

OFF THE RECORD

ALLEZ OOP!



Which means London fanzines, and plenty of them.

First and best is *Allez-Oop* set up by one time *Rip It Up* writer, Jeremy Templer. To avoid critical in-fighting the magazine has adopted a non-evaluative stance, which means all you get is a series of question-answer interviews without any value judgements from the writers. In other words rock criticism which isn't critical. Informative but sterile.

The other fanzines, *Shout*, *Rising Free*, *The Story So Far*, *Grinding Halt*, *Cross Now*, *Sign of the Times*, *Shake*, *Panache* *Fourteen*, *Trees and Flowers* and *South Circular*, are all amateurish in-it-for-the-love-and-not-the-layout angle. They are all printed and distributed by Better Badges, 286 Portobello Road, London W10.

One novel presentation worth singling out is *Wool City Rocker*, a Bradford fanzine the size of a forty-five and packaged in a small



David Bowie & Iggy Pop, Moscow (*Bowie Black Book*).

plastic sleeve containing a poster of some ugly Northern talents and a flexi-disk of a Heaven 17 song 'Something's Wrong'. And it's only 30p.

Locally, the NZ Students' Arts Council have initiated a *Touring Papers* publication that lets you in on what acts are doing the Varsity circuit. Its most recent edition included excerpts from John Dix's history of NZ rock'n' roll. Any news? Write to their Resource Base: PO Box 9266, Wellington.

George Kay

Browsing among books on rock music is a lot more interesting now British-based Omnibus Press publications are distributed in NZ.

Your standard rock book has always been the illustrated fan-bio wherein a poorly researched, clumsy and gushy text serves as an excuse to package heaps of photos of some current fave rave.

In 1979 American writer Dave Marsh used this format to produce a serious book on Bruce Springsteen entitled *Born To Run*. That said, however, Marsh's book does have its shortcomings. In 180 pages we learn all the facts and get plenty of observations but somehow, by the end, a real sense of Springsteen the man remains elusive.

Dave Marsh's book is now in Omnibus's catalogue as is an even more interesting remodel of the fan-bio quickie: Lester Bangs' *Blondie*. It may be slimmer than the Springsteen effort but you get 16 pages in colour coupled with the ravings of the greatest gonzo rock writer of all. Bangs was commissioned to write a standard hagiography but instead turned around and began to attack his subject in chapters such as 'On the Merits of Sexual Repression'. His thesis about Blondie's - i.e. Debbie's - appeal is fascinating and, as usual, both brilliant and ultimately way over the top. (Apparently Chris and Debbie Harrystein are now writing their own version.) *Blondie* was written in 1980 prior to the *Auto-american* and *Koo Koo* albums. I'd love to read an update on Bang's thesis.

The *David Bowie Black Book* is a strictly conventional example of the fan-bio but as such is

CHAS JANKEL FROM PAGE 3

What's on the cards Chas?

"On the way to LA I went via Nassau in the Bahamas where I've been making my third album and after that I'll get a seven piece band together and do some gigs. So you'll see me before long."

And with that we leave the amiable Chas Jankel, a musician's musician, a modest geezer with a wealth of talent that springs from the right roots. Check out his *Questionnaire*, most answers are positive.

George Kay



John Carradine & Tracy Mann, 'Scarecrow'.

excellent. Its text is simply a year by year factual rundown on Bowie's career from 1963 to 1980 with no critical attempt to get at the masks behind the masks. The book's great value lies in its superb collection of photos, predominantly full-paged and, as often as not, in colour. Trace the hairstyles and sartorial splendour from sixties mod to flower-power perm to Garboesque to Ziggy etc. The shots vary from solo studies to telling candid shots of Bowie with associates, friends and lovers.

Undoubtedly of more limited appeal (though still great fun) is *Merseybeat: The Beginnings of The Beatles* wherein the early days of the fab four are chronicled through reprints from the now defunct Merseyside entertainment paper. In 1961 you could get five bands for five shillings with the Beatles topping and Gerry and the Pacemakers second on the bill. On one page you'll find an item reporting on The Beatles' 'rapturous reception' in Hamburg while underneath is a news snippet that Rory Storm and the Hurricanes are spending their third summer season at a local Butlin's holiday camp. John Lennon's own pseudonymous column 'Beatcomber' is a fore-taste of *In His Own Write*.

The Omnibus range includes the modestly priced *In Their Own Words* paperback series. Semi-biographies on Lennon, Dylan, the Stones, Bowie et al that are assembled by a cut and paste job on years of press interviews. Their value depends on how eloquent and candid the subject was. The Who volume gave me a few good chuckles.

Another book is *Rock Family Trees* for all those people wanting to trace various sixties and seventies' groups. A truly major work for and by the obsessive.

There's a *Sex Pistols File* and one on the Clash and a whole discography series. The only two real nasties I've spotted so far are a vacuous Pretenders' volume and a shoddy *Encyclopedia of British Beat Groups and Solo Artists of the Sixties*.

Happy browsing. (Omnibus Press is distributed locally by the Australia and NZ Co.)

Peter Thomson

F I L M

The Scarecrow

Director: Sam Pillsbury

Working from a very clever scripting of the Ronald Hugh Morrisson novel, Pillsbury has come up with a most satisfying film, a piece of cinema that proves the local film industry could produce something as successful as Peter Weir's early explorations of the more bizarre sides of the Australian character.

Although the eerie, centrifugal force of the whole film is the emaciated, omni-present Scarecrow, played with relish by Hollywood veteran John Carradine, the real reference point for most of the action comes from the trio of youngsters. Australian actress Tracy Mann is an impressive Prudence, and Pillsbury has managed to get wondrous performances from Jonathan Smith and Daniel McLaren as the two friends who eventually unravel all the dirty goings-on in the funeral parlour.

Add to this many memorable and vivid cameos (Margaret Blay as the testy Mrs Breece admonishing her petulant child is particularly vivid) and a striking evocation of small town life in the repressive 50s, and you have the most effective piece of New Zealand cinema I have seen for some years.

The California Dolls

Director: Robert Aldrich

What on the surface might seem to be an exploitation flic about glamorous lady wrestlers becomes, in Aldrich's hands, a shrewd and cynical tale of compromise in modern society. Underneath all the tawdry glamour (and the final fight-out between the Dolls and the Toledo Tigers is the most dazzling of production numbers, with gasps and giggles in equal proportions) is a piece of tough character analysis.

Peter Falk as Harry Sears is a hard-bitten manager, playing tapes of *Pagliacci* in his car whilst ferrying his two lady-tag-wrestlers (the statuesque Vicki Frederick and Laurene Landon) around the country in search of that elusive title match. Aldrich uses his usual production team, and Joseph Biroc's images are as elegant as ever, finding that there can be an ironic beauty in the most unlikely places.

Outland

Director: Peter Hyams

A thoroughly dreary little space western, in spite of the cool presence of Sean Connery. Some interest is generated during an all-too-short show of paranoia by Steven Berkoff, and Frances Sternhagen deals out a nice line in wise-cracking cynicism, but after a while, you just get rather tired of reading printed messages on video screens and gazing at flashing computer keyboards. Really, people are still more interesting and good scripts help too.

Renaldo and Clara

Director: Bob Dylan

Currently doing the rounds in the hallowed setting of the Film Festival, this is really much more than just a record of the Rolling Thunder tour. Although the original version is often self-indulgent and rambles at times, it presents some marvellous images and equally memorable scenes (Allen Ginsburg reading poetry to an audience of respectable matrons being one). To cut it by half its length, as has happened in NZ, is brutal. Surely those interested would prefer to see the film as the director originally conceived it.

History of the World Part I

Director: Mel Brooks

It's all a matter of taste, as the bishop once said to the actress. In the matter of comedy, Mel Brooks has become an anarchic law to himself, being the most noted contemporary exponent of the 'Would it be funny if ...' brand of comedy. Self indulgence sometimes works splendidly. It does in *History's* Inquisition sequence, with starched nuns suddenly becoming voluptuous chorines. And Brooks certainly has an enthusiastic cast, with Cloris Leachman, Madeline Kahn, Harvey Korman, Dom DeLuise and Sid Caesar - almost making one ignore the fact that so many of the jokes are not only fairly venerable, but more than a little on the weak side.

Still, considering the current state of 35mm comedy, now that Frank Tashlin is no more, who can afford to be fussy?

William Dart

Late News

Sydney band Dropbears with ex Hooker, Johnny Batchelor, have released a 45, 'Fun Loving'/'Anything I Do'. They also feature on the new *Fast Forward* cassette. Same town: *Real Traitors* have recorded another 4-track EP ... *Swingers* may record their second album in Auckland. If so, expect them with Snoid, at Mainstreet in May. Mondo Rock play NZ in June. Grace Jones will tour down-under ... there's a rumour about that Harry Ratbag wrote 'Legend In His Own Lunchtime' for the Gurlz and that he penned the new Sister Sledge single 'My Guy' using the pseudonym S. Robinson ... Furtive may release a live 12 inch EP of the *Newmatics* recorded at their final gigs ... same size but by May: six-trackers on Key label: *Th'Dudes So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star* (all the singles) and *Hello Sailor Last Chance To Dance* ... Troggs pic sleeve 45 'Wild Thing'/'With A Girl Like You' is released to coincide with their tour April 28 Mainstreet gig ... rebuilt Mascot Studio is open. Phone them for special re-opening rates. First projects include: Phil Yule produced *Herbs* 45 and LP and *Mahana* produced by Billy TK ... the Jam tour is postponed to August.

New look Talking Heads?



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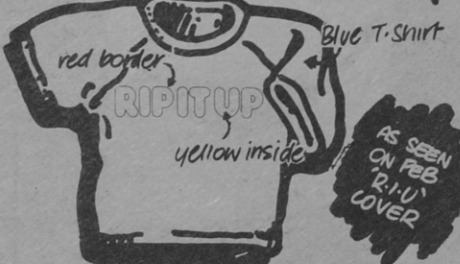
BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

- 1 Commodores, Split Enz, Mike Chunn Int. 1, Janis Ian.
- 2 Mark Williams, Joe Cocker, Chunn Int. 2, Frankie Miller.
- 19 Talking Heads, Ramones, Sire label, Steely Dan, Kim Fowley.
- 23 Th'Dudes, Talking Heads Int. 1, Street Talk Bandfile, Phil Manning.
- 24 Talking Heads Part 2, Citizen Band, Swingers Bandfile, Dragon.
- 26 Devo, Knack, Mi-Sex, Wellington Special.
- 27 Bob Geldof, Kids Are Alright, Sheerlux Bandfile, Ky Cooder, Radio Radio.
- 29 Graham Parker, Members, Mother Goose, Radio Radio 2.
- 30 Sweetwaters Issue programme - John Martyn, Elvis Costello, Renee Geyer, NZ band profiles.
- 31 Sweetwaters, Swingers, Mi-Sex.
- 32 Police & Split Enz interviews, Sharon O'Neill.
- 33 Marching Girls, Crocodiles, Fleetwood Mac Ellen Foley, Russell Morris.
- 34 Tom Petty and Street Talk interviews, Mi-Sex, Virgin Supplement, Whizz Kids and Pop Mechanix bandfiles.
- 35 Quadrophonia, Bob Geldof and Kevin Stanton interviews, Newz and Flight X7 bandfiles.
- 36 Ray Davies, Cure and Jo Jo Zep interviews, Neil Young supplement, Stones.
- 37 Magazine, Toy Love in Oz, Newz, Ramones, Tim Finn.
- 38 Howard Devoto interview, Flight X7.
- 39 XTC, Lip Service, Motels.
- 40 Martha Davis, David Byrne and Dave McCartney interviews, Doors, Bruce Springsteen, Hammond Gamble.
- 41 Coup D'Etat, Flowers, Clash, John Lennon, Elton John.
- 42 Clash interview, Cold Chisel, INXS, Tigers, Jo Jo Zep, Borich and Tilders.
- 43 Bryan Ferry Interview, Sweetwaters Report, Flowers.
- 44 Adam Ant, Associates and Police interviews, Stevie Wonder.
- 45 Split Enz, Pop Mx, Meemees, Wgtn 81, Class Of 81, Newmatics, Herco Pilots, Swingers, Madness Supplement.
- 46 Phil in London interview, Cure, Ellen Foley, Dire Straits.
- 47 Jam in London interview, Reggae Bob Marley Supplement, Madness, Joy Division.
- 48 Cold Chisel, Blams, Wgtn Zone.
- 49 Angels, Beat, Lemmy Motorhead and Desmond Dekker interviews.
- 50 Swingers, Psychedelic Furs and U2 interviews, the Clean.
- 51 Newmatics, Cramps, Stray Cats, UB40, Blind Date and Gordons interviews.
- 52 Echo & Bunnymen, Danse Macabre, Penknife Glides, Mockers, Valentinos, Jimmy & Boys.
- 53 Screaming Meemees, Ian Dury Interview, Mental As Anything.
- 54 Dave McCartney & Pink Flamingos, Go-Go's interview, Sunnyboys, INXS.
- 55 Clash interview, Sweetwaters, Pop Mechanix, Devo, Sharon O'Neill.
- 56 Teardrop Explodes, D.D. Smash and Mick Jones Part 2 interviews, Neighbours, Richard Burgess.
- 57 The Clean, Pretenders, South Island bands, Mental As Anything, Chas Jankel.

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How about a booking agent to sell tickets for Auckland shows down here in Hamilton. I'm sick of taking half days off work to go and book tickets in Auckland.

If you don't book them there's a queue at the Logan Campbell Centre and only one person behind the counter. I missed half the Devo waiting to purchase a ticket.
G. McLeod Hamilton

Why do you continually laugh and point at us punters by reviewing records as positively as D. Campbell's review of Toots & the Maytals new release, only to have us told at record shops it'll be weeks, maybe months until release date. Pissed-off.
Barry Linton Pakuranga

I am overwhelmingly in love with your sexy pages. I read every inch of each issue with passion, my Dunhill superior mild cigarettes in one hand and my bottle of Vat 52 in the other. I painstakingly move my Cutex-painted toe nails to turn the pages of your delight.
Delinquents Selwyn College