

Jesus Christchurch

Hey, Rob Mayes. Change the fucking the record will you? For someone who goes on (and on and on and on) about being ignored by *Rip It Up*, it seems we can't open the magazine without yet another half page of you reciting your tired mantras ("blah blah South of the Bombay Hills", "blah blah national apathy", "blah blah The Hype Machine blah blah blah").

"*Rip It Up* is attached to the commercial market." Gee, no shit? Thanks for your vigilance, Rob. Wake up and smell the 90s — music is a business. It becomes one the second you step out of your bedroom with your guitar; certainly by the time you charge \$5.00 at the door for a gig; most certainly when you go into a recording studio ("to create serious music") that charges you \$100 an hour (or \$50 or \$25). Why should working for a living to support your music on the side be OK, but trying to make a living *out of* your music be something unethical?

You're down on people for trying to make records (and maybe a living — but I doubt they're sleeping on piles of \$100 notes at night), then say you're "denied an income" while you're "providing New Zealand with a service by documenting their musical history"! Denied by who? The Hype Machine? The Man? The Major Labels? Maybe they should all be levied a few cents on every "commercial" album they sell, and that could go to pay you a wage to continue your good work.

"Selling out", "playing the rock 'n' roll game", "budgets and labels and cellphones..." you level these terms of abuse at Pumpkinhead (What? Albums shouldn't have a budget?) for signing to Wildside, but Love's Ugly Children are just "getting their music out to people" by signing to Flying Nun. What's the difference? Neither of these are hardly majors anyway.

It's not about Christchurch versus Auckland. It's not about Majors versus Indies. It's not even about New Zealand versus the Rest of the World. It's just about people doing their thing. For virtually all local bands and labels that's just surviving; no one's making millions of dollars (hell, thousands even) so fuck off about "selling out" (it's a completely meaningless phrase). As for cellphones — sheesh, my Grandad's got one — get used to them okay? As for "The Hype Machine"? Please! Auckland promotion is The Hype Machine whereas you send out "information" on your bands... um, what's the difference?

Music is a business and, sure, a game. If you want to put out records, you are *part of the same game* — so don't flop down on the pitch and grizzle when the big kids play by the *established rules of the game*.

Keep putting out records Rob. Good on you. Just shut up about all the other shit will you?

And hey, no reply is required. *Please*.

Max Cady, Auckland.

The Kids Are All Right

Grant McDonagh: I can't think of any Christchurch musicians at all that live in Fendalton, are snorting money up their noses, living in the lap of luxury and oppressing the masses with pop music. Take your working class hero fantasy and shove it up your passage. People spend years paying off good amps because they sound good, not because they cost more. Fuck your deluded stereotyping man. You are 45 years old, go stir some shit in your own peer group, where you might be relevant. Fuck off and leave the kids alone.

A Linwood Musician, Chch.

You're Not The One For Me Fatty

Hey Fat Mannequin,

Yeah, you Willie 'redneck' Hickman. For fucks sake, would you please quit the pathetic attempts at impersonating Eddie Vedder. While you're at it get a new act. The rehearsed head banging is too much for a person to stomach. I realise you're going through a major identity crisis and that the band is plagued with anorexia, but if you give up the try-hard accent, along with the transparent act, you'll be fine. By the way, gain some weight and live up to your name.

PS: Your music goes off, unfortunately you don't.

Lots of love,
Floyd, Waikato.

Is Pop Cool?

I usually take all contributors' comments in your magazine with a pinch of salt, but [Grant McDonagh, interviewed in last month's Christchurch scene report, *Rockin' in the City That Shines*, almost] stated in your March issue that pop music was oppressive, unstimulating and that it stopped people thinking.

Well, imagine a world where only black/death metal or industrial music was played or received airplay. Gee, what a happy, communicative, uplifting environment we would live in! Imagine Western Civilisation without Buddy Holly, the

Beatles, the Stones or the Velvet Underground.

Youth rebellion has been encouraged and endorsed in society through the marketing of pop and rock music, creating the generation gap. Pop music's role in giving sexist, racist, classist, homophobic attitudes a kick in the pants can never be overemphasised.

Besides, a life without ABBA, Duran Duran, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Kylie Minogue or disco would be cool and 'credible', but also very, very, very unsexy and dull — a bit like that person's opinions.

Yours melodically,

Thoughtful, Stimulated Pop Fan.

PS: Music critique should not be used as a platform for political rhetoric.

Cure For Bad Attitude

Dear Grant McDonagh and all you others who know fuck all about Christchurch,

It's my humble duty to tell truths on one or more matters where large amounts of misinformation exists.

Firstly, most of the 'sold out' bands that dare to release CDs or play to crowds of 30 or more people, or worst of all, play through good amplifiers, live in central/east Christchurch.

Secondly the good gear is, or was, paid for by years of living in scum holes with little furniture or food, and not by Daddy in Fendalton

Thirdly, I personally have never seen any excess cash going up anyone's nose in Christchurch ever. The only things that do get up peoples noses are misinformation and destructive attitudes.

Finally, it is not coolness and credibility that leads to fear of record sales, high crowd numbers, good gear, promotion of own gigs/recording or (whip me dead for even thinking this) some cash in hand at the end of a gig (it happens sometimes, I saw it once!!). These fears come from boring self destructive stagnant thought patterns. Suicide is a far more honest and considerate expression of these valves than inflicting then onto others — but each to their own.

Have a really nice day.

Chris (the roadie from hell) and Annabel Pugwash, Chch.

Come Together

Of the three commentators Robyn Pett interviewed for her Christchurch report (*RIU March*), I found Simon McLaren's comments to be the most positive, and I'd like to hope the majority of people in the Christchurch music scene share his views.

Grant McDonagh needs to get his head out of his bum — the Christchurch music scene as a class system? Puh-leeaase!?! The majority of musicians who played *Avalanche/Good Things*, whatever, are on the bones of their arses like the rest of us. Any 'flash amplifiers' were either borrowed from the likes of the Rock Shop, or are being paid off on drip feed. I don't know of any original bands in Christchurch who are earning a living from their music, but if there are any, good luck to them — the notion of suffering for your art is an antiquated cliché, which should have been tossed away years ago.

A salute to Rob Mayes and what he's been doing with Failsafe over the years, but let's face it, Failsafe is never going to be any more than a small in-city label without more aggressive marketing. That's too much for one person to handle and any bands doing stuff with Failsafe need to get off their bums themselves, rather than stretching Rob's patience and resources to the limit. However, there are two sides to every story and maybe Rob needs to take a good look at his motives too.

I've been involved with Christchurch music since the late 70s/early 80s, and we have a huge pool of talent in all avenues of music in this city, but it seems so bloody disjointed at the moment. I don't see much hope for the scene here until all the dissing and back stabbing stops, and people make a conscious effort to support one another. John Greenfield's funeral and wake made me realise what an incredibly small and fragile community we are and that we've gotta learn to work together, not against each other. We have to remember that all music (from the most banal pop to the wildest shit imaginable) is valid and serves a purpose, which is to make people *feel*, rather than rationalise and that enjoyment of music (as with any art) is dependant on personal taste, nothing more.

Thanks for the article Robyn. Hopefully it will inspire a bit of debate/discussion in the local music community.

Kristy, Christchurch.

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