

Courtney sauntered onstage, some 10 minutes late I think, and gave us all the finger. She then proceeded to say how good it was to be back in New Zealand, the place of the boarding school that had "fucked her up". Courtney then strapped on her green guitar, put her leg up on the monitor and proceeded to play a surprisingly together set, with the help of her very competent band, including foxy new bass player Melissa. Phoaaw!

After the first song, Courtney commented that the "guys in New Zealand are much better than in Australia", then proceeded to jump into the crowd to fetch some flowers that were obviously meant for her, and to give the guy a good snog too. "Good kisser," she said, after climbing back on stage and showing the audience her lunch. I'd heard reports that Courtney couldn't, or wouldn't, sing all the notes in the songs, but she was on form today. 'Doll Parts', 'My Beautiful Son' and 'Miss World' were all fantastic, and 'Pretty On The Inside' was crudely and beautifully raw. As far as reports of her abusing the audience go, that was complete pooh pooh as well, unless it was when she was yelling at the crowd to "shut the fuck up", 'cause she wanted to play her next song. What'd they expect? Someone polite like Juliana Hatfield? I thought it was funny. Somebody threw her a sunbathing mat, which she promptly spread on the floor, like New Zealand's own little red carpet, and played on. This was followed by a spot of 'abuse', aimed at her guitarist. "His girlfriend's [Drew Barrymore] on the cover of *Playboy* magazine," she drawled. "I thought all this time you only wanted me Eric... c'mon, lemme touch it." She then chased him around the stage and tried to touch his dick. If that wasn't enough to confuse the *Herald/Sunday News* and some other startled men in the audience, she then hit him violently over the back several times with her guitar, while the other band members paid no mind!

I know Hole aren't the greatest band in the world musically, but none of the great bands in the world are. They've all got something wrong with them, which makes them right. Courtney is entertaining. She was playful and very funny, and you wanted to keep watching her and her band. Isn't that what it's all about?

The set finished. Courtney squatted on the edge of the stage to peruse the audience, then jumped in, reappearing some minutes later with half her frock pulled off, before disappearing backstage.

After all that excitement, I headed over to Stage Five to catch **Fagan's** set. The crowd here was completely different, consisting of lots of old Gluepot/Coromandel looking types. Not that there is anything wrong with that, it's just lots of his potential audience weren't

there. Fagan's set consists of very good poppy songs, in a Lemonheads-ish sort of vein. He plays the music the kids would like, but somehow, the kids don't go and see him. Maybe they can't get over the Mockers thing. Andrew is completely batty, and again, if you have someone batty, or mad, like Courtney, it's obviously gonna be entertaining. Between songs, Andrew was telling us about his new thing called the Future Earth Organisation, or something like that, in which you write your emotional problems to Andrew and he will help. He kept saying (infomercial style): "Blah, blah, blah, Future Earth thing... hi, I'm Andrew, blah, blah, blah." Guess you had to be there, but most of you weren't. I think I saw Martin Phillipps there, near the front of the stage. I think it was him. It looked like him. But then, the same night, I had a dream about Martin Phillipps being there, so maybe I'm wrong.

SHIRLEY CHARLES

The hypnotic grind 'n' growl of **Solid Gold Hell's** 'Sugar Bag' heralds the beginning of my *Big Day Out*. Beneath the folds of the Super Top, the one and only Glen Campbell (not that one, or the other one) is orchestrating the descent to a place much darker. Solid Gold Hell come on like a tragically forgotten house act, at a lounge bar somewhere between hell and the Mexican border. The sweet irony is that they are, of course, far from forgotten, or forgettable. Campbell sports the threads of one of those dreadful friends of the family (y'know, the ones you're supposed to call *Uncle*) and the kind of shades which proved Andrew Eldritch was a *CHiPs* fan. The combined effects are as intoxicating as the most creeping of internal evils. However, as I surrendered my six-shooter at the bag search on the way in, I am forced to abandon all thoughts of committing *Swingin' Hot Murder* on the beautiful people outside in favour of seeing more bands.

Stage Five is a lovely place to hang out. It looks like a holding tank for the non-moshers amongst the crowd and it's nice to find a decent patch of grass to kick back on. **David Kilgour and the Best Minds** are the reason I'm here, although I got my additional thrills out of watching one enamoured fan getting down in a pair of *Sesame Street* trousers. Very fetching! I arrive in time to hear my favourite Kilgour song, 'Nail In My Foot', and plenty more off *Sugar Mouth* follows, so I'm well pleased. Kilgour's resigned delivery of that sad, sweet 'Recollection' is a definite highlight. The set is unfortunately dogged by a crackling speaker, and Kilgour suffers more technical difficulties in his later Clean set.

It's taken a long time for **Head Like A Hole** to happen for me, but today was the day this was destined for, and it couldn't have gone off

any better than it did. One need go no further in describing the band than placing Hidi and Booga alongside one another — the former typically naked, save his dreadlocks, the latter's latest style looks like he's dressed for a *Miami Vice* audition. The perfect summation of their performance occurs right in front of my nose during one of the Booga-dubbed "sensitive" numbers. Two (apparently) long lost, hard ass mates swamp each other in an uncharacteristic looking, warm embrace, then, as if by telepathy, simultaneously break into a spontaneous fit of headbanging. Fair brings tears to my eyes, it does. Booga gets the audience in the palm of his hand, squeezes them tight, then shakes them till they're silly. The band blasts back to the Cabaret Volatile from whence they surely issued with a mighty version of 'Holidays In The Sun', and the kids go wild.

**Shihad** are sandwiched rather unenviably between headliners Hole and Primal Scream, but manage to make mincemeat of the trepidation which would understandably mark such a spot. Jon Toogood looks a lot more comfortable in front of a crowd these days and well he should, being at the helm of the heaviest and strangest band in the country. I can register nothing other than a stunned disbelief at the cold steel perfection which encased every component of the band, and the even mightier one (driven by man-or-machine drummer Tom Larkin) which hammered them all home.

**Ministry** were the moment I had been waiting for, and I'm damn sure they came close to being the last band I would ever hear, so blistering was their volume. Samples in tact, they burn through a bunch of the best, in front of a screen alive with the typical fodder of the monster called Ministry — death, religion, war etc. The renderings are largely faithful to their recordings, but I ain't never heard nothing this loud before.

Paying to be abused has always struck me as one of the stranger human failings, nevertheless big Al (yes, he is goddamn frightening in action) makes sure we all get our money's worth. "So you like the fast ones, huh?," he asks, to ass licking howls of affirmation. "Well here's a slow one for you, you fucks. It's called 'Scarecrow'." And on it went. It appears Al may have made some new friends over at the hot rod stand, as 'So What' is altered for the "Westies" in the crowd. After all the press I've read lately about what a nice guy Mr Jourgensen is, I was pleased to see him restore his legend status as the baddest ass in the business... and a damn good advertisement for earplugs. I left clutching my bleeding aural orifices, and couldn't hear a thing for the rest of the weekend.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

The Big Day Out: referred to as the big day off, and even the big day out of it. At the rate the St. Johns people carried bodies away on stretchers, maybe the latter is the best description. Out of it or not, it was a day to enjoy a broad range of acts, local and imported.

We got away to a late start, due to a freak accident on the motorway. By the time I arrived and was processed, **Moana and her Moahunters** were halfway through their set. The broadcast from bFM informed me they had begun with a poi dance. When I arrived they were belting out 'Sensual' a slower track from the *Tahi* album. Moana then stepped aside, giving Teremoana the lead to perform one of her own songs. Meanwhile, the Moahunters provided the super fluid essential funk background. They performed a few more numbers from *Tahi*, all perfect and professional.

So begins the wandering around. With all the construction going on at Mount Smart, moving from stage to stage was fraught with other bodies trying to do the same thing. I went to Stage Five, the little stage, to find a tutu clad **Jacinda Klouwens**. She belted out her post Fatal Jelly Space set, without the wailing that was her FJS trademark. Her singing has improved and so has her song writing. 'Pleasure' is the name of her new single, as it was to hear Jacinda again.

I was not in hip-hop mode. Neither were the punters as they left the Supertop in droves. The "dance party" kicked in with 'Damn Natives'. No welcoming mihi, no solemn karakia. Dam Native lay down the challenge and the challenge is to think. Think about that billion dollars, is that all? We cannot be bought anymore. The heap of them come at you like your worst urban nightmare. It's almost intimidating, despite some technical difficulties.

On with the show — **Three the Hard Way** and **Urban Disturbance**. I didn't like either of these crews and left during the latter. Though it may have been hard for them performing to the handful of remaining punters, but the dull humourless rhymes and beats dragged from the moderate rock box were not even entertaining. Is that old school? I think not. It wasn't their big day at all.

Coming back to the Supertop, I caught the **Picassos** at their blistering best. Yeeha! **MC OJ, Rhythm Slave** and their true school **DJ DLT** showed strength and experience. Mixing up their half hour, old school, new school, ragga. They have always been a conduit of prevailing influences, taking them and making them their own. Now they have stopped being the goofiest rappers in town, they displayed an edge that some of the younger crews can learn from, 'cause none of them had it.

Never mind. There were bound to be some



Jill Cuniff, Luscious Jackson



Gabby Laser, Luscious Jackson