

## RIP IT UP • 10 YEARS ON

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was Propeller's (eventually crippling) shift from singles to albums, and, that age-old problem, "No innovative young bands are coming through because there are no underage venues," said Propeller's Simon Grigg. "The Auckland music scene will be in a sorry state by later this year if no inventive bands emerge."

The answer conveniently arrives at the next issue (May '82): a South Island special with the Clean on the cover. "Auckland is very quiet," said Doug Hood. "There are one or two interesting younger bands but it seems to be very stagnant. Whereas it seems to be the opposite in the South Island. It seems to be thriving, it's great." With the now-legendary TEAC, Hood and Chris Knox had just recorded the four-band Dunedin double EP. "For the Clean," wrote Michael Higgins, "the Enemy are the past in Dunedin. They got things moving. Other exports, Mother Goose and the Knobz, are embarrassments and best left unmentioned."

*Rip It Up* was now five years old; Herbs' 'French Letter' and the Dance Exponents' 'Victoria' were released, and Russell Brown made his entrance reviewing a Clean/Exponents double bill: "The Clean are not entertainers, they play pop music without smiling. The Dance Exponents are entertainers. Rock and roll clichés sit under them like platform heels. They could step down from them and still be the Dance Exponents."

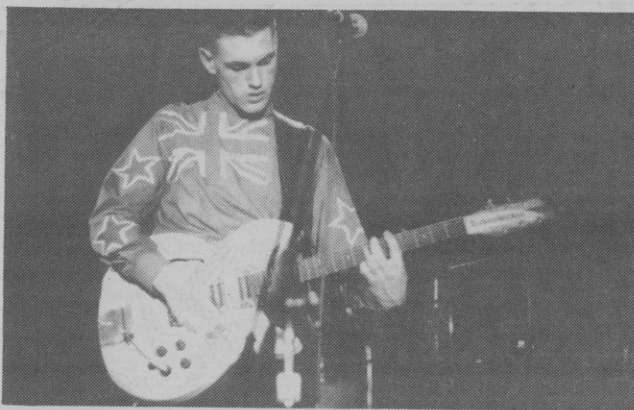
Longevity, said Eddie Raynor and Andy Narc in *RIU* 60, was the key; Split Enz were on that cover, and Graham Brazier and Harry Lyon, making a comeback as the Legionnaires, on the next. The Certain Bar disco was attracting Auckland's new romantics; there were still two dozen major local bands for Sweetwaters '83. Murray Cammick, reviewing the Tall Dwarfs' 'Louie ...' said "Chris Knox is doing more with four tracks than those with 20 more," but letter-writer David Cohen didn't agree: "Chris Knox is to the arts what cannibalism is to missionary work."

Whereas once *Rip It Up* had to make do with cover stories from press conference interviews, or worse, cut and paste essays, now

it was offered exclusives: Marianne Faithfull, Joni Mitchell, Malcolm McLaren, Talking Heads. Locally, people began to talk about capturing a "New Zealand sound" — "In a year of much talk of indigeneous music and Pacific culture, Diatribe and Herbs pay more than lip service." George Kay awarded 1983's "Best Con" as "A tie between the Narcs, Auckland Walk, all Wellington bands (except the Pelicans), Coconut Rough, Legionnaires." 'Arry awarded Russell Brown, who in 12 months had made quite an impact, the "Special I Brought Foot and Mouth from Timaru to Auckland Shield."

By 1984 the touring circuit had stagnated and the Party Boys introduced a safe concept that was to be well-milked in the coming years by the likes of the Kuitze Band: old faces, old songs. But Looney Tours mounted an ambitious "End of the World Before it Happens" package tour with the Chills, Children's Hour, the Double Happys and Expendables. Also, New Zealand had its two biggest pop idols since the 60s; 3000 people attended the Dance Exponents' "farewell" show at Logan Campbell with the Mockers.

The issue I feel *Rip It Up* can be proudest of came out that December, after the Aotea Square debacle. With just three days till the magazine went to press, and with a severe hangover, Russell Brown produced the most objective,



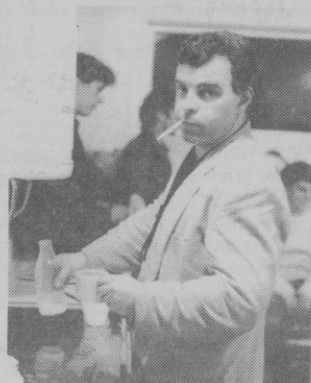
Phil (or Bud ...) Judd, Swingers.



Fagan in furs, 1984.

honest account of the evening when police and punter ran riot. While other papers hysterically looked for sociological causes, *RIU* printed a half-page photo by Bryan Staff of a peaceful crowd, taken the moment the police moved in.

In "Famous Last Words" a transcript taken from a Walkman recording (by Los Angeles' NZ music fan Ron Kane) of the



Smoko for Rick Bryant, 1983.

concert gave a gripping account of the run of events: Dave Dobbyn will regret one sentence he uttered at Aotea Square for the rest of his life. 'I wish those riot squad guys would stop wanking and put their little batons away.' He then tried to encourage the crowd to ignore the disturbance at the back, and keep on enjoying the music. When the music was stopped,

4 5 s

Dunedin Double EP: Stones, Chills, Sneaky Feelings, Verlaines (Flying Nun)

By recording these bands in Christchurch in April, Chris Knox and Doug Hood have achieved as much if not more on four track as any recent NZ documentation. It's not perfect, the mixing is unsympathetic in parts, but it never sounds hollow.

Anyone who's familiar with early Lou/Velvets is going to feel right at home, because the same rhythm guitar approach can be traced throughout, although as a set the perspective is more optimistic. There are also snatches of Syd Barrett, sixties' snake skin boots intact.

The Verlaines use pace/rhythm changes effectively for 'Angela', and for their fine 'boy hurt by love' song 'Crisis After Crisis':

Don't think that you're the great reason  
Why I've got my guts in a vice.

But unlike 'Crisis' the vocals in the solemn 'You Cheat Yourself of Everything That Moves' are way back and sound strained.

Best for the Stones is 'See Red' (not Enz song) and 'Surf's Up' which is not unlike the Kinks' 'All Day and All of the Night'. It contains gruff surf harmonies in a rib dig at surfies, complete with plaintive "I can't even ride this thing," and nice little verbal fade out. 'Down and Around' and 'Something New' lack strong vocals.

Sneaky Feelings start with the slow 'Pity's Sake' then move into the uptempo 'There's a Chance' with a catchy chorus. Last is 'Backroom'. Painful.

The Chills have the best songs, though opener 'Kaleidoscope World' is too sweet for this tooth. But 'Satin Doll' works in its simplicity, and 'Frantic Drift' is just that. Martin Phillipps is an inspired lyricist.

There's both strong and weak material on this compilation. Dissatisfied with your local climate? Try some cool Dunedin air. AnnLouise Martin



Martin Phillipps, 1982.

people turned around and noticed the riot police — and a little disturbance turned into a riot.

"The whole sorry incident could have been avoided in one way by, as has been suggested, the banning of alcohol at the concert. But to many who were there the disorder would not have escalated if police conduct had been sensitive and appropriate to the overwhelmingly peaceful mood of the concert. Coming up the middle of Queen St and assembling across the main exit from the square was akin to setting themselves up as pins in a bowling alley. Some of the crowd simply took up the challenge."

The writers' favourite local records that year were the Verlaines' '10 O'Clock ...' Chills' 'Pink Frost' and Herbs' 'Long Ago.' Auckland alternative bands were

taking initiatives to dispute "the only place where anything is really happening is Dunedin syndrome," wrote Russell. "Some of these bands are really happening — they just need to be taken seriously." "Those Who Are In It For The Money," he said, were beginning to take an interest in the Chills.

Eighteen months on from the 100th issue, the perennial difficulties still face local music: lack of venues, alternative and underage; a general public who seem disinterested in New Zealand music, or condescending, thanks to an unsupportive radio; and few innovative young bands emerging. Nevertheless, despite the ebbs and flows since '77, there's plenty to be positive about — international success is beginning to happen through Crowded House, Dave Dobbyn, the Chills and Flying Nun's export strategy, radio shows some signs of discovering local music, and hopefully a flow-on effect will stimulate the young musician. There's no "movement," as such, but plenty of movement.

"Being in a band" is still a helluva good thing," wrote Russell Brown in 1985, "like the modern day equivalent of running off to join the circus. And when you set your sights on the stars and then begin to make some progress towards them, it's an adventure."

For 10 years *Rip It Up* has been part of that adventure. ●

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