybody is Somebody' proven beautiful songs and the crowd responds. The importance of this band is atmosphere and their spot in the dying sun is a fitting tribute, for it surrounds their music with the pink glow of an Aotearoa sunset — imagine the sway of the ocean current and you've got the mood. This band is great.

Paul Kelly is a brave man starting and finishing his set with slow songs — the beautiful 'Randwick Bells' to start and 'Maralinga' to finish. Like Herbs, this man is at-mosphere. A stage presence which demands your attention and a band that won't let your mind wander. Most of the set's off the double album *Gossip* and except for a few lost rhythms the band is tight as. The crowd knows these songs and so they should, PK should go down in folk history as one of the few troubadour/poets of the Pacific and I wish him all the best. Great singing — three-

part harmonies even! — the sax player blows gas like he's fit to burn and the drummer keeps things bouncing along. Kelly himself seems a man happy, he's found his place on the stage and the only way from here is up. Australia has rock'n'soul!

Yeehah, it's the Johnnys. Ear piercing proclamations and many beery salutes see a set of self parody through. Ol' Spence sure can whip up a treat on his gat and Hoody beats his bass into submission. None of the 'I Got the Hoss' and She Got the Saddle' laments from these fellahs. Great renditions of 'Showdown', 'The Day Marty Robbins Died' and 'Injun Joe', while the newie 'Elvisly Yours' pays homage to a thousand highway songs and sounds better than any of them. Loud'n'proud, eh boys! The Clean's 'Anything Can Happen' closes the set and the Johnnys lurch off to more turps'nburps.

The Damned prove to be the pros of the day, launching into their set which is sure sound and rapid fire, but it all tends to sound the same. These guys may have been punk once but now it's glam rock and beat which doesn't bop. The "crowd" is already half gone.

Thanks Peter Shepherd, a well-organised and managed concert. The only criticism of the day is levelled to the reader — where were you? It was a great farewell to the summer sun.

Tim Byrne

ZZ Top

Western Springs, March 14

Okay, already, what's with all this enraged yuppie bit, the *Star* with its Wild Youth on Rampage paranoia, and the talkback shows full of declining poverty values. Give us a break ferchristsake.

Seemed like a nice bunch of people to me, a real community, of sorts, like a Woodstock for V8 boys. The Texan trio gave us a nice bit of high-powered blues in the night, with Billy Gibbons demonstrating that beneath all the technology of the latest albums, the guitar remains king, and the basic beauty of the blues will never change.

Opening with a crunching 'Got Me Under Pressure', things never let up, moving from the hi-tech boogie of 'Sleeping Bag' and the pounding 'Can't Stop Rocking' to old favourites like 'Jesus Never Left Chicago' and a great version of 'La Grange' — just magic. It was amazing just how many songs this band has done over the years, and perhaps it is only now that they are really hitting their peak with stuff like 'Legs' being a contemporary classic, and being one of the highlights of this particular show, next to the tender rendering of 'Rough Boy' and the funky 'I Wouldn't Touch it With a Ten Foot Pole' (about the *Star* perhaps).

The boys looked real good, but it was a hard job getting a look at drummer Frank Beard hidden in the back, the dance steps were cool and crowd reaction was hot. Everybody had fun doing the 'Tube Snake Boogie' and 'Tush' was the ultimate in boogie down. I can't wait to see them again.

Jimmy Barnes was also impressive, with a bit of rockabilly in 'Rising Sun' and the massive anthem of 'Working Class Man.' When Michael Hutchence teamed up with Jimbo for 'Good Times' the place went wild. Yep, there's nothing better than a huge helping of blues and boogie.

Kerry Buchanan

The Happy Accident

Maidment Theatre, March 6

Alternative entertainers' state of the art gang show, grim overtones (the performance was dedicated to Johnny Pierce) spiced with wild and wacky humour. This update of the Nitpickers Picnic was characterised by rare sincerity and spontaneity.

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