

# ON TAPE

With the shutdown of the last pressing plant in the country, there's a new onus on cassette releases to become an increasingly important outlet for bands who would have otherwise released records themselves or on the smaller independent labels.

That's reflected in the professional approach to both recording by the Failsafe, Onset Offset, Passage and Blue Factory labels in Christchurch, South Indies in Wellington, Walking Monk in Auckland, and Maurice Priestley's Capture label in Gisborne, as well as the continued outpourings of the oddball likes of Steve McCabe's Sleek Bott label and Lower Hutt's Henry the International Atlas.

## Indies Capture Failsafe

Various Artists  
South (Failsafe)

South is a new compilation from Failsafe (PO Box 3003, Christchurch), a followup to their earlier release *Biding Our Time*. Fifteen local bands, recorded mostly at Rob's

Place, give us sometimes an indication of the darker side of Christchurch music, with the semi-industrial Lead Leg and That Petrol Emotion soundalikes Hiding From Stan. Also, lighter fare in the form of All Fall Down's 'Acted Blues' and 'Best Friend's Brain' from the Bats. A full-on Tall Dwarfs deliver 'Song of the Silents' in a live recording from their southern tour this year, and Jay Clarkson's Breathing Cage provide a well-recorded 'Raise the Glass.' I enjoy the first side a lot more than the second, but maybe that's just perverse. Listen to it all — a worthwhile purchase.

## Trephines Wall of Wairarapa (Sth Indies)

Bill Direen's South Indies label started out in Wellington releasing Direen projects, and other people's music on

vinyl. With a switch to tape comes a new release by the Trephines. A "12" cassette, *Wall of Wairarapa* is worth owning just for the accompanying lyric sheet and History of NZ Pop Music, a "120 volume, 12 billion page essay of portentous proportions by Troy Love Sculpture." Musically, Wall one's 'Turn Around Love Killing Blues' is Bats-like with cool organ, but 'Wellington' on the other side ain't so hot; sweet tho. *Wall of Wairarapa's* five songs are nicely produced by Golden Axel-Rod ("using the new Trephines-surround Dynamic Talent Enhancement System"). In the beginning was Ray Columbus, ahem, then came the Trephines. (South Indies, PO Box 7151, Wellington South).

## Various Artists Capture Compilation (Capture)

Most recording that gets done in Gisborne gets done in Maurice Priestley's Capture Studios. Priestley's released two previous compilations from Capture (*Fast Sides Always Get Played at Parties and Handle With Care*). *Capture Compilation '87* is a diverse compilation of a uniformly high recording standard. Once again, a fair slice of "contemporary rock" from the likes of Fast Forward (electro trickery), Rad Max and Handle With Care (stompin' 'All Funked Up'), offset by some blues from the Villains and a decent finish to the tape from the

Leathers (good musicians), the Wasp Factory (much needed energy) and a strangely normal interpretation of Elington's 'Callan's Caravan' from Pete Stewart and Neill Duncan. (Capture, PO Box 1231, Gisborne)

## Robert Cardy Lalaloosa (Sleek Bott)

Dunedin personality Robert Cardy's tape isn't considered by aficionados of the Cardy-sound to be his best, but it sure is interesting. Playing most of the instruments himself, Cardy takes us on a trip through weird soundscapes like 'Trouble' and 'Resident-stuff' 'Hindsight Scrambler.' The recording's a bit quiet in places, and I might've liked a bit more rock 'n' roll like side one's 'Playing With Ourselves' and the wonderful 'Do You Really Wanna Beat Me Up?', but it's cool. Cardy's new band Tonikon Nervus have put in a couple of excellent performances around town, playing raucous mutant R&B, recorded for posterity on tapes also available from Records Records, Dunedin, or, I suppose, McCabe the Sleek One himself. (\$7 from Sleek Bott, PO Box 2764, Chch).

## Onset Offset

Various Artists  
Krypton Hits 7 (Onset Offset)

Through his Onset Offset label, Campbell McClay has released records by the likes of the Brothers

Gorgonzola and the Primates, as well as a number of cassette-only releases. *Krypton Hits 7* is, you guessed it, number seven in an ongoing series of solid krypton compilations. It features three tracks only: 'Foaming Out' by Scorched Earth Policy, some sick (but enjoyable) minimalist rock 'n' roll in the form of Nick Slick's 'My Friends' and the Riptoids' 'Little Red Radio' which, rather than lose impact through the poor recording sound, gains some warped ambience from it. Weird. (\$3)

## Various Artists Off Our Shoulders (Onset Offset)

*Off Our Shoulders* is another Onset Offset compilation, this time featuring female artists. It's an enjoyable release with a clean, warmly acoustic sound throughout. Emma Peel (a band) contribute three strong songs with excellent vocals and lyrics, plus some engaging sax-playing. Sacred Sisters' 'Nice Men' is stridently ironic: "There are lots of nice men / who help their wives / with the shopping and the housework / now isn't that nice?" With only vocal harmonies and acoustic guitar accompaniment, Sacred Sisters reveal a genuine depth and commitment in their three songs, but also an ability (most evident in 'Chicken Shit' — "I got those poultry processing blues") to bring a sense of humour to their songs. On the second side, 'Shooting Star' by Sarah Richards has its sense of urgency injected through

the percussion, sax and flanged guitar backing. Of the four songs by Rachel Grant, only 'Wells by the Seashore' doesn't make the grade, getting a bit awkward musically, stopping the listener from settling into the song, as in her 'Radiate' and 'Willow Weep'. (\$10.99)

## The Oxes Onset Offset

The Oxes are Denys Beckinsdale (vocals) and Dave Cranston (guitar, backing vocals). Their self-titled Onset Offset release contains six tracks, mostly songs like 'Fact is Fatter Than Fiction' ("walking in the suburbs") full of Christchurch observations. There's a wry humour that lends itself to the song presentation; tunes that never outstay their welcome and delivery (including whistling and kitchen percussion) that's entertaining throughout. (\$3)

## Ziggy Stardust and Stack Zowie ZS001 (Onset Offset)

'ZS001' is a cassette containing Ziggy Stardust's 'Martian Walk' and Stack Zowie's 'Iron Rodent.' 'Martian Walk' really is a space walk, a bit beyond me and I can't even be sure that it's tongue in cheek. Ditto for the desperately bizarre 'Iron Rodent.' One for the acid-fried Dr Who fans out there?

Send for the above four (plus others from the O-O catalogue) from Onset Offset, PO Box 2764, Christchurch.

# THE CHILLS



# BRAVE WORDS

"... includes two of the most spectral unrequited love songs of the decade in 'Wet Blanket' and 'Night Of Chill Blue'... this is what makes the band so special, the hurdy-gurdy they wind emits shards of slightly diseased pop but pop all the same... courageous indeed." — NME

"... one of the year's most subtly beguiling and singular pop debuts... an unparalleled guitar pop set firmly apart from it's more structurally predictable contemporaries..." — SOUNDS

"... The Chills have a chance of being pretty damn big and this LP suggests that they might just make it." — MUSIC WEEK

"... well worth the wait... a very refreshing LP indeed..." — RECORD MIRROR

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21 VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, WELLINGTON

22 SAMMY'S, DUNEDIN

23 CARLTON, CHRISTCHURCH



Headless Chickens strut their stuff at awards gig (L-R): Michael Lawry, Chris Matthews, Rupert E Taylor, Grant Fell.

## Rock Awards Play Chicken

Auckland's Headless Chickens have been awarded the 1987 Rheineck Rock Award.

The award contributes \$30,000 towards the funding of an album for the band and a further \$30,000 in advertising and promotion for the album launch.

On the advisory board selecting the winner of the award were Campus Radio manager Judy Anaru, journalist Colin Hogg and promoter Doug Hood. Speaking for the advisory board, Anaru said, "From early on, when we looked through this year's entries, it was obvious that not only would our task be a tough one but the winner of the 1987 would probably come

from the area loosely described as 'alternative rock.'

"It has become obvious that the New Zealand bands most likely to achieve — and deserve — success both at home and abroad, are those who follow their own instincts — the Headless Chickens are such a band."

The award was presented in Auckland on December 2 by NZ Breweries managing director Ron Endley. The Chickens will begin recording their album next year, and will tour New Zealand in mid-1988.

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