

# LIVE

Elvis Costello  
LCC. Auckland, June 5.  
Manawatu Stadium, June 6.

Two of the three Costello gigs in this country are ample proof that he's still one of the finest song craftsmen/song performers currently working in rock'n'roll.

The Saturday afternoon before the Auckland show saw Costello front the microphone for the Varsity Radio B Radio Hauraki who, mind you, had a hand in promoting the man ironically refused to have him on air; Costello later that night dedicated 'Radio Radio' to Radio B with a stinging slap at Hauraki: "It pays to know the good guys from the bad guys."

On the varsity station Elvis played his own selection of music. It wasn't an interview but Costello-plays-deejay as he trotted out Feelgood's 'She's A Wind-Up', James Brown's 'Sex Machine', Teardrop Explodes' 'Culture Bunker', the Who's 'Legal Matter', and before Heaven 17's 'Fascist Groove Thang' he knocked those people who used synthesizers for 'whining' and praised the new rhythmic dance approach of Heaven 17 et al.

Saturday night at the local barn (LC Centre, what else?) and Dave McLean's Little Criminals provide the heat treatment as support act. It's pub R&B of the type that Dr. Feelgood still tote around and the Criminals do it well, right down to McLean's cockney off-the-wall mannerisms.

And then Elvis with that grey suit and bow tie. A tight bracket of 'Accidents Will Happen', 'Strict Time', 'Hand In Hand' and you knew it was going to be something special. The sound was good (for the LC Centre) if a touch loud and indistinct in the vocals, and the

crowd was responsive. Track breakdown and you get three from *My Aim* (Alison of course), five from *This Year's Model* ('The Beat' and 'Watching the Detectives' stood out), from *Get Happy* (a bluesy 'I Can't Stand Up' and a fiery 'King Horse'), three from *Armed Forces* ('Oliver's Army' and 'Green Shirt'), five from *Trust*, (the epic 'Clubland' and 'Watch Your Step' were highlights) and only one from *Almost Blue* - 'Good Year For the Roses'. He previewed songs from the new album *Imperial Bedroom*. ('Pidgin English' emerged as one of the possible aces) and turned out one or two covers in the form of a perfect version of Smokey Robinson's (thanks Alastair) 'From Head to Toe' and Nick Lowe's 'What's So Funny'.

The Attractions were, naturally, the last word in proficiency although keyboards player Steve Hart and bassist Bruce Thomas occasionally over played. But three encores of two or three songs each and no-one felt cheated.

The Manawatu Sports Centre is new and vast - it's like two aircraft hangers have been welded together - not a rock'n'roll club. Daggy and the Dickheads provided support and Daggy from Taihape kept warm by diving all over the stage Bob Geldof style. All clean fun.

Sunday night and Elvis and the Attractions confronted the 1500 or so in the crowd at 8.20. The sound was more precise, more balanced than the night before but the show was essentially the same except that 'Big Tears' was substituted for 'Radio' and 'Clown Time Is Over' from *Get Happy* was included. 'King Horse' and 'Clubland' were monumental but the meagre and lukewarm crowd could only get Elvis back for one encore.

On balance the Auckland show was the better rock'n'roll event, but anyway you look at it, two



Elvis Costello & Bruce Thomas, LCC.

consecutive nights of Costello on his present form can only be magic.

George Kay

**Right Royal Rage: Screaming Meemees, Newmatics, Danse Macabre, Rank and File.**

*His Majesties Theatre, 6 June*

Unfortunately Rank and File were an endurance test, due to some heavy handed mixing, even so Jero Max's guitar shone.

Danse Macabre's set was worlds apart from R & F, enthralled the crowd and got the audience dancing. It was nice to hear their older tunes - and later the Newmatics' and Meemees' singles - cheered as if they were anthems.

Despite the house lights being switched on and some early sound problems the Newmatics, reformed for this gig, were bloody marvellous. Though the horns, sounding lazy, hindered some of the set, Ben's drumming compensated. Three cheers for 'Broadcast'.

Bill-toppers the Screaming Meemees were vastly improved. Michael O'Neill's infatuation with his fuzzbox did sound groovy but shouldn't be touted as the next big thing, as it either started or finished nearly every song. If Duran Duran can go to number one in NZ, I can see nothing holding the Meemees back.

The show, moved along by the wit of compere Nick Hanson, ran smoothly to its climax with more people dancing than sitting downstairs, which seems as good a sign as any for making this event regular.

Mark Moss

**Prime Movers, Bongos The Pleasure Boys**  
*Massey Hall, May 22.*

This is really no one's idea of a good time. Sub-zero temperatures, rotten acoustics and a small turnout must have been disheartening for three bands who did their level best to liven up proceedings.

First up, and facing a wall of frozen apathy, were the Pleasure Boys, who delivered a set of gloomy originals, of which the Bunnymen-ish 'All The Same' was the best.

Next up, the bass-less Bongos, who opened with the typically up-tempo 'Machine Gun' (not the



Skeptics, Battle Of The Bands.

Commodores' one). Their version of Martha and the Vandellas' 'Dancing In The Street' finally had a brave few on their feet. All in all, a good set which did justice to the band's musical strength and original approach.

Finally it was time for one of Auckland's finest, the Prime Movers, who drove their usual hyperactive set through broken strings and collapsing drum kits.

The Movers combine unstoppable enthusiasm and a collection of sharp songs, such as 'Circles', 'Crying Again' and the frantic 'New Direction'. Energetic enough to get nearly everyone on their feet, and smart enough to keep them there, the Movers more than anyone deserve a bigger audience, which hopefully their contribution to the upcoming Furtive EP will give them.

Barry Morris

**Naked Spots Dance**  
*Rhumba Bar, May 20*

Naked Spots Dance are an inspired Wellington band. The steady stream of punters that experienced the new strength of the line-up and the material will testify to that.

The new NSD is Martin Fisher (steady pounding drums), Stephen Norris (jangly, airy guitar funk), Kate Walker (3D loping bass lines and shared vocals) and Kathy McRae (well-mannered vocals). The sound is not dissimilar to Delta 5 or Au Pairs.

Initially the mix was indiscernible and bottom-biased. It was never satisfactorily rectified. Sad really, because the full effect of David and Allison's violins, added periodically through the night, was never properly realised.

The essence though was a wash of tautness, of stretched nerves a la Velvets, minus any obvious plagiarisms. Not until their fifth song, 'Secrets', was true form and commitment shown. NSD music smouldered and smoked, with genuine concern.

Considering their performance, their next recording should be a supreme offering.

Stefan Morris

**The Clean, Dance Exponents**  
*Lincoln College, May 1.*

Whatever else they may be, the Clean are not entertainers.

The Clean do not court favour. They are not sluts.

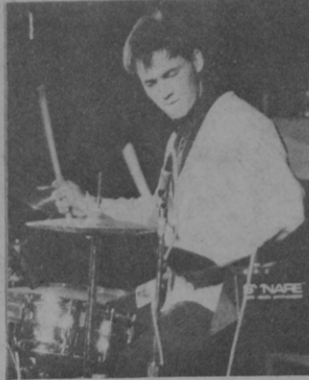
The Clean play pop music with-out smiling.

The Clean don't like you. Why should they? They don't even know you.

They add-libbed ferociously, people danced and it was a hell of a lot of fun. Great boys, great.

Whatever else they may be, the Clean are honest. From Hamish Kilgour's nightmares come Mushroom Records' latest signing, the Dance Exponents.

The Dance Exponents are entertainers. They arrived, set up and



Roddy Carlson, Danse Macabre.

the speeding began. The pace of the show was breathtaking.

Jordan Luck is a face. So are all the others. In fact, we're all faces. Yippee!

Rock and roll clichés - Jordan's "cockney" accent, sits under them like platform heels. They could step down from them and still be the Dance Exponents.

The songs? I'm told they're quite good. Whatever else they may be, the Dance Exponents are gonna be stars.

The Agriculture students drank a lot of beer.

Russell Brown

**Battle of the Bands Final**  
*Mainstreet, May 10*

So here we are again, 12 eager bands, a packed Mainstreet and more volume than the average ears can stand. Yes, it's the annual debauched battle.

First up were Skeptics, a Killing Joke/Bauhaus-influenced four-piece from Palmerston North. The sound system was still being tested and there was almost a total lack of drums. Some strong material and a powerful vocalist helped overcome the problems, enough to give them second place.

Green Eggs and Ham are, apart from keyboard-vocalist Nick Hanson, a brand new version. Original, witty and now featuring violin, they still need to tighten up a bit. They got third. Innocent Veto took far too long to actually get going, and lack badly in the material stakes.

Scouts, a three-piece commercial pop-funk unit, suffered from the age-old problem of no presentation. They did, however, deliver their songs with a fair bit of punch. Transmission are also a three-piece. Powerful playing and intricate rhythms, if they had a communicative frontperson they would have stood a good chance.

Oi Oi Oi and it's time for No



Kim, Gurlz.

Tag. Short-haired rock and roll for the boys and girls in boots. Like Proud Scum and Spelling Mistakes, their fans are likely to become the major problem.

Innocent are from Wellington and are so visually exciting I had to look in the other direction. Mantra are a Maori heavy metal outfit, Titan are a caucasian version. My ears started to hurt.

Next on were eventual winners the Gurlz. The no-hair brigade moved up front to intimidate, but that didn't detract from the Gurlz' obvious potential. Good poppy songs, well delivered, and you couldn't ask for a better frontperson than Kim. It's a pity that most punters were by this time already home in bed.

Zambucks have a strong Liverpool influence, lots of heavy toms and thick atmosphere. I liked them, though hardly anyone else did. Last band of the competition were Economic Wizards. Very young, they were light relief, if nothing else.

As always, it was a very mixed bag. Some surprises, in particular This Sporting Life not making the final, but in general the standard was low. The biggest disappointment was the lack of anything outstandingly new or original. I wish Bongos had entered.

Mark Phillips

**Teardrops/Bunnymen**

**Winners**

Those who receive autographed copies of *Heaven Up Here* and *Wilder* are Andrew Brice (Christchurch), Stephen Jelinek (Auckland) and Guy Scollay (Christchurch).

Three famous members of Crucial Three are Ian McCulloch, Pete Wyllie and Julian Cope, pictured was Julian Cope and the Bunnymen drummer prior to Peter de Freitas was Echo the drum machine.



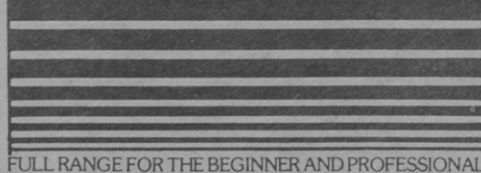
The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council is considering the publication of a Handbook for New Zealand Bands.

All technical, practical and legal aspects of playing, touring, recording and video work will be covered.

If you have information or experiences you would like to be included, send the details, a contact address and phone number to P.O. Box 1336, Christchurch.

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