

Live

The Motels
Grammar Boys
Mainstreet, Nov 25.

The fact that a band as talented and committed as the Motels has had to slog away for near 10 years to get any recognition at home is a sad reflection on the state of the American music industry. But the years in the wilderness have had some benefit. They've honed the

Motels into one frenzied killer of a live band. They were some kind of wonderful on their first tour here but this time they sizzled and not just because of the stifling temperatures inside Mainstreet.

The opener, 'Mission Of Mercy', was a shock to the system. The pace continued relentlessly through 'Kix', 'Closets and Bullets' and 'Celia'. Everyone sang along with 'Total Control'.

Martha Davis is a peerless performer, mesmerising the audience with those huge, penetrating eyes, face clenched tight in a moment of overwhelming emotion, feeling the incendiary nature of those

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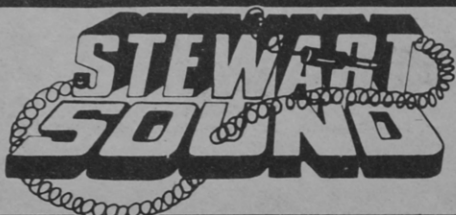
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Photo by Terry Hobin

Motels' Martha Davis, Mainstreet.

beautiful songs she writes. The bluesy 'Change My Mind' is a showstopper, beginning up in the balcony (she uses a radio mike) and finishing with a gut-wrenching vocal climax back on stage. The lady has soul.

It was the last gig of a six month tour and the Motels pulled all the stops out, thundering through 'Cry Baby', 'Danger', 'Take The L' and 'Apocalypse'. Guy Perry tearing off one utterly superior solo after another. Three (or was it four?) encores, concluding with a rendition of 'Forever Mine' that outstripped the recorded version and left everyone gasping.

The Grammar Boys have some good ideas, but the influences stand out too strongly. They've even got one song that sounds like a rewrite of 'Repetition'. Other songs are stretched out too long. More succinct and original statements are called for. Duncan Campbell

The Clean
Stones, Doctors
Captain Cook, Nov 15.

Dunedin huh? Let's be perverse and talk style.

The Doctors proved to be the kind of clothes nobody wants to wear because they aren't hip. Riffery and reverie — out of step with the rest of the evening.

The Stones are the kind of clothes people wear because they'll

never be hip. Michevious, sloppy, the Stones had most of the crowd packed on to the dancefloor watching. A few even danced.

The atonal vocals of Jeff Batts and Wayne Else were charming and wholly appropriate, but they may eventually prove limiting. The Stones always sounded best when the were making the most noise. But, when they finished without warning (as is the wont of such bands) there was the feeling that they hadn't done themselves justice, things hadn't been quite right. Basically good cloth, but a few more stitches needed...

The Clean could have been the Emporer's New Clothes and perhaps, at times, they have been. But none of that mattered tonight, the last (rilly, honestly, etc.) Clean performance.

It wasn't a "magic" Clean night, there were too many factors against that — including, perhaps, the attitude of the band themselves. When the Clean aren't enjoying playing, it's hard for the audience to get rapturous. It would have been nice to have heard 'Tally Ho' once more...

Still, the point rammed home was that even on an average night the Clean still beat the hell out of anything most New Zealand bands can do. With the demise of this band, the way lies open for another.

Russell Brown

New Order
John Cooper Clarke
Nocturnal Projections
Mainstreet, December 4.

Nocturnal Projections started things well, with their unrelenting songs filling every inch of Mainstreet. They played a decidedly better-than-average set, which was only slightly spoiled by a weird bass end sound, similar to that which New Order had suffered the previous night. But the Nocturnals were happy and rightly so.

On Friday night, John C. C. was unwell and unenthusiastic. Saturday saw his flesh back in the right places, his ability to notice the audience returned and he even permitted those close enough to scrutinise his shadeless eyes for 15 minutes. The first and last thirds of his set were brilliant, maybe because he made a couple of cock-ups and told some terrible jokes. When you're all alone on a stage for an hour with nothing but a bunch of doggerel and occasional backing tapes, a bit of ad-libbed humanity goes down a treat. And he doesn't really look like *Highway 61* Dylan ... well, maybe if he was drawn by Aubrey Beardsley with a raging hangover ...

New Order. Their only song that had previously got right to the heart of me was 'In A Lonely Place', on the flip of their first single. All the others seemed inconsequential by comparison — easy to gloss over. Now I'm going to hafta buy all their fucking expensive import-only back catalogue and start again, for the more I think about their performance (especially Saturday), the more I want to hear them. I still don't know what their songs are about, lyrics being indecipherable, but the power and attack of their musical approach speaks volumes.

Steve Morris is an extraordinary drummer, and takes turns at electronics and guitar with equal facility while a machine continues the percussion. Gilliam M. is a mystery, surrounded by emulators and such that produce a range of sounds encompassing all yer average synth stuff, plus what the rest of the band does and more. She also plays guitar, as does bass player Peter Hook, on occasions. What he does on bass is not entirely apparent, as often it seems to be producing sounds more commonly associated with guitar or keyboards.

All in all, it's sometimes very difficult to tell where the sounds are coming from. Vocals are easy though. Bernard Albrecht does most of them, with some from Hook and doesn't once sound like Ian Curtis. He wears his guitar high (as opposed to Hook's ankle height) and plays with economy. He also plays that extremely tasty instrument, the melodica, to especially luxurious effect on 'In A Lonely Place'. Beautiful. Last song. No encore. No need. Chris Knox

Body Electric, Jon McLeary
Video Party, 1860 Tavern

If rock video nights are going to be the next big thing then I might just sit this one out: All the disadvantages of crowded pubs and one channel TV rolled into one, no thanks. By the time you've seen more than half a dozen of the current crop of glossy band videos end to end it becomes more than obvious that most of them are just so much bloated pretentious crap. But of course this was just the filler, the real show was Body Electric, NZ's first actual 'electronic' band, consisting of 'technicians' Allan Jimson and Andy Drey (both ex

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Bernard Albrecht, New Order & John C.C., Mainstreet.

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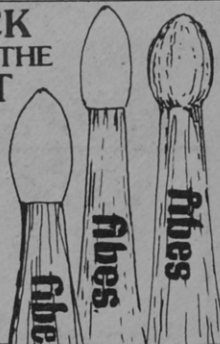
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