

LIVE

wellington zone

The best thing about Wellington music is that it isn't dominated by one sound — there's a strong diversity, from soul, to hardcore, to country. Here are some of the acts seen last month at the Cricketers' Steinnie Club.

Putty in Her Hands — this six piece band is definitely an act to catch live. The vocals are tremendous, with strong expressive voices declaring each note with assuredness and cool intent. Bowie's 'Repetition' is given a great revamp, while the band's own originals stand up. 'Lemon Daze' and 'Dreams' are superb, the latter enhanced by a soaring sax solo.

The Laundrettes — high speed, energetic funk spirals upward. A stage act somewhat reminiscent of the Backdoor Blues Band is their trademark. The hats clutter and with humour aside, I wonder if this band means business. More music, please, less act!

The Ranchsliders — a Wellington-based four-piece who excel in C&W with an off-beat sense of humour. Check out songs like 'Your Cheating Heart' and 'Suffocate' ('She's packing her bags/she's packing a sad /It's a bit on the nose.') One of the few bands I've seen in recent memory to utilise the old tea chest bass, and boy it's used effectively. Quirky guitar lines cut through each song — this band belongs in *Repo Man*'s land and to top it all an old English ballad finishes it off in rolling country style: 'I am the anti-Christ ... I wanna be anarchy'

... **The Holidaymakers** — this band is getting better and better with each

performance. Their sets devote more time to original material and one can sense that this band is destined for greater things. A message to record is one thing we should all pass on. A larger stage allows them to fit on with no overspill. With the larger space comes more sensitivity as the songs themselves are allowed to develop and find the spaces in between. A soul sound coming from the capital city. It's here and it's more than welcome.

Tim Byrne

The Spines Cricketers, July 29

The whine of the singer's voice mixes with staccato six-string gunfire — this band sure knows how to up tempo as chords flash through a finger blur of right hand flick and twist. The foundations here are jazz-rock, but there are almost strains of folk-rock which blur the edges. The front person is Jon McLeary, an artist and musician of considerable talent. He's an excellent lyricist, words paint pictures of scenes, parties, dreams, while looking at typical themes — love, hope, despair. His voice conveys a street image, hardened through experience.

This band feels their way through the music, the ubiquitous Ross Burge on drums, Wendy Calder on bass, and Neil "Toots" Duncan with assorted saxophones. All are fine musicians, each with the sensibility to create texture and give air to the songs. Their new album is soon to be available, and judging by this performance, it should do well: listen for it. Several songs are worth special mention: 'Minus Woman' (where the bassplayer is absent) is a driving, forceful song; 'I Wish You Well' has a spiced-up beat that struts along with a Beatles radiance; and 'You Seem to Be Happy,' with its spacey feel and jinky rhythms.

The only way from here is up!
Tim Byrne

WALLS SURROUNDING ME

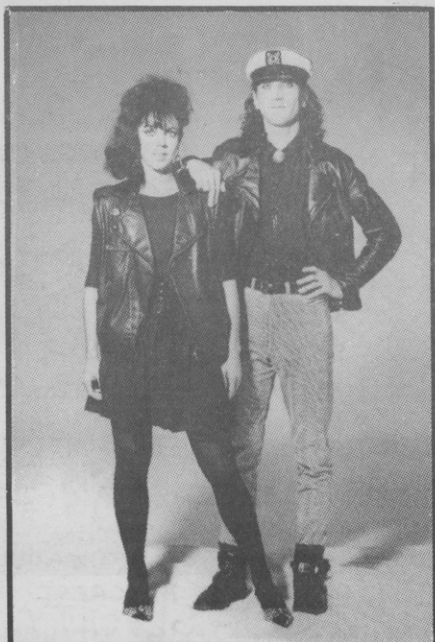
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