

# VOX POP WHO WRITES THE SONGS?

There are a lot of them about — great New Zealand songs that is — and it would be totally unreasonable to expect somebody to single out their ultimate favourite. But we had a big gun lying around the office, so we put it to a few people's heads and popped the question: 'Name your all-time favourite New Zealand song and tell us why you like it.'



"If I Were You' by the Straitjacket Fits, because I like the angle from which he's writing it, and it's still got the shiver-down-the-spine factor even now.

Also, Blam Blam Blam's 'Don't Fight It Marsha (It's Bigger Than Both Of Us)'. I like it for lots of reasons, but the main one is the line: 'Well I want you to be happy, but I would rather you were here with me.'

**Fiona McDonald.**



"Nature' by the Formyula. I don't think any other country could have got away with that being in the charts."

**Martin Phillips.**

"Boogie in the Mud' by Six Volts. [It's] just a damn groovy tune really."

**William Hickman, Fat Mannequin.**



"Do The Headless Chicken' by the Headless Chickens. I was too young to see the song live, but it must have been something else. Now they don't do it no more. 'All together now, fingers clickin'."

**Jo Fisher, Supergroove.**

"Anything Could Happen' by The Clean. Why? Because I like it!"

**Sir Doug Hood, Promoter.**

"My all-time favourite New Zealand song



changes from week to week, depending on whether the Australian record company is being patronising and obstructive, or the anti-depressants are kicking in.

"Currently, it's 'Lucky In My Dreams' by the Verlaines, because it's so vast and hopeful — but sometimes it's 'Certain Sound' by the Swingers, which was one of the things that made me first want to be in a band, or 'Cactus Cat' by Look Blue Go Purple, which was one of the things that made me want to get back in a band when I wasn't in one."

**Don McGlashan, the Muttonbirds.**

"She Speeds', because it's just a fuckin' good song."

**Brent Milligan, Pumpkinhead.**

"She Speeds' by the Straitjacket Fits. It was a really fresh song when it came out, and a song that will remain timeless. It really invented a New Zealand style and flavour."

**Bryan Bell, Dead Flowers.**



"True Love' by the Scavengers. That song has such a great attitude and is an excellent tongue in cheek look at teenage love. And 'Loyal' by Dave Dobbyn is a really emotive, quite moving song. Dobbyn is a master craftsman."

**Graham Brazier, Hello Sailor.**

Slave: 'Aotearoa' by Herbs; DLT: 'Stoned Guitar' by the Human Instinct; Otis: 'Nightmare Man' by Joint Force.

**Joint Force.**

"An almost impossible task. There are so many good songs that have come out of New Zealand that to limit the list to one is like sharing a plate of chips with a rugby team. I have to admit though, when I get a little homesick, the song I always hum to



myself is 'Ten Guitars'. I'm not too sure who wrote it, but I know all the words and the chords are easy. There are a few people that worked on my album who would probably kill if they heard it again, which goes to show how many times I've hummed it."

**Jan Hellreigal.**

"I always seem to be able to relate to my own songs."

**Greg Johnson.**

"Blue Smoke', Ruru Karaitiana. I love the fact this song was so famous in its day no one believed it was written by a New Zealander, and a shearer at that. 'Blue Smoke' has a perfect pop simplicity and a poignant melody never more beautifully sung than by Pixie Williams in the 1940s. 'Tears', the Crocodiles. One of those fabulous moments when a great song perfectly captures a singer at her best. Excellent fruity backing vocals and an inspiration to me as a young Gisborne girl. 'In The Neighbourhood', Sisters Underground. The best example of urban Polynesian soul ever. So effortless, so charming, so melodic, so cool. Utterly indigenous, but existing happily within an international context — something to aspire to."

**Jackie Clarke.**



"Whaling' by Dave Dobbyn. It's got that popular thing. People, audiences, you know, they love it — they can sing along with all the words, and it's also great musically and lyrically and emotionally, and it's character is distinctively New Zealand without naming any place names or making any of those fashionable kiwiana references. Do you still like singing it Dave?"

**Janet Roddick, the Brainchilds.**

"Saturday Night Stay At Home' by the

Suburban Reptiles. I was at a Catholic school in New Plymouth when punk rock arrived on these shores, hence I never heard of it till a couple of years later when I made it to the big smoke... Hamilton. The Sex Pistols records the punks played in the music room interested me, but it wasn't until I heard 'Saturday Night Stay At Home' on Radio Contact that I realised kiwi music was more than Dean Waratene and Jon Stevens. Life just hasn't been the same since."

**Mike Houlahan, Evening Post reporter and New Zealand Music Awards judge.**

"Baby It's You' covered by Blackjack. Paul Martin's an old mate of mine. Hi Paul!"

**Bill Kerton, 95 bFM Programme Director.**

"Taumarunui'. As a kid that was a song you always remembered on the radio. It's a real parochial sound. I immediately thought of 'Nature', by the Formyula, because I thought that was the first serious pop song we had. And any Split Enz."

**Michelle Scullion, soundscape composer.**



"She Speeds' or 'Dial A Prayer' from the Straitjacket Fits' Life In One Chord EP. Both are orchestral, sweeping and grand. When you listen to them they

sound like the last two songs in the world."

**Josh Hetherington, Thorazine Shuffle.**

"Hey Julie (Don't You Be Like That)' Otis Mace and the Psycho Pet Healers and 'Out In The Cold', Prince Tui Teka. Both equally as sick, er... compelling."

**Karyn Hay, Maxwell Film and Television.**

"Block' by JPSE because I know some of the words and only have to warble 'waaay... ol' block' if I don't know the words to that bit. It's just this beautiful, haunting, syrupy little song that makes my neck hairs go all a-quiver every time I hear it. My plants like it too."

**Yvonne Dudman, Festival Records.**

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Wellington bands **Shihad** and **Head Like A Hole**, has spawned a single entitled 'Mixdown', due for release in June ... the **Warners** label, who have lost several key execs lately, are expected to boost industry confidence by announcing their signing of **Neil Young** for five more albums ... **Blur** have recorded 'To The End', from *Parklife*, with French singer **Francoise Hardy** writing her own lyrics in French ... **Nirvana** drummer **Dave Grohl** is mixing the debut album by his new band **Foo Fighters** ... **Bono** and **Edge** join fellow Irishman **Christy Moore** on his single 'North and South of the River' ... hip-hop label **Tommy Boy** will market their own casual sportswear ... **Juliana Hatfield** suffered a breakdown during the recording of her new album *Only Everything* ... ex-**Suede** guitarist **Bernard Butler** will release two singles recorded with **David Almont** under the name **Yes**, on Virgin's Hut label. We're told it's "very Tamla Motown". Meanwhile, **Suede** are touring Japan and Thailand ... for his new album *TTD's Vibrator*, **Terence**

**Trent D'Arby** has cut his hair short and bleached it blond ... **Nina Simone**, who has been vocal about her lack royalties from sales of her old recordings, has won ownership of 52 tracks in a San Francisco court. With increasing industry pressure in the USA for old unfair contracts to be overturned, **Sony** and **Rhino** have joined labels **Atlantic**, **EMI** and **MCA**, who have already given older artists a fairer deal ... music writer **David Ritz** has co-written an autobiography with **Etta James**, *Race to Survive* (Random House, May), and Ritz is now writing an **Aretha Franklin** autobiography ... **James Brown** has had the domestic violence charge dropped at the request of his wife Adrienne. He filed for divorce soon after the incident ... former **Shelter** and **Mango** label founder **Denny Cordell** died on February 18 at the age of 51. Cordell produced albums for such bands as the Moody Blues, Move and Procul Harem, and as an A&R genius Cordell signed acts from T Rex and Joe Cocker to Tom Petty, the Gap Band and, most recently, the Cranberries.

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