

Live

Underground Mega Show
Railway Hall, Wellington,
April 24

A still, cold, Wellington night. People dress for the occasion (thick coats, boots); drink for the occasion (warm spirits). Chrome studs reflect hall stalkers' glares while the duffle and sniffs hug walls ...

The sound is in control, lights minimal, and the Close lead with 'Lest We Forget.' Good vocals. A band that could go places with more confidence and a better guitarist. Cans are thrown from behind the darkness as knobs are turned; the machine's in fine tune.

The Trephines say goodbye to diode control but retain the drum machine. Fast, bright rhythms, bass playing that wouldn't be amiss in any major NZ band, but the vocals need more inventiveness. This band is tight but it needs to control its stage sound, use their strengths rather than let them mix up in murk.

Phase Two blow away the cobwebs of stage innocence and playfully bat away the teasers from the

crowd while delivering a high energy burst of rock music. Butterflies on speed. Excellent keyboards and the singer jives in twisted turns. He delivers, the band deliver. The space is now being used, finally animated with a band prepared to use it.

On the floor it's spills and rolls as bouncing heads bump and grind in a dancefloor monopoly. The crowd stands back, wooden pegs in stilted glazed ... oops, one's puking in the corner, others ... the evening's degenerating with still two bands and the crowd's dispersing. Hard core's left — nowhere to go? The breaks between bands are so far managed with efficiency, no system farts, so to speak.

We're told Electric Church is to close (where did you get those hats?), but it's Onaweta who powerhouse their way with a salute to the Pistols and to the Pretenders. While they search for new meaning in nihilism, the stage is in revolt, and I beat a retreat.

Billed as underground, described as alternative, the Mega Show had all the makings of a great event, highlighting new trends in Wellington music, a worthy promotion, but it lost direction at the end, which is what those who remained seemed to want.

Middle class yobs grabbing at loose ends from a mid-70s London trip. It's not all black and white you know, there is colour, and the more you see, the more you'll like it.
Tim Byrne

James Griffin and the Subterraneans
Gluepot, Friday, April 24

It seems some of the only sounds of interest lately has come from overseas. Give or take a few promoters, bands based across the Tasman have been quick to nourish the Kiwi soul — or at least attempt to and in doing so, hopefully take back a few bucks.

Griffin and the Subs are an interesting Ocker concoction. Guitarist Marty Willson-Piper of jingle-jangle nobles the Church justified an otherwise melancholy evening with a solo set on acoustic 12-string. Thank God for electronics, eh Marty? In my judgement, a bard better than Griffin himself. Nothing brilliant, but a good buzz.

Having played together little up to now, it's understandable that the union of five otherwise competent musicians doesn't cut the cheese. The right noises in the right places, but little unity, flow or "groove," baby. Nothing to get harsh about, it just could be that

with time they'll fall together.

Griffin's musical material strikes me as being overweight and lazy — or is it the delivery that bogs out? But — moderate responses from a moderate crowd for his lively poetry. Hello John Cooper Clarke, Attila the Stockbroker and hello Auckland. And hello Lez White, ex-Dudes bassist, a tad sharper and cleverer than when I saw him last, laying his fingers exactly where they belong — out 'n' about the kick drum. Steady and efficient stuff.

So, all in all, much ado about nothing?

Barry Caitcheon

Rumours

Wellington

Skank Attack, who entertained patrons outside the Kiwi Music Convention until issued with a noise abatement notice by the city council (whose offices were across the road) have a debut EP out on Skank Records. Also out on Skank is *When the Wind Blows*, a compilation LP of eight Wellington bands ... the **Backdoor Blues Band** are now in Melbourne and are known as **Naked City**. **Ted**

Clarke has been recording a single which he will complete in Australia.

Bill Lake's band the **Living Daylights** have been recording an album at Marmalade and are playing regularly at the Oaks, alternating gigs with ex-Hulamen/Tombolas the **Holidaymakers** ... **Anthony Takes a Bath** have recorded four tracks at Frontier produced by **Fane Flaws** ... new soul funketeers the **Launderettes** had two full house nights at the Cricketers for their debut headline gigs. The nine-piece play 90 percent originals and will record an EP at Radio Active's new production studio ... a reformed **Juke Jivers** have Tim Robinson replacing Caroline Esther. Guitarist **Dave Murphy** has just completed a southern tour supporting the Backdoor Blues Band.

Local duo **Lauder and Milk** have split with the departure of **Ken Double** to London ... blues band **Chicago Smoke Shop** are touring. Guitarist Darren has Albert Collins licks that even Collins would be struggling with ... **Bill Dieren's** Builders have released a new EP 'The Cup' recorded with Barry Stockley, John McDermott, Linda Lloyd and Stuart Porter ... **Jungle Mice** have an 11-track cassette out and will be gigging again when

Howard returns from Australia.

The annual **Folk Festival** will be held over Queen's Birthday, with **Martin Carthy**, ex-Steeleye Span as the overseas gig ... **Jim Moss** has sold Chelsea Records (except the Lower Hutt shop) to concentrate on **Jayrem** ... well done **Pete Kaye** at the Cricketers for introducing early week gigs for local bands and promoting the venue through a info sheet, complete with free passes ... cultural crime: 100s of hours of local bands' tapes recorded by Broadcasting are gathering dust on shelves.

Info for Wellington *Rumours* can be dropped in to **Solid Air Records**.

John Pilley

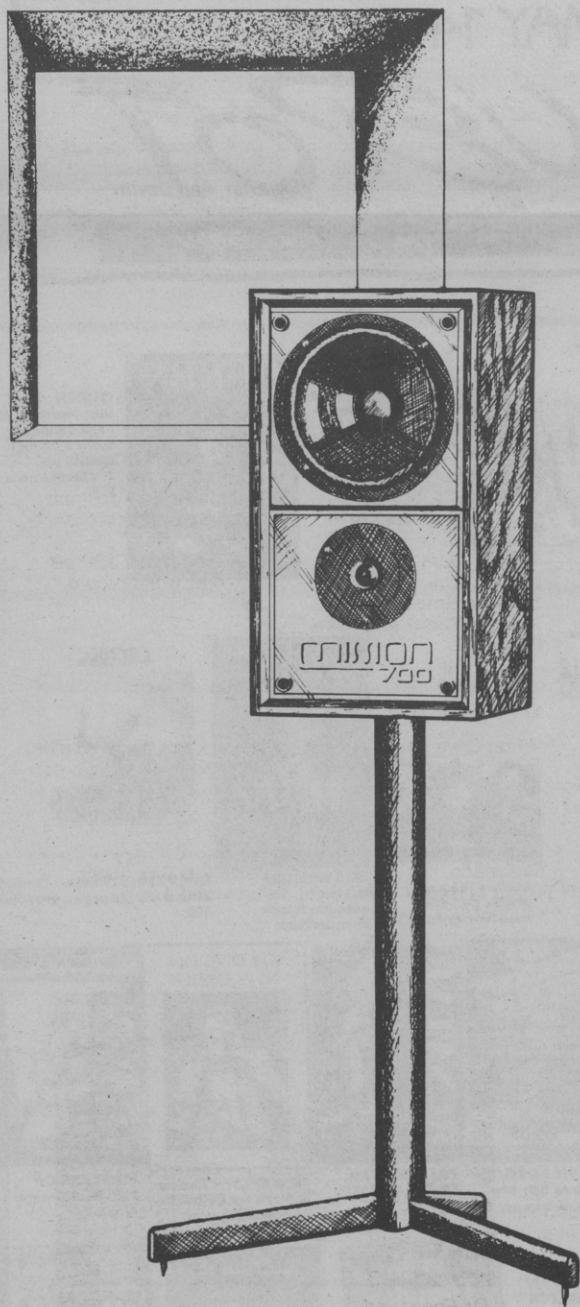
On Tape

The Ranchsliders
Ranchsliders Go to Hollywood

Pretty cowboy-lookin' stuff from Wellington's Ranchsliders, but the overall effect is rather one of carefully arranged pop rather than all-out Johnnys' yeehaw!-ness. 'GUILTY' in particular is winsome bestness, very laidback delivery and instrumentation. Not sure where this is recorded, but it sounds fine. (\$5 from Mossman, P O Box 1986, Wellington) PM

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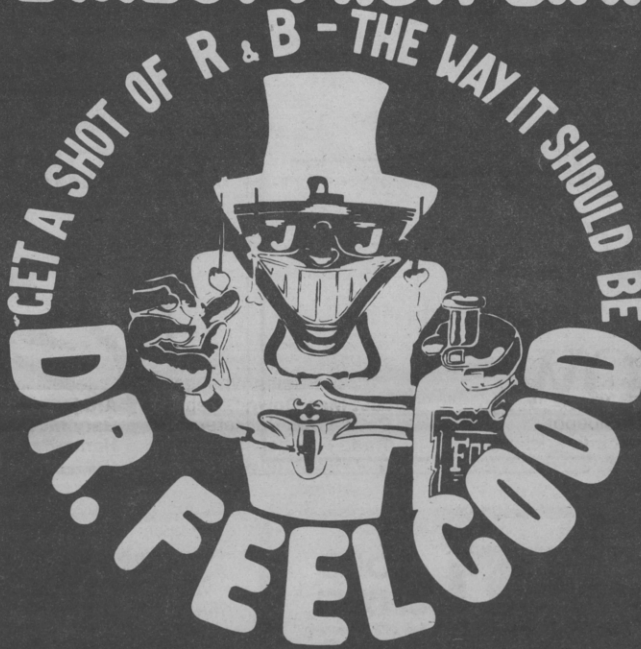
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