

RUMOURS

Auckland
Simon Lynch, longtime keyboard whiz for **Ardijah**, is another dedicated member of the band to leave in recent months ... **Herbs and Rhythm Cage** are filming an *RWP* special at the Galaxy on Thursday, Nov 11 ... on Friday Nov 20 the year's final HM special will take place at the Galaxy, with **Fat Sally** up from Christchurch, and locals **Mantra** and **Confessor**.
Rhythm Cage stole the show at **Pagan Records** party at Wildlife with an acoustic set, playing their 'Freeze City' and an acapella version of Elvis's 'Return to Sender,' among others. Also starring were the **Warratahs**, Pagan's first No 1 act **Tex Pistol**, who sang Joe Ely's 'I Keep My Fingernails Long (So They Click When I Play the Piano),' and **Shona Laing**. **Ray Columbus** appeared in a speaking role. **Pop Mechanix**, under the working title of **Big Rehearsal**, begin gigs at the Wildlife this month. New member is **Peter Warren** ... keyboardist **Murray Hancox** has his debut album *Just for the Record* out on Ode ... also on Ode soon is **Chris & Lynne Thompson Live**, recorded by Radio NZ ... **Margaret Ulrich** signed a solo deal with CBS last month ... **Dave Dobbyn** won the 1987 Apra Silver Scroll for 'You Oughta Be in Love' ... the **Warners** LP has been recorded, and should be out next month.
Chris Bourke

Wellington
The **Rock Theatre** has closed down again as a live venue after noise problems and high overheads ... the **Wild Poppies** have split with part of the band in Wellington and part in London. An overseas reunion is planned and their last single 'Where is Wellington/Stare at the Sun' is getting a lot of local airplay ... **Nazgul** have a new bass player and lead guitarist, and will tour south with **No 9** ... **Wazzo Ghoti** continue to use stand-in drummers as Joe's health improves after the July assault. They have an excellent demo tape circulating. Look for an LP early Feb ... the **Ranchsliders** and the **Cattlebirds** are recording at Wriihe.

The **Gordons** look set to reform and record in the wake of a **Skeptics** split ... **Neil Jones and the Heaters** are standing in for the **Warratahs** at the Cricketers as the Warratahs, with their single in the charts, are spot touring the country. Their album is currently being pressed in Australia. Congrats to Pagan stablemate **Tex Pistol** and backing vocalist **Callie Blood** for reaching No 1 just before 'The Game of Love' vinyl ran out ... new band **Ga Ga** recently debuted after nine months rehearsal ... new hard rock band **Xenon** hae been recording demos and are supporting on the suburban circuit ... despite what *BiFim* might say, **Chicago Smoke Shop** are *not* known as **Smokestack Lighting**.

The **Backdoor Blues Band**, now known as **Naked City**, will return for a pre-Xmas tour with new Australian drummer ... new studio **Rock Solid** will record free of charge if the material is accepted by their publishing company ... **Bill Lake and the Living Daylights** have their LP *A Bop in the Ocean*, out this month on Eelman through Jayrem. The album was recorded virtually live in the studio at Marmalade ... with EMI having refused to press **Skank Attack**'s new single, the material will probably surface on thier debut album. They'll play with **Hunters & Collectors** on Nov 23.

The **National Student Radio Compilation** selection panel received over 130 demo taps for consideration. The unofficial selection is the Benders, Ranchsliders, Cattlebirds, Tarter Brown, Neil Jones and the Heaters, En Can Ma, Prodigies, Screaming Pope, Shine, Fish for Life, Riflemen plus a short list of reserves. Each band will re-record later in the year for a March '88 release ... local bands to make the Wellington finals of the **Battle of the Bands** were the **Holidaymakers**, **Kaihana**, **Craw-billy Creeps** and the **Quiet**, with **Cattlebirds** and the **Laundrettes** going through to the national final.
John Pilleay

Christchurch
Passage Tapes have been busy with releases by **Hiding from Stan** and **Patchamama** due out soon. They recently released **Indians 1926** and *Breaking Even* by **South Amerikan** ... and the another cassette distributor **Blue Factory** are producing a monthly newsletter *Sloth Cloth*

Bits 'n' pieces: Floyd has left **Mea Culpa** ... **Worlds Apart** have "gone underground" for five years ... **Flying Nun** report that the **Sneaky Feelings** tour of Europe is going well ... in the gone-but-not-forgotten department, the **Pedestrians** have been offered a recording deal from Germany and new semi-resident band

at the Playroom is Peter Kearns' **Atomic**.

Overall winners in the national **Battle of the Bands** was Christchurch's **Eklectic Club**, with **Big Game Hunters** coming third equal: that must say something for Christchurch bands! But this month's big question is, if Christchurch is still producing the best bands, why are our top two studios in jeopardy and our only venue for original bands closing its doors?

John Greenfield

Dunedin
After many ups and downs the **Chippendale House** venue is sadly closing up, but the collective will continue on. **Straitjacket Fits** and the **Bats** both recently had good weekends there ... **Saltwaters** is an open air concert to be held at Riverton on Nov 22, to raise money for a school pool. Taking part are **National Collection**, **Spaghettis**, **Jim's Live Deer Recovery**, **Sierra**, **Live Wire**, **Splinter**, **Pioneer Scroggin Bush Band** ... the **Battle of the Bands** came and went with a puff of grey smoke and the bands winning the two Dunedin heats were **Cactus Club** and **Doug the Warlock**. **Jim's Live Deer Recovery** cleaned up the Invercargill heat ... **Tonikim Nervus** have a live cassette out.

Look Blue Go Purple have a breakup gig planned ... **Let's Get Naked**'s 'Funky Dunedin' video suffered a major disappointment after being turned down by *RWP* due to "violence" ... welcome **Collin**, upon returning to Dunedin from the **Bad Eggs** in Sydney ... **Pink Polyester** have recently recorded a cassette of all their best songs; it's available from the second hand record shop ... **Tin Can Dread** are taking a three-month break ... the **Southland Community College** will be operating a radio station out of Invercargill aimed at the 15-29 audience from Nov 28, six days a week on 99 mhz from 3.00pm to 8.00pm.
Sharon Guytonbeck

UK & USA
From RB in the UK: **Sneaky Feelings** are by now well into their debut European tour, which began with a low-key set with the **Chills** in Bristol, Belgian, Dutch and German dates were to follow. One of the locals at Bristol called out for 'The Strange and Conflicting Feelings of Separation and Betrayal' — "Unfortunately, we don't play that one any more," **David Pine** told the out-of-breath punter ... the **Verlaines** compilation *Juvenilia* is showing up on college charts around the USA ... the **Chills' Brave Words** entered the MRIB charts at No 12. The CD of the album has just been manufactured in Germany ... **Sonya Waters** has been subject of the whims of rock stardom and is no longer with the **Woodentops**.

Jordan Luck strode the boards for the first time in England with a pick-up band that had formed to back up **Jayne County**. Jayne arrived with her own band, so the group wanted a singer to play a few gigs before dispersing. With the arrival of **Brian Jones**, all the Exponents are now in England ... NZer **David Swift** has left the *NME* to work with new technology at a Nottingham newspaper.

Crowded House won best new artists at the US MTV awards, **Paul Hester** dropped his trousers, **Aerosmith** refused to play 'Walk this Way' with **Run DMC**, while **Prince** stayed in his trailer throughout. He emerged at 2am to give a two-and-a-half hour set with his new 10-piece band.

Lou Reed joined **Duran Duran** on stage for 'Walk on the Wild Side' at a NY charity gig recently ... **Larry Blackmon of Cameo** has been recording with **Eddie Murphy** and, in a separate session, **Miles Davis** ... **Bob Dylan**, **Bruce Springsteen** and **U2** will all record a **Woody Guthrie** song for an LP to benefit the Smithsonian Institute ... **Eddie Kendricks** and **David Ruffin**, key early **Temptations**, have recorded an album together.

Springsteen will have earned USD \$56 million for the 24 months up to this December 31, says *Forbes* business mag ... last year, the US record industry released 2345 albums, with only 15 percent making money ... **Roy Orbison** has re-recorded 'Crying' with **K D Lang** ... next single for **UB40** is a **Michael Jackson** cover, 'Maybe Tomorrow' ... **Cher** has entered the studio, to record, with **Jon Bon Jovi** ... **Diana Ross** was filmed from the waist up for her 'Shock Waves' video recently. The reason? Days later she gave birth to a son.

film

PERSONAL SERVICES

Director: Terry Jones

I'd seen the trailer a number of times, with Terry Jones doing his wink-and-nudge act and Julie Walters preening herself in a skin-tight jumpsuit. With the director's Monty Python background and associations, there seemed good reason for looking forward to his new film, loosely based on the career of Madam Cyn, one of the most celebrated London madams of the 70s.

It's a promising subject — a chance to look at the phenomenon of Anglo-Saxon puritanism as well as the sexual politics implicit in the "oldest profession." Unfortunately, this is a challenge that Jones doesn't really manage to meet.

A running banter of smutty dialogue soon becomes tiresome and *Personal Services* isn't much of an advance on the old *Carry On* films in this department. The deeper political issue is one that is barely addressed, although it is touched on in a few scenes.



One is an amazing confrontation between Walters and her father in a field after her sister's wedding, a scene in which Walters reveals the deep-rooted bitterness at the heart of thei relationship. In a neat directorial touch, Jones uses longish takes with a telling waver of hand-held camera at a climactic point. The other instance is much more crudely manipulated. This is the final scene in which a smirking Walters faces a courtroom made up entirely, from judge to jury, of her past customers.

It is strange too that the relationship between Julie Walters and her son, whose very existence seems symbolic of her self-resolution and independence, is hardly developed at all. But even in a film which has so many flagrantly ignored opportunities, there are some memorable moments: Shirley Stelfox's crackling performance as Walters's more experienced friend, running through a gamut of characters from "matron" to "lesbian schoolgirl" in the course of her work, and an amusingly deadpan performance by Danny Schiller as Dolly, a Dandy Nichols in drag.
William Dart

GOTHIC

Director: Ken Russell

"It is an age of dreams and nightmares and we are merely the children of the age," intones Gabriel Byrne's Lord Byron to his party guests as they stage their own Walpurgisnacht in a villa on the shore of Lake Geneva. In his first film since *Crimes of Passion*, Russell returns to the sensationalistic rewriting of history that made his name back in the late 60s.

Byron then is ringmaster in this psychological circus, as Shelley, Mary Godwin, her half-sister, and Doctor John Polidari—with the aid of alcohol, laudanum and the odd seance or two

— live out their fantasies, creating the ferment that would give birth to two classic Gothic novels, Polidari's *The Vampire* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. With much running through ancestral corridors, billowing drapery, and twitches of madness, the scene is set — something like an *Evil Dead Part 2* with literary pretensions.

There's an alarming inconsistency to the tone of Russell's new film. There are inspired moments, such as the striking use of mechanical life-size dolls at various points in the movie, but there are also too many special effects that seemed to have strayed in from your average video nasty (assorted monsters, as well as a scene in which a ghost's helmet is pulled up to reveal a face full of seething worms). His players are nothing if not energetic, especially Myriam Cyr's Claire, and Timothy Spall from *Auf Wiedersehen Pet* tackles the role of Polidari with a relish worth of Max Adrian.

But this is not enough in the final count. The material is possibly too fragile for sustaining as a film, and Russell's conclusion, with present-day tourists milling around the villa, and the director providing the biographical wind-up on the characters, seems to admit this.

William Dart

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