

Spida, Lip Service at Kicks.



LIVE

POP MECHANIX

LAST RESORT, WELLINGTON. APRIL 25

There is a school of thought that the true test of a band is how they cope on those nights when everything goes wrong. Pop Mechanix despite encountering the full catalogue of gremlins (broken strings, temperamental amp, inadequate foldback) managed to stay on top of both the music and the situation and came out of a potential disaster looking all the better for the frustrations suffered in the process.

The largely original set was consistently both dancable and listenable (some better than routine lyrics), with the originals (stand-outs "Spanish", "Mr Smooth", "The Ritz") tending to over-shadow the covers. While musically the band functions as an impressively integrated unit, visually the show belongs to vocalist Dick Driver, NZ rock's first really classy frontman since Alastair Riddell gave up trying (remember Orb?).

If PM don't make some sort of impression with their upcoming Auckland campaign, I'll buy a baggy suit, dribble soft boiled egg down my neck tie and start calling myself a Wellingtonian.

R. Solez

ANDROIDSS, SLOTH CREATURES

LIBERTY STAGE. APRIL 26

As Iggy told us, there is a thin line between punk and heavy metal. This brings us to the Androidss. With three guitars and keyboards it would be difficult for any band to not come on like Motorhead or Uriah Heep clones, but the Androidss seem to pull it off at Liberty Stage.

This improvement since the first time I saw them was very noticable. Their covers were well played (including a superb "Search and Destroy") and the originals were good, especially "Are You Getting Jumpy". Unfortunately the sound balance was poor and the vocals muddy and unintelligible. A decent soundman would be a definite bonus.

I'm not sure if the Sloth Creatures took themselves seriously, I couldn't, the vocalist's ridiculous posturing became very tedious halfway through the first song. Their sound was too loud, too flat and too cliched. They did nothing that the Masochists/Europe didn't do ten times better, three years ago.

However, the guitarist showed promise, but it will remain only promise if the Sloth Creatures continue on their present course.

Simon Grigg

LIP SERVICE

KICKS. APRIL 18

It would be unfair to judge Lip Service too harshly on the basis of this performance. Sound hassles stopped the show twice, and problems with monitors and feedback were never really remedied completely.

In between those times, Lip Service managed to produce some stomping fodder which saw the dance floor well filled. Their hybrid visual image has something for everyone, with Rooda and O'D having had cut and dye hair jobs to resemble Stewart Copeland and Sting respectively, while Spida fixes the audience

Th'Dudes and guests, Mainstreet.



with a psycho stare not unlike Jerry Hall of the Specials.

Much of the set is taken up with high-speed, head-shaking numbers. A slight progression on the three-chord thrash, but a little too stereotyped. When they slow the pace down, on numbers like "20th Century", Lip Service show a much more inventive side to their songwriting, which they need to capitalise on. It also gives Revox a chance to show what he can really do with his Les Paul. The final set included covers of "Five Foot One", "Friday On My Mind" and "Suffragette City", which made up in vigour what they lacked in finesse.

On a good night, Lip Service are fast, furious fun. No challenge or threat, just a rage. Something we all need every now and then.

Duncan Campbell

ROCK QUEST

WINDSOR CASTLE. APRIL 5 & 7

It's 1980, when it should be 1976 ...

The first band up, and one of the most promising were Rank and File, an r'n'b band with the interesting addition of a trumpet, and a good lead singer. The Regulators followed; a brash three-piece from the North Shore. They obviously have an admiration for the Jam/Buzzcocks sound of long ago.

Probably the messiest group were the Dum Dum Boys who played for ten minutes and fiddled with their gear the rest of the time. A pity, really, because Iggy Pop's imbecile proteges looked so good. The Extras came on with the cleanest sound of the competition. In their walk shorts they reminded some of early Split Enz. The next band on, \$1.09, played a fairly ordinary 1-2-3-4 blam set.

The Features, the tightest band, were to say the least interesting — crisply discordant, although their lead singer brought them back to '76.

The second day's quest was started by Electric Food — fish out of water with their 'alternative lifestyle' sound. Rex Reason and the Rationalists played good stop-start music that was original for a change, and their wee singer had a coy voice.

The Modes would be a good group if they cut down on the pre-match posing. Unfortunately they seem to epitomise all that is wrong with local bands at the moment — religiously heeding foreign trends. The Flicks are semi-aggressive. They, while still belabouring '76, at least choose lesser-known covers (the Vice Creems and Stiff Little Fingers). Their originals are nothing more than slogans — very loud.

While still officially an amateur band, the Spelling Mistakes are one of the best. A fact confirmed by their eventual victory. Contests like this bring you the bad with the good, and so the Spelling Mistakes were followed by Spherox.

The Respectables were the band that got the crowd dancing. They played strictly covers, from the Clash through to Marc Bolan (with five Undertones songs).

Another band to broaden the spectrum were Raven: a good pub band but they died in front of this audience. The last band to play, the Androidss, ended the day on a fairly high note. With four guitars, though, they proved too much for the mediocre sound system used.

Tony Moss

IGGY POP, MISEX

WANFIELD THEATRE, SAN FRANCISCO. APRIL 5.

Steve Gilpin's first words were confident ones: "This is the first time you have seen us, but it won't be the last." And then it was down to the hard business of winning America's hearts and pockets. They worked hard, but had a poor mix which dulled the keyboards and rhythm section.

Kevin Stanton's guitar work was certainly heard as he commanded the stage with his playing and presence, gaining applause for the space licks of "Computer Games" and the power chords of "Graffiti Crimes". If anyone was responsible for winning American hearts this night, it was Stanton.

Into a dark hall, and to the strains of Beethoven, Iggy walks on stage, giving a very unholy version of the Lord's Prayer. The band contained Glen Matlock, Billy Rath and Patty Smith's guitarist Ivan Kral, and played it tight and fast, slowing only for a haunting "Sister Midnight". Up front, Iggy's vocals were in fine shape. Choosing songs mostly from the new *Soldier* album, he threw himself into the air like some amphetamine Nureyev. He spat on the audience and stood arrogant and upright when they returned the same.

I was told that Iggy's getting mellow in his old age, but he still seems to have more balls than the rest.

Alfred Grant

RED MOLE

MAIDMENT THEATRE — MARCH 25.

Witty, baffling, thought-provoking, unconventional. Very ordinary adjectives for the extraordinary entity that is Red Mole.

To call it theatre is to sell it very short. A multi-media presentation would be closer to the mark. Nor are its performers mere thespians, but rather craftspeople in the hugely varied world of entertainment.

Flicks, Windsor Castle.



Red Mole is a hook with a thousand barbs, dressing up human foibles in gay but true colours. Its vision is never less than 20-20.

Its latest guise, Lord Galaxy's Travelling Players, ran four nights to a warm reception as part of the Auckland Festival. The plot is traditionally simple, but the setting could be any time, any place, any war.

For conflict between nations is the theme. As Red Mole showed only too clearly, nobody wins. Young girl marries soldier as a means of escaping drudgery in the exotic colonies. Soldier dies drunk and heart-broken while merry widow makes a new start as a dancing artiste. She falls on hard times, and takes to espionage as a way of making a living. Inevitably, she is caught, and pays the ultimate penalty.

The satire is often vicious and merciless, but then so is the world it reflects. Ultimately, it is a tragedy, but it has its comic relief. The scene-setting pieces draw their share of laughs, as does a remarkable puppet sequence where the

Extreme Left and Right wings battle it out. The subject matter is extremely topical, with Arab land deals and synthetic petrol plants rating dishonourable mention. And while the revolutionary has the last word, its propaganda is as hollow as that of the fat cat.

Intersperse this with a wide variety of music from a well-chosen band, superb choreography and simple but imaginative sets and lighting, and you have a stimulating, unforgettable evening.

Duncan Campbell

THE SNIPES

THE SQUEEZE. APRIL 19

This is not the first time I have seen a half-empty house for the Snipes. Why does nobody go to see them? They are a tight, rhythm and booze act, who have the capacity for a great night's entertainment. Saturday night was one of those nights, but there just weren't enough people.

They played a hard and tight set of old covers (the Doors to the La De Dahs) along with some new original material ("Money for Sex" was very good). The band's guitarist, Simon Lynch seems to extract exactly the right sound from his guitar for their style of music. The rhythm section of Norman Knox and Allan Evans provides a solid drive that keeps the music going perfectly.

Glen McLean on vocals has the ability to change his voice from a Paul Weller whine to a bourbon-sodden Springsteen inflection as demonstrated by a slow blues in the middle of the set.

After general promotion problems, the Snipes seem to be getting on with it. They are writing original material and learning new covers. They are worth your three bucks any day.

Harry Ratbag

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