

Neon Picnic: Roy O! Jaaames Brown!

The lineup for the Neon Picnic festival next January has been boosted with the announcement of performances by the Godfather of Soul, James Brown, and Roy Orbison

They've been added to the list of major acts at the festival, to be held Pukekawa from January 29 to February 1. Also on the bill are Los Lobos, the Pogues, Bob Geldof, Johnny Clegg and Savuka, Nona Hendryx, with Chills and Sharon O'Neill heading the New Zealand contingent.

The Topp Twins will act as MCs, and other New Zealand acts to perform on the main stage include Aotearoa, Ardijah, Chicago Smoke Shop, Rhythm Cage, the Holidaymakers, Patea Maori Club (with Moana and Kara Pewhairangi), Dead Famous People, the Warratahs, When the Cat's Away, the Al Hunter Band, Rick Bryant and the Jive Bombers, the Bats and the Backdoor Blues Band.

Neon Picnic organiser Lindsay Mace doesn't rule out the possibility of other acts being added to the bill. "We can't promise any more," she says, "but we haven't closed the door."

Mace says this will be a "different, sophisticated" festival, aimed at a wide audience. "The

market was saturated with festivals in the early 80s, but is ready for another one. Festivals have a special magic, and ours is aimed at having a family/picnic atmosphere."

Among the changes promised for the festival, which will be held on the old Sweetwaters site at Pukekawa near the Waikato River, are a more varied range of food — "the diners demand more modern food, from ethnic to health foods. You can't live on hotdogs for three days." Also, that old festival bugbear, better toilet facilities will be provided. "There will be nothing like the number of long-drops, and far more portable toilets," says Mace. "We're going to take advantage of recent technological improvements."

All planning procedures have been okayed by the local council, and a liquor licence has been applied for. Planned is a huge "wet tent," plus a wine bar. One change from previous festival that will be applauded is that campers will now be able to pitch their tents

beside their cars.

Mace decided to plan a three-day festival — because of their "magic" — and because the setting-up costs are virtually the same as a one day event. The Neon Picnic will be active from 10am each morning to 4am the next day, (with jazz, films and cabaret till the early hours) finishing at 3pm Monday February 1st. Only local residents will be allowed day passes. Tickets, a slick credit card, are \$80 before Christmas, \$90 after.

The major acts for each evening are, Friday: Johnny Clegg, Bob Geldof, Roy Orbison. Saturday: Nona Hendryx, James Brown. Sunday: Pogues and Los Lobos.

Side FX

As with previous festivals, there will be another stage presenting alternative acts to the main event. They will range from bands, poets, films and clowns. There will be "theme" sessions, with women's or rockabilly bands, say, running together.

"The Side FX stage won't be amateurish," promises organiser Debbie Gibbs. "It's a lot more complex, so the production standards will be high." Gibbs says the stage will provide acts that complement

those on the main stage: "It's being programmed very carefully. Some of the main acts clash more than others — the Pogues, for instance. What do you put up against them? It can't be a blues or folk band. Maybe a funky pop band. It's much easier to find someone who complements Nona Hendryx."

Gibbs has a full programme of a wide range of acts. "Saying no to over 200 acts was heartbreaking."

RIU will feature more information on the Neon Picnic next issue.

Chris Bourke



Roy Orbison



James Brown

Former RIU writer David Taylor, in Washington working for the NZ Government, witnessed a James Brown show recently:

James Brown

Washington DC, July 17

James Brown is sharp. At the appointed hour his crack band, the Soul Generals, took the stage. They warmed the crowd for half an hour with a stirring soul brew be-

fore the Godfather was welcomed with the familiar chorus: "Jaaames Brown, Jaaames Brown ..."

Launching straight into 'Living in America,' JB began a set that lasted for two-and-a-half hours, covering songs from throughout his 30 year career. He shimmied to and fro, danced with members of the audience both on and off stage, and proved later in the show that he could still manage his trademark splits. He sang, played keyboards, even took a turn on drums and guitar, confirming as he worked up a sweat that he remains the hardest working man in the business.

In person Brown was far more satisfying than any of his recent records (most of which are pretty good), especially the live recordings. In part this was because his 14-piece band was relaxed, yet carefully orchestrated to get the maximum audience response. But mainly it reflected JB's ability to pick nuggets from his remarkable body of work and fuse them with his personal magnetism.

JB remains dynamic. He hasn't mellowed one bit. He plays hard, damn well, and is absolute entertainment.

David Taylor

Govt Boost Pacific Music

The Government have lent Warrior Records' Pacific Division \$130,000 to develop and promote musicians from the Pacific Islands.

On November 27 The Minister of Pacific Island Affairs, Richard Prebble, presented Warrior a cheque for \$70,000, the first installment of the loan. It will be used to fund a Pacific reggae compilation, the first in a series planned to represent the Pacific region, including Aotearoa.

Warrior have a lot of experience in the Islands, after tours from Herbs and releasing records by Dalvanus and the Patea Maori Club, Jean Gabilou of Tahiti, the Moana Fire Band of Tonga, and Herbs.

Some of the money will be used to help buy a MCI computerised desk, formerly from Harlequin Studios, for Mascot, plus a 24-track Otari MTR90. Also planned is a mobile recording facility. Mascot has offered 2000 hours to the recording programme.

Music Awards: The Winners

Dave Dobbyn and Herbs dominated the winner's podium at the 1987 NZ Music Awards held in Auckland on November 9. The winners were:

Single: 'You Oughta Be in Love,' Dave Dobbyn. **Album:** *Sensitive to a Smile*, Herbs. **Male Vocalist:** Dave Dobbyn. **Female Vocalist:** Shona Laing. **Top Group:** the Chills.

Most Promising Group: Bongo and Harwood. **Most Promising Male Vocalist:** Al Hunter. **Most Promising Female Vocalist:** Moana.

Jazz Record: *Open Door*, Mike Nock and Frank Gibson Jnr. **Country Record:** *Neon Cowboy*, Al Hunter. **Polynesian Record:** 'E

Papa,' Herbs. **Classical Record:** *Music to the Sun King*, Gillian Weir. **Folk Record:** *Bushes and Briars*, Beverley Young. **Gospel Record:** *Heartstrings*, Jules Riding. **Film Soundtrack:** *Footrot Flats*, Dave Dobbyn. **Cast Recording:** *Pirates of Penzance*.

Producer: Dave Dobbyn, *Footrot Flats*. **Engineer:** Ian Morris, *'The Game of Love.'* **Sleeve Design:** Philip Trustrum, *Songdance*. **Video:** Mattbox Films, *'Sensitive to a Smile.'*

Songwriter: Charlie Tumahai and Dilworth Karaka, *'Sensitive to a Smile.'* **Top International Performer:** Neil Finn. **Special Awards:** to singer Chris Thompson and long-serving EMI factory manager Frank Douglas.



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