

'ARDIJAH' FROM PAGE 16

for an outsider to go out to the South Auckland nightclubs.

J D points out that people who go to clubs don't go to listen to the band; Ryan agrees: "People go to clubs to enjoy themselves and if the band down the road is better they'll go there. It's a little competition — all club bands are stuck in it and the only way they can win is to get their professionalism into it. All you can do in club residencies is get new numbers each week. Feel the crowd and see what moods they're in and see what sound is in on TV and radio."

"It happens as a cycle, all over and all over again," says J D.

"That's the trap," adds Simon.

Ryan: "You're running round in small circles competing with the band down the road ..."

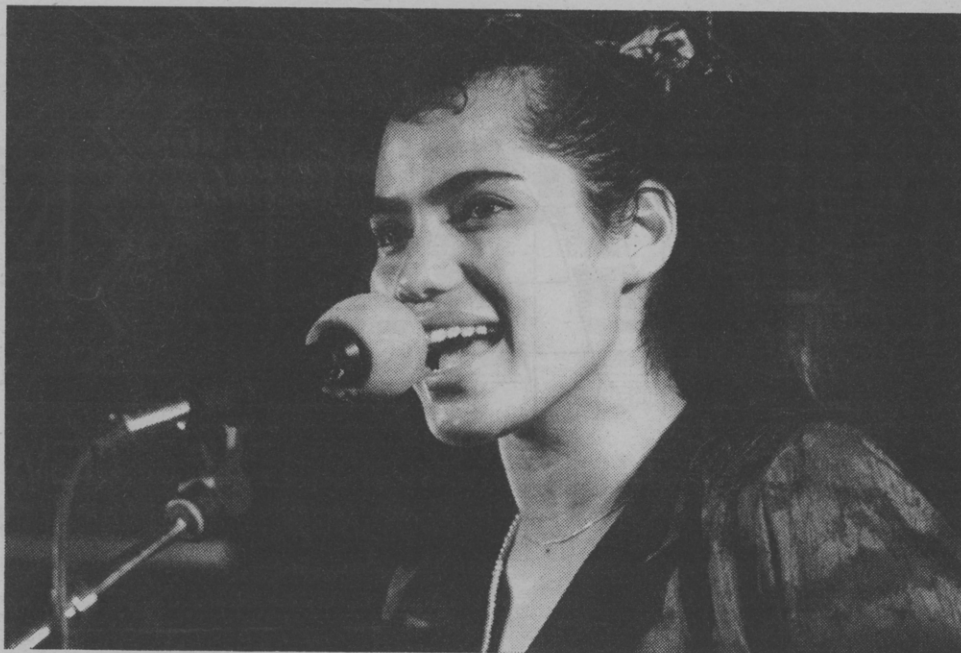
"And you must stay current," says Simon.

Betty: "You almost have to cover the songs before they're released." Ryan agrees. "In some ways club bands get releases for stuff you don't normally hear — the SOS Band and Princess were like that."

"It's okay if you want to be a club band ..." Betty doesn't want to put club bands down. Explains Simon, "It's just we weren't happy to stay there. Because it's moving round in circles, you're not going forward. And you can't work on original stuff because you're busy learning new material."

"Till you record your own record," says Betty.

"Then you become commercial," Ryan laughs. "Now it's just writing songs ... when a band makes their mark in the world it depends on the songs they bring out, whether they're hits."



Betty Anne Monga, Ardijah.

Whether the songs keep the audience happy and in tune with the group."

## Spintime

Trevor Reekie of Pagan Records gave Ardijah their first break to, as Ryan says, "step through the door of the music scene in New Zealand, rather than just local, just South Auckland. I played in his group Car Crash Set which made it easier to communicate — you've got all this thing about, you walk into record companies, whoever it is, and you've got to present your demos."

Reekie had heard about the band and asked Ryan to come in to Pagan. "He listened," says Betty. Pagan released 'Give Me Your Number' and through their association with Mirage Films the single was used on the *Queen City Rocker* soundtrack, with the band appearing in the film. "Trevor Reekie exposed us

nationally," says Ryan.

Ardijah started touring immediately the single was released, playing Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. How did that go? "Christchurch really liked it," says Betty. "No one walked out, from what we could see from the stage."

Ryan: "We played the Palladium and they came to our changing rooms afterwards." Dunedin was tougher. They played Sammy's and it took three nights to get a good crowd, but they drew 700 people on the last night.

The *Ardijah* album is released through WEA, who have watched the band for about a year and imported Tony Humecke "specifically to re-record 'Give Me Your Number,'" says Simon. "That cost them a hell of a lot of money; it showed they had faith in us."

Ardijah's manager Peter Campbell says the band hopes for "international

success" through WEA. The Los Angeles office have expressed interest, Ardijah have another version of 'Give Me Your Number' for international release.

The band had already planned to record an album when the Rheineck rock award gave them \$30,000: a good surprise, they say. Did the award money help make a better quality album?

Ryan deliberates. "Sometimes quality comes with time ... how many hours you've got to spend on it ..."

"Time is knowledge as well," says Betty. "You have to know what you're doing."

Did Tony Humecke provide positive input? "He is right in the front line of studio technology," says Simon. "It was the first opportunity for us to see a computer at work in the studio. He also would like to come down and work with the band again. he was very interested to hear the album on vinyl."

Ryan: "Tony Humecke taught us things, just by watching him and seeing what he was doing. Basically he said, if it sounds good, do it. He said the songs themselves would be very acceptable in the States with the recording, it was like it would need a good final mix."

Ardijah say they'd like to make it nationally first, wanting the support of their own country. The *Ardijah* album release starts an intensive tour schedule, a six-week Rheineck tour followed by their own. "Places we don't hit on the Rheineck tour," says Simon, "Taihape, Dannevirke, Levin maybe."

New Zealand audiences have not, in the past, given viable support to local bands until they have "made it" overseas. Ardijah's class act is cabaret, not pub-circuit, orientated. But Ryan's dream of touring the Pacific may be more realistic (the rest of the group shouted him down). With astute management and record company backup Ardijah could have a rosier future playing Tokyo, Los Angeles and Honolulu.

## Funkateers

So what does New Zealand's premier funk band listen to; what are their past and present influences?

Ryan first: "The things that they played on the radio, that was okay ... commercial. Then I found there were other types of music, like the Commodores, mainly funk, the Bar-Kays, old Cameo, you know — the band that's just done 'Word Up.' They've been around for about 10 years." His early listening taught him to appreciate different kinds of music and led him to mix them in the Ardijah format. His first record: Earth, Wind

and Fire.

J D's brother was a freelance deejay and ran a record store, exposing him to a lot of new music, but funk and rock were favourites. "Basically I'm a heavy metal guitarist, but I do have funk origins, anywhere from Bootsy Collins to Linda Lovell." These days he listens to Gary Moore, Tony McAlpine, the Reddings and plenty of Prince. "We all listen to a lot of Prince," says Ryan.

Simon spent time listening to the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones. His first record was *Cosmo's Factory* by Creedence Clearwater Revival. He also like blues and reggae. "Then I started listening to club music when I started playing in clubs: Parliament, Kool and the Gang, James Brown — I've always liked soul — Marvin Gaye was a big influence."

Betty "didn't have a record player until I met Ryan — I was 16 and I'd never bought a record." She listened to the radio and says she would sing along with anything, commercials ... "Singalong songs," interjects Ryan, and they both laugh. This is how she learnt to sing, says Betty. Australian Renee Geyer was also an early influence, "especially coming from this part of the world. The female singer in Mtume influenced me a lot in the last two years — she's so relaxed, no fancy scales."

Ryan says he and Betty listen to a lot of electrofunk, especially Jimmy Jam's productions.

"We're funkmen," says J D.

Betty: "Funkateers."

Ryan: "A bop band."

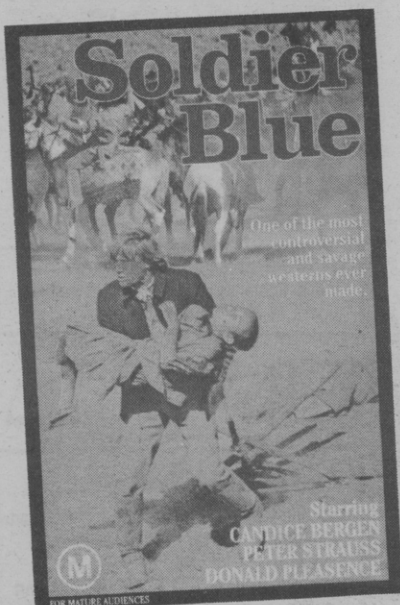
Betty: "Disco bunnies ... are you writing this down? Say 'They chuckled' or something, so people don't think we're serious."

Jewel Sanyo

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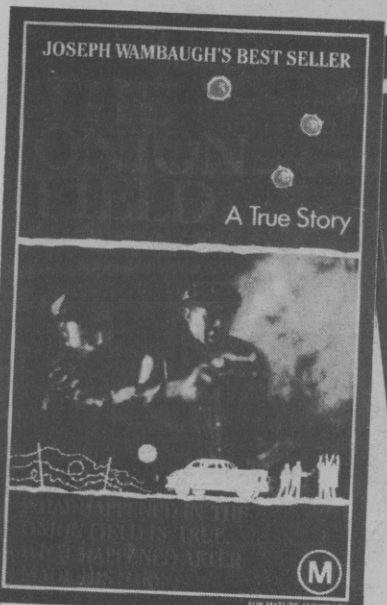
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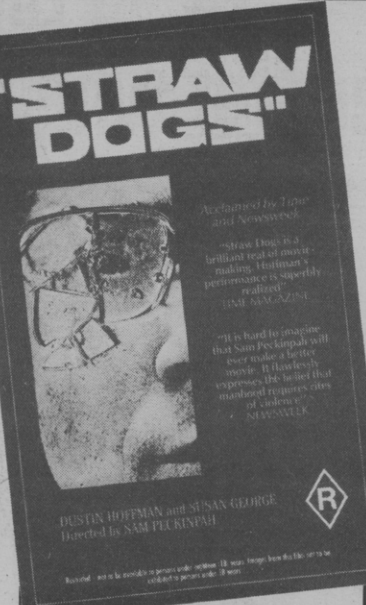
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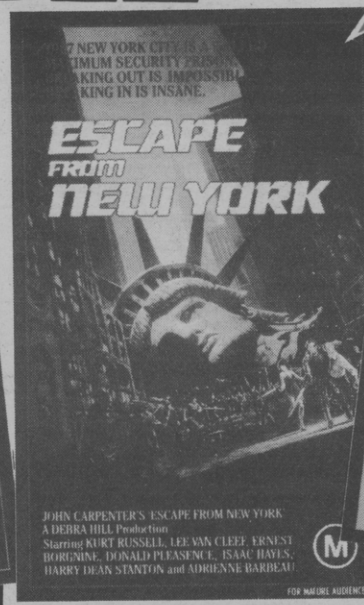
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