

down to the driver. With greater swings on the controls, it's down to the individual."

Argument

One continuing argument about amps is the valve versus transistor debate — all Marshalls still have valves. Jim Marshall says you can't get the same sound from a transistor that you get from a valve, because a valve generates harmonics. "A valve distorts with a rounder, smoother sound," says Bran. "A transistor distorts more harshly, like an organ. On a six-string guitar that's a more offensive sound. In the Marshall combo amps, which include transistors, we have to build the distortion in."

For bass guitars, however, Bran says "you can't beat modern technology — as long as the amps are

run clean, with plenty of power. But Motorhead will never change. They'll always have six valve heads on stage, all on 10."

Since 1981 Jim Marshall has once again been distributing his amps worldwide himself. For 15 years, a distribution deal meant Marshall amps were hard to find, and expensive, but now with less markup they're becoming more available and cheaper.

Whenever international hard rock groups tour Britain, they make a pilgrimage to the Milton Keynes factory, and get their gear checked. But despite the legend that has built up around the amps, they've never given them away to groups in return for endorsements. "If we gave them away to the top groups, someone's got to pay, and it'd be the kids."

"When I saw groups on television

with Marshall stacks behind them, I knew we'd made it," says Marshall. "Plus, seeing Hendrix on stage with my old drumming pupil Mitch Mitchell. [James Marshall] Hendrix loved the fact our names were the same."

Chris Bourke

VIDEO

Girl Groups: the Story of a Sound (CEL)

Based on Alan Betrock's authoritative book, this is the best visual history of the glory that was Girl Group. All the best are featured, from the influential Frankie Lyman in a '64 clip doing 'Why Do Fools Fall in Love?', the Shirelles hit 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?',

the Crystals, Ronettes, Darlene Love, the rise of Motown, everything you ever wanted and more.

Born in the new Camelot of the Kennedy administration, optimism flourished and the Brill Building churned out the hits. Add to this the presence of boy geniuses like Shadow Morton, moulding punks from Brooklyn into the dream team called the Shangri Las. Let's not forget Crazy Phil Spector, the Wagner of youth music, mad, bad and dangerous, presented in this video as a dark image in sunglasses — as Tom Wolfe called him, the Tycoon of Teen.

Best bits are the great historical footage, we see Diana Ross with the most outrageous hairdos — like a creature from some 50s monster movie she looms, intoning 'Baby Love.' Also a bit of cultural truth. With the rise of British music (the Beatles)

the death knell sounded for black rock 'n' roll. The girl groups stopped, the songwriting teams like Leiber and Stoller hit the dirt.

Sad, sad, sad, but this video is essential for those who love black rock 'n' roll. The Ronettes are the coolest, but just look at those white girls the Shangri Las performing 'Give Him a Great Big Kiss' — now that's class.

This will be on sale soon — buy it and love it.

Kerry Buchanan

RUMOURS

North

Ardijah's new keyboardist is Barbara Griffen from Wellington's Holidaymakers. They've also added Neville Schwabe on sax, trumpet, flute and percussion. Ardijah's only Auckland gig for some time is at the Forge, Papakura, on Dec 13. Their album's about to go gold, and 'Time Makes a Wine' is being played on Aus MTV.

The Patea Maori Club album is finally out, on cassette this month, with the LP and CD being released the day they appear at Neon Picnic, just before Johnny Clegg, on Friday. Kara Pewhairangi and Moana will appear with them. (Aotearoa are also on that night.) The PMC have postponed their Australian tour, as they were refused work permits in Queensland when Actor's Equity complained about their use of backing tapes.

The Bats have a track 'Block of Wood' from the Glasgow sessions (not on their forthcoming (?) album) on a UK compilation on Shelter called Let's Try Another Idea ... Bill Dreen is a "withered wintery twig of his former self" following the disappearance of the Bread and Board master tapes in post. He's decided against changing his label's name to "South Undies," and reports 'Iceberg' and 'What Shall We Eat' has been playlisted on four US campus stations. South Indies have a 30 min Soluble Fish video available for \$15 (Box 7151, Wgton Sth).

Acts on the second national Student Radio Compilation are: the Benders, Ranchsliders, Cattlebirds, En Can MA, Taste Barons, the Claps, Neil Jones, the Prodigies, Screaming Pope, Shine, Fish for Life, Rifle-men, Naughty America ... Golden Harvest are putting out a single in Aus ... the just re-opened indepen-

dant Bridgeway Theatre in Northcote would like to hear from people interested in putting on live theatre or cabaret. Ph 418-3308 ... a songwriting seminar is being held in Auckland on Dec 19 & 20, with a teacher from the US, K A Parker who has written for Motown. Covering all aspects of songwriting, from rhyme, meter, lyrics and copyright, the two-day six-hour seminars are \$50, assisted by the NZ Composers Foundation. Contact Ginny Peters at 834-4444.

Chris Bourke

LIVE

Michael Jackson Sydney, November 20

I've maintained for some time that, as I was unlikely to ever have to socialise with Michael Jackson, his personal habits and idiosyncrasies are unimportant. His song and dance routines are all that's relevant to most of us.

That may be as far as his recorded efforts go, but confronted with the live performance, the man proves to live his media role so well that it is impossible to ignore.

All the expected genius shone through, the incredible voice, the dancing with a capital D. Lowered to the stage on a hydraulic platform, he proceeded to dazzle his adoring audience of 35,000 with 'Gotta Be Starting Something' and continued with barely a pause through 'The Way You Make Me Feel' and several more frantic numbers before dissolving into tears for 'She's Out of My Life.' 'Billy Jean,' 'Beat It,' 'Thriller,' they were all there, and the crowd loved it ... on cue.

The only technical flaw to be picked was a muddy sound. The lights, the musicians, the backup singers and dancers, all were perfect. Too perfect. Two hours of very contrived magic tricks, video-clip wardrobe (yes, the white glove did appear), laser dynamics and at least two or three faultless endings to every song. Oh yes — and via giant video screens, lots of closeups of the famous, expensive face.

Good? Yes. A thriller? No. Lacking all spontaneity, it seemed to miss the whole point of what a live concert is all about. At \$36 per ticket, you might as well buy the video.

Gini Goode



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Thanks to all who contributed to the outstanding success of our debut album, which has now achieved gold status through sales within New Zealand.

GET FUNKED IN THE FLESH!

Wed Dec 16 — West Town, New Plymouth

Thurs Dec 17 — Barristers, Wanganui

Fri & Sat Dec 18 & 19 — Cricketers, Wellington

Sun Dec 20 — Club Exchequer, Palmerston Nth.

Sat Dec 26 — Whangamata Community Centre

Sun Dec 27 — Whakatane Recreation Centre

Mon Dec 28 — Taupo War Memorial Hall

Wed Dec 30 — Napier Municipal Theatre

Thurs Dec 31 — Gisborne Sound Shell

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THE Backdoor Blues Band



DIRECT FROM AUSTRALIA

Whangarei - Dec 17, 18, 19 Pips & Tutukaka

Hamilton - Dec 21 Metropole

Hastings - Dec 22 Vidals

Napier - Dec 23 Shakespeare Inn

Gisborne - Dec 24 Sandown

Whakatane - Dec 26 Commercial

Mt Maunganui - Dec 28 Soundshell

Rotorua - Dec 29 Hyatt

New Plymouth - Dec 30 Ngamotu

Auckland - Dec 31 Gluepot

South Island dates to follow