

LIVE

## Blondie

Hammersmith Odeon, London — Jan 11.  
That face. The poster sellers were doing great trade with a new portrait. The buyers, the concert-goers, looked a very normal bunch. Well for a rock group to make England's top selling LP for '79, it must appeal to the average bloke. And to the average bloke — tonight's audience is decidedly male-dominant — that face on the poster is Blondie.

The first half-hour of the shows took pains (sic) to demonstrate group as group, drummer Clem Burke coming on like a new Keith Moon and the guitarists holding stage front. The instrumental sound is coarser and less sophisticated than on record. It is also undistinguished and boring, often covering an essential thinness behind a bluster of fuzzy guitar. "Heart of Glass", for example was stodgy instead of propulsive and those expecting beautiful swirling keyboards found them weak and tinny.

If Blondie's record success owes much to producer Mike Chapman, its stage show came alive once Debbie Harry asserted herself as focal/vocal point. Playing an extraordinary blend of street urchin, strutting ex-punk, knowing sophisticate and eager amateur, she moved — and leapt — superbly. (Those coy, stilted teleclips are quite misleading.) More importantly, as far as the mix would let me assess, she sang remarkably well.

With her natural beauty and fascinating persona, Harry can be seen as the rock Marilyn Monroe. One major music weekly, in a pompous burst of reverse sexism, castigated her for playing on her sex-appeal, yet from earliest Presley to recent Rod Stewart, sex has been integral to the rock singer's stage act. Blondie's eponymous vocalist is a dynamic performer in the grand rock tradition, not just the pretty face that launched a 1000 posters.

As regards tonight's show, the average bloke's conception of Blondie is quite right.  
Peter Thomson

## 4XO Battle of the Bands

Dunedin Town Hall — Jan 29  
The Battle of the Bands was revived by Radio 4XO and held in the Town Hall, where, let it be said, the sound rarely climbed above listenable, thanks to the random twiddling of the guy on the mixer and the feeble PA which thwarted any and all attempts at vocal impact in the endless space which is the Town Hall.

First on, the Terls. Rough gumbooted splintery rock songs that needed a much tighter rhythm section to push the interesting guitar exchanges. They had fans. Stonehenge played straight-faced country rock but the drummer tried too hard and got in the way.

Tibet are good players and Annabelle Wilson could make a living as a singer but their music's too sombre, and despite the nice arrangements, far too predictable. They were second, fair enough, because on the night they coped. But rock'n'roll is scarcely in their vocabulary.

Le Centrebande, a three piece played Undertones and Feelgood and played it simple and economic. Knotty and enjoyable but the drummer couldn't sing and they picked two of the worst Undertones' songs. What's the matter with youse guys — listen to the album again.

Lemmmeeee say it again, the Heavenly Bodies are Dunedin's best, but after a great start they dwindled as their peerless originals couldn't climb over the mess that was the sound system. Doff your hats coz the Bodies are it. They came in third but they were first. Work it out yourself.

Schoolband Static were fast and exuberant, watch 'em; Kilgour's Stains were young punks doing old punk; Hoax tried XTC and Be Bop Deluxe but faded badly and Feedback were keen but they need to hang in there a little longer.

Last were Rockylox and they won. A triumph for proficiency and professionalism.

But was that the point?  
George Kay

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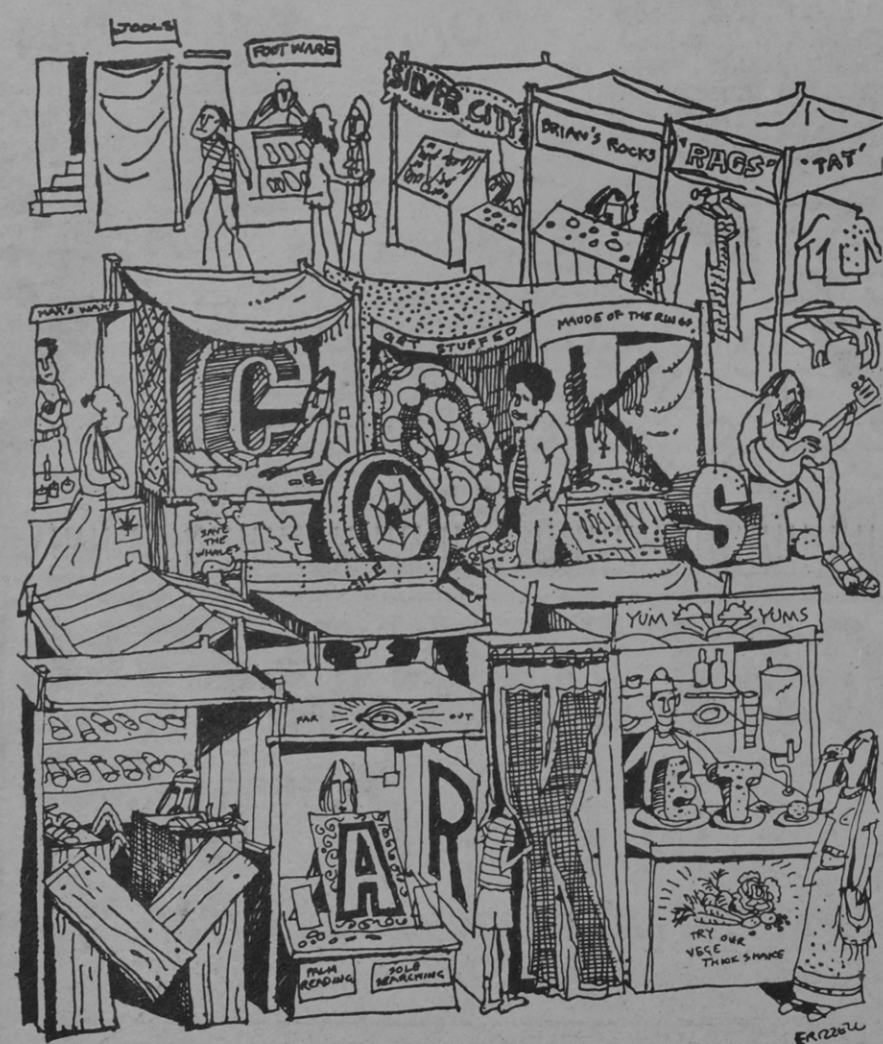
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## SINGLES

**Split Enz** are gradually evolving into a smart sixties beat combo as they prove on "I Got You". A terse, atmospheric up-front rhythm showpiece with a haunting melody, it's probably their best single to date and a great start to 1980 in the small vinyl market.

**Joe Jackson** and more superlatives for "It's Different For Girls", perhaps the most perceptive, honest and moving love song of the year. Immortality assured. Sting is another songwriter of growing stature and **Police's** "Message in a Bottle" is a lesson in how to combine energy and hooklines. **Rory Gallagher** must be in line for some kind of long service medal and "Philby", slick and hard, is the best thing he's done in a while. Keeping with the Irish and newboys, **Starjets**, are powerful but maybe just a little too polished on their own "Schooldays".

**Dury** sound-a-like, **B.A. Robertson** is cheeky enough on "Knocked It Off" to make it work but **Queen** are becoming even more embarrassing with their puny Presley pastiche "Crazy Little Thing Called Love".

Locally **Sharon O'Neill** is confidently nudging her own elbow room after the Eagle-ish clichés of "Luck's On Your Table". "Words" and now her latest single "Baby Don't Fight" establish her as a worthwhile songwriter in her own right. **Jon Stevens** obviously wants to make it two in a row with his gutsy though unnecessary cover of Bobby Bloom's "Montego".

### MI-SEX COMPETITION RESULTS

For those of you that didn't know, Mi-Sex's guitarist is Kevin Stanton, record company is CBS, their number one Aussie single was "Computer Games" and the producer of *Graffiti Crimes* is Peter Dawkins.

A copy of the Mi-Sex debut album *Graffiti Crimes* and a badge have been won by Martin Jenkin Remuera, Ian Stringfellow Whakatane, Eugene Butcher Christchurch, Russell Grove Christchurch and Bevan Marshall Te Puke.

Winners of Mi-Sex badges are Andrew Armitage Lower Hutt, L. Sheenan Whangarei, Louise Meyburg Hillsborough, J. Paris Masterton, Brent Jones Manurewa, Don Calder New Plymouth, S. Trail Palmerston North, Mark Datten, Linda Ginnane Lower Hutt, J. Woon Karori, Linda Roberts Cambridge, Jan Eastwood Hamilton, John Norton Epsom, Jocelyn Hughes Avondale, Jenny Saunders Whangarei, J.H. Bernards Hamilton, V. Stewart Wanganui, J. McDonald Rotorua, Graham Moore Karori, and Chris Moeran New Plymouth.

THE BAND ON PAGE 11 SPLIT ENZ 1973  
(L-R) WALLY WILKINSON, MIKE CHUNN, PHIL JUDD (AT REAR), GEOFF CHUNN, TIM MOERAN (AT REAR).

## FRAMED BY W.DART

### ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ

Director: Don Siegel

It was nice in the late sixties when everyone suddenly realised that Don Siegel was a director worth noticing. *Coogan's Bluff* was probably the film that instigated this re-appraisal, even though he had been responsible for some fifties classics such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Riot in Cell Block 11*. Interestingly enough he immortalised the rather plasticised Fabian on celluloid in *Hound Dog Man* and gave Elvis Presley the chance to act in *Flaming Star*.

*Escape from Alcatraz* sees the master of the B movie back in action with a craftsmanlike little thriller, starring everyone's favourite macho man Clint Eastwood as a convict determined to escape from the inescapable. A good deal of Eastwood's determination is provoked by the somewhat sadistic behaviour of the prison governor, played by a rather bloated looking Patrick McGeehan.

The film is effectively photographed by Bruce Surtees with a sensitive eye for composition, particularly in the exercise yard scenes which convey a quite gripping sense of menace after the claustrophobic interiors of most of the film. *Alcatraz* fits in well with what Andrew Sarris describes as the Siegel stamp — showing as it does "the doomed peculiarity of the antisocial outcast". At times things hover perilously near to sentimentality in the episodes connected with one prisoner's pet mouse and another's dying mother, but the quite traumatic shock of one prisoner chopping off his own fingers comes across with considerable impact. The premise for the act is basically sentimental (the warden has forbidden him to continue oil-painting) but the act itself is such a moment of bleak violence that it transcends that sentimentality.

Siegel has garnered quite a reputation for violence, a sort of beginner's Peckinpah, but I am not sure that I liked the implications of all the nastiness that comes out of Eastwood's dealings with a prisoner called Wolf who tries to line him up as his new punk. One feels that this sort of treatment of the gay theme is rather designed to appeal to the lowest and most reactionary denominator, and it contrasts strongly with the sympathetic treatment accorded the black prisoners in the movie.

That flaw aside, and also the reservations one feels when one sees all the representatives of the law treated as either sadists or cardboard figures, it is a film that deserves your attention.

### ELVIS — THE MOVIE

Director: John Carpenter

Originally made as a three hour television film, this somewhat shortened version is now making it in cinemas around the country. It is a haunting biopic from the same director who chilled us with *Halloween*. It doesn't cover all of the singer's career, finishing with the 1969 Las

Bay". Mind you there's probably a new generation of buyers who don't know the original.

Good news that the new **Clash** album *London Calling* is only a few weeks away and CBS have released a single with the title track and the reggae "Armageddon Time". Micky Gallagher on keyboards certainly has the right touches and the band overall have more feel and maturity than they displayed on the lashing aggro of *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. Place orders now.

The **Now Wave** is a \$2.50 four track 45 CBS sampler presenting the new side of Los Angeles rock'n'roll. **20/20**, **The Beat** and **Hounds** play brisk exuberant power pop but it's the much touted **Jules and the Polar Bears** who provide the real tune on "Good Reason".

Surprise as **Linda Ronstadt** shakes off her LA customline formula and rocks out in earnest on "How Do I Make You". Could this be the start of something better.

GEORGE KAY

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Vegas comeback, but it does catch the fatalistic character of Presley in its series of almost expressionistic tableaux (at one point Elvis is soliloquising to his shadow on the wall). Ronnie McDowell's vocal impersonations of Presley are immaculate, and the fact that Kurt Russell does not always seem quite right only adds a sinister undertone to the film. Shelley Winters, too, is in fine form as Presley's mother.

### THE MUPPET MOVIE

Director: James Frawley

I have always found the Muppets to be the last word in dearliness, even in their weekly video doses. The only fun I have derived from their tiresome little faces is trying to see parallels between Kermit Frog's little friends and acquaintances of whom I am not particularly fond. But such parlor games were forgotten in the sheer horror of seeing such people as Madeline Kahn, Cloris Leachman, Milton Berle, Orson Welles and many many more debase themselves in this debacle. Haven't we suffered enough on the tube?

### DAYS OF HEAVEN

Director: Terrence Malick

Widely touted as one of the 'most beautiful films ever made', *Days of Heaven* may well be so, thanks to the stunning photography of Nestor Almendros and Malick's almost ritualistic visual sense in the film. We are given an encapsulated portrait of the human condition in this story of three souls emigrating from the grimy Chicago of 1916 to find fortune and relief in the Texas Panhandle. The film is distinguished by a quartet of exemplary performances (Brooke Adams, Richard Gere, Sam Shepard and Linda Manz) and a score of Ennio Morricone built around Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*.

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