

Lean On E

Having Palmerston North as a home town would be seen as a major handicap in some people's eyes, but it hasn't prevented Three Leaning Men from releasing a professional first album and video.

In Auckland recently playing a couple of gigs, Three Leaning Men admit that coming from Manawatu doesn't rate too highly in the credibility stakes.

"When we come to a city like Auckland to play, people tend to think we're just a bunch of country hicks," says guitarist Lindsay Gregg. "That's why it's so important that people have already heard of us and our music, or only about 20 people would turn up."

The four "Leanies," as they're locally dubbed, take a professional attitude to the presentation of their music. Their album *Fun in the Key of E*, brought out on Meltdown Records, is well-produced, with an intriguing cover by Fane Flaws and accompanied by an impressive press kit.

So do the Leanies take their music seriously?

"We try to be as tight and professional as possible when we

play, but we're doing it mainly to have a good time and for the audience to as well," says Lindsay. "We like doing fun things. We're not angry young men. I think it's quite funny when people walk around being angry with snarls on their faces. It must be a youth thing. We like a goodtime."

Chirpy

This attitude is reflected in the band's chirpy tunes and mild-mannered sound, which some could describe as watered-down Go Betweens.

"Yeah our record has already been called wimpy," admits singer/guitarist Greg Malcolm-Boelee. "But that's just the easy way out for people who can't be bothered listening to it properly."

"We could always put some anti-Christ symbols on the next record cover to shut them up," he suggests.

"Yeah, and I could buy some Black Mask symbols for a more demonic look," adds drummer Nigel Corbett.

"Whoever calls us wimpy should go and see us live and they'd change their minds," says bassist Alan Gregg, formerly of the Remarkables. "We sound different live — rawer. I think a band's live sound should be different from the record. I like the way you can hear all the instruments on our record."

They're pleased with the sound quality of the record, which was recorded at Palmerston North's 16-track Dolphin Studio, and mixed at Marmalade in Wellington.

Catalyst behind organising the band is Mr Meltdown Peter Shepherd, who had forsaken this interview to go and watch rugby. I'm sure no Wellington band would admit having such a politically unsound manager, but then the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Fall Guys



For anyone who had All Fall Down numbered as just another Christchurch band, the release of their debut EP *My Brand New Wallpaper Coat* is going to come as rather a sharp shock.

While All Fall Down have been in existence for about four years, there had only been a well-received track on the patchy *Weird Culture*, *Weird Custom* compilation to serve as any indication of what the band were about. Now out on Flying Nun, *My Brand New Wallpaper Coat* contains six distinctive and intelligent pop songs which fill out the picture.

All Fall Down's apparent longevity is, however, misleading. They first emerged in 1983 as a high school band, but only Blair Parkes (guitar, vocals) and Campbell Taylor (bass) remain from those days. Esther McNaughton (violin) joined in 1984, and the present lineup gelled with the arrival of former Ballon D'Essai member Stephen McIntyre (guitar, vocals) and drummer Brett Aldridge in 1986.

Wallpaper will doubtless earn a place in train-spotter folklore as the first record to bear a generic Flying Nun label, but it was in fact self-financed. "There is a New Zealand tradition," says Parkes, "of waiting for other people to do

things for you. But unless you make a move nothing ever gets done. Nobody does it for you."

The 30 hours of recording at Christchurch's eight-track Audio Access studios have been the catalyst for a maturing in the band's musical outlook. Says Esther, "Before we just used to play, but now we really think about where we put things in our music, and that makes a hell of a difference!" *Wallpaper* is very much a studio record, but gaining in depth for that — and the band are very pleased with the results.

All Fall Down are unashamedly 60s influenced but the suggestion of revivalism draws a sharp response. "There is a strong sense of the 60s in the music," says McIntyre, "But it's not just a re-hash of that. It's a 60s sense of melody combined with an 80s pop sensibility."

Says Parkes, "Melody is the main thing, melody without twee-ness." And they have no desire to be lumped in with other bands mining a 60s vein, particularly Australian outfits. There are dark

mutterings in particular about the Stems and Huxton Creepers.

In their evidence All Fall Down can cite their lyrics. There is certainly nothing throwaway about them. "We don't write dumb trashy lyrics," says McIntyre, "things are written because they mean something." He and Blair Parkes are the principal writers and both write very personally and at times darkly. Alienation, despair, suicide and the passing of childhood are prominent themes, and the record's more upbeat moments are more often musical rather than lyrical.

Not that this necessarily amounts to gratuitous misery. "These are not world-view lyrics," says Parkes, "they're about the person who wrote them." And this is a band whose darkest moments are firmly tongue-in-cheek. A song called 'Sickness,' described as really over the top, was composed as an antidote to the Cure.

In many ways *My Brand New Wallpaper Coat* is a temporary point of arrival rather than departure for All Fall Down. They are keen to re-work their other songs in the light of the lessons learnt, with another record in mind. In the immediate future however is a trip to Auckland for several live gigs in early October.

Michael Higgins



GROOVY Real RECORDS

IMPORTS, SKA, PUNK, ROCK & ROLL, JAZZ, BLUES, REGGAE, CLASSICAL, SOUL, R & B, WESTERN, AND EVERYTHING ELSE.

Buy, Sell and Trade

Real Groovy Records, 492 Queen St, Ph 775-870
Late night Thursday and Friday, Open Saturday.