





"It's obviously a sound beyond 'mistakes', but sometimes I wonder if you can make mistakes in rock & roll, besides being too careful about it."

Lester Bangs wrote that about Johnny Thunders. If he'd followed Dunedin's Clean through the last three years, he might well have drawn a similar conclusion. The Clean have truly done their 'growing up in public' since first emerging under the Enemy's wing in June, 1978.

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That first Beneficiaries Hall gig in fact was yer definitive rock'n'roll cock-up — false starts, forgotten words, unintentional key changes, ignored cues, the lot, all of it linked by David Kilgour's white noise guitar and brother Hamish's magnetisation to the snare drum.

Since then there have been a succession of bass players, a singer (sorry Doug there isn't room for your name) and at one stage Hamish even went out front before retiring back to being a (better) drummer. Current bassist is Robert Scott, and there is absolutely no indication that this now-solidified line-up is about to change. Things are really starting to gel.

Two trips to Auckland have interrupted the band's threeyear struggle to build a following in Dunedin, and in early July came the recording of the first single 'Tally Ho' at Arnold Van Bustle Studios in Christchurch for Roger Shepherd's Flying Nun label.

'Tally Ho' cost \$50 (yep fifty) to make and it sounds a bit that way. If you're looking for mistakes, there are a couple of real boners in there. But it's a great song, its rock'n'roll heart-pumping hard. And those lusting after that unique Clean sound — thwarted somewhat on the A-side through the inclusion of prominently-mixed organ (played by the Chills' Martin Phillips) — have a live B-side, recorded at the Gladstone by Paul Kean on his trusty Ferrograph.

The Clean vision is as unified as a three-piece should be — and they all sing, distinctively — but it is David Kilgour's guitar which underpins the whole thing. Using a white Ibanez bought off Alec Bathgate (which Bathgate still wants to buy back) Kilgour's starting point appears to be an appetising menage a trois of Byrds, early PiL and Bathgate himself. The ability to fill suburban church halls with layers of sound was quickly learnt, but the real progress came when the band purchased a Revox and starting checking out what all of us out here were hearing. Then things really started to get interesting.

The many Revox taping sessions widened and markedly improved the band's writing to the point where there are now a host (twelve? fifteen?) of songs to look forward to in live performance.

Hamish says early on the trick was to work as much melody as possible into the white noise. Now things are more adventurous, and he talks of developing the experimental side of late sixties' pop which he thinks really wasn't developed nearly enough by those bands then.

The Clean all realise Dunedin isn't a place to base a rock'n'roll career. They are still considered as welcome as a police raid in the city's hotels (their sole non-support stint in a local tavern saw the power plug pulled by management with 45 minutes still remaining on a Saturday night) and their numerous local performances have almost all been self-organised.

Devoted Dunedin post-Toy Love hardcore notwithstanding, Christchurch has proved a friendlier place: and Auckland. So with the single done, the Clean, the Enemy, Ian Fraser and Sir Archibald McIndoe before them, headed north. Only bits and pieces were organised, but hopes were high and, with narry a daytime job or fallback career to be seen, the commitment total.

And don't you think the Clean is a great name?
Roy Colbert





