



Photo by Anthony Phelps

Penknife Glides before Police.

Who's on first?

It is ironic that something which represents one of the highlights of a New Zealand rock and roll career should so often be seen as an annoyance or distraction by the public. The first thirty minutes or so of the show on international tours to this country is generally given over to a local act. As people arrive late, locate their friends in the crowd, disappear

to the foyer for a smoke or show allegiance to the stars by chanting their name, a home-town band fights for attention on the stage. Often with no sound-check, only part of the PA, and the most mundane section of the lighting rig, why do local bands fight for the privilege?

Anyone who might think that all that was a thing of a

past need only have gone to the recent concert by Madness at the Logan Campbell Centre. The sight of the Newmatics struggling through their opening set without a soundcheck, and with lighting that went from one footlight to a rapid flick through every colour combination on the rig, was enough to chill the most blase. The Newmatics themselves

are pretty philosophical about it. The small English road crew and the band themselves were as helpful as they could be. Unfortunately, the roadies provided by the Australian promoter were less obliging. Still, they say, it was worthwhile to play to that many people, and to play with Madness. The Newmatics' sound, with its strong ska links, was

the logical complement for Madness, and it is to the credit of promoter Arthur Williams that he put the two together. There have been enough cases of gross mismatching to make it remarkable that there are no recorded cases of an audience lynching a support act.

Another well-balanced bill — though this time more by accident — was the pairing of Penknife Glides with the Police. The promoter of the tour, Hugh Lynn, was managing Penknife Glides at the time, and this went quite some way towards ensuring that they landed the spot. Their experiences were very much the same as those quoted by the Newmatics. Allowing for the weariness and strains of the closing stage of a very long tour, the band and their personal crew were pleasant and unobstructive. The Australian road crew were less willing to acknowledge the needs of the support act.

Still, Penknife Glides did get soundchecks in all but one case.

The lights were no problem because of the confidence of their lighting man. The band is convinced that the presence of experienced, professional crew of your own goes a long way to gaining the respect of the main act's technicians.

If they survived the Police tour, they thrived on the Split Enz tour they did a few months later. There, not only were the crew much more helpful, but the band were more interested in the performances of their guests. Blam Blam Blam, also on that tour, echo those comments.

In strict contrast with their experience with Australian metal group, Midnight Oil, which were pretty much the same as the Newmatics with Madness, the Blams enjoyed their five dates on the *Waiata* tour. Raewyn Turner, the Enz' lighting designer, helped out on the board for them, and the main act stood in the wings to watch their set.

In the past, Enz have toured

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