

enthrall me, yet I believe there is more to them than can be judged on one night. After the underground hype that has followed this band, they just didn't satisfy.

DONALD REID

ROYAL TRUX, FLUF

Las Palmas Theatre, Los Angeles, April 13.

Although Royal Trux have a hideously poor track record live (a glorified tune-up session and you're doing well), the clipped blues/junk rock of *Thank You* was enough to lure me to this dive of a theatre. With a new and effective rhythm section added to the line-up, the album's material not only made live transition well, it even had a newfound, bottom heavy kick in places. The 70s recidivist guitar vibe was definitely in place on this night, from the grimy, flared pants on up to a few phased out solos from Mr Hagerty, and a great drum solo that even featured a little gamelan break. There were definitely times when this all fell into place perfectly, and Royal Trux rolled out a fine murky take on *Sticky Fingers* era Stones, only filtered through the New York art/noise aesthetic. (Fine though this is, Hagerty and Spencer both have a way to go before we should totally absolve them for Pussy Galore.) They grooved, they psyched, and they even got down and rocked, all while feigning disinterest and smoking continuously. Definite rock star material in action here. Other times, well, it all got a little messy. Ms Herrema's voice is not too flexible, and the lurching tempos hardly help, as a pretty damn awful version of 'Ray-O-Vac' proved. I guess that's all part of the deal when you want to have this much skanky fun. Openers Fluf were pretty fine as well, throwing out some nice choppy punk. The charts and MTV may prefer nice, emasculated boys like Green Day, but big guitars and a kicking rhythm section will still do it for me every time.

KIRK GEE

SICK OF IT ALL, NEFARIOUS, STATE OF HATE

Antipodes, April 21.

It's Friday night in Wellington. Over the course of the next 24 hours, some extremely loud music will be played. The setting for tonight's hardcore holocaust is Antipodes. The culprits consist of two bands, State of Hate and Nefarious, but the real villains behind tonight's skulduggery are from New York, and they've come to play a little 'punk rawk'. Looking around Antipodes, it's a fair bet little punk rock from New York has been played here before, the place reeks of espresso and jazz combos, but by evening's end there will be only one odour — the stench of youthful anarchy.

Being a conscientious fellow, I arrived around nine o'clock, to be sure of apprehending the good vibes on offer. Unfortunately, it took an hour or so before the first band, State of Hate, shuffled on stage.

State of Hate were a four-piece with impeccable taste in 80s hard core and punk, one shown in the covers they chose and the smat-

tering of originals that sneaked their way through. Perhaps they could abbreviate their name to SOH. Throughout their set they suffered from the infamous food processor mix. The sound pouring from the amps was a mixture of the Kambrook multi purpose blender and the Breville milkshake maker. As State of Hate departed, so did their drumkit, necessitating a tediously long changeover time between them and Nefarious.

Nefarious were a different kettle of fish to State of Hate. For a start, they had one more member. The sound improved marginally, confirming suspicions that the soundcheck was being carried out during the support bands' sets. After three songs, I took a wander outside and watched Nefarious' set though the glass windows, giving my ears a break from the Barry Crump meets Black Flag kiwi hardcore rattling its dags indoors.

By carefully positioning toothpicks under my eyelids, I was able to remain semi-conscious for the third interminable drumkit changeover. Father Time's beard turned a little bit whiter, and finally it was time for "a little bit of New York punk rock". Miraculously, the sound had increased a hundred fold with the 'All's' arrival. Leader of the pack, Lou Kollers, had a grin plastered on his face all evening, as they blasted through an hour of white hot punk rock hardcore and general noisy nastiness.

Despite the tiny stage, Sick Of It All played an energetic, limbs flailing set. Lou had a frog-like leap going all evening, while the guitarist's feet never seemed to touch the ground. Every now and then Lou serenaded us with a "love song". 'You've earned a castration / Your face ta face with your victim's fate / You deserve this laceration...' Mostly tenderness and emotion was steered clear of, the lads preferring the brute strength and bone crunching power of ditties like 'Scratch the Surface' and 'Return To Reality'. Both used back up chants and a gag from Lou that had me fooled for the first couple times. When the bassist or guitarist needed to lend their tonsils, Lou would wave the mic' in a member of the front row's face, giving the impression they were chanting the chorus. It was a darn neat trick, and summed up the good humour that characterised the gig. Sick Of It All never gave the impression this was just another gig, and the enthusiasm they had for playing live was reflected in the amount of sweat extracted all over that nice, plush grey carpet — the sweat of youth gone wild.

KEVIN LIST

BODY COUNT, ICE T, THERAPY?

Victoria University, April 22.

Woke up Saturday, feeling half deaf. No worries, gonna finish off the rest of my hearing at Body Count. Evidently, Mr T and the Count have been transferred to Victoria University. Arriving not long after 8pm, it comes as some surprise after the previous evening's tardiness to find Therapy? all set to blast off.

Looking like they've just finished a hard game of footer, the three likely lads power through a short, but warmly received set of Celtic hard

rockin' punk, vaguely bringing to mind Stiff Little Fingers. Every now and then bassist and guitarist get airborne, normally this feat would be impressive, but after Sick Of It All's gymnastics of the previous night, Therapy?'s efforts are a trifle arthritic. The co-ordination's lacking and they fail to achieve the all important height, except when cheating by climbing atop speakers. They close with what is presumably their big hit, judging by the audience reaction. Therapy? played a team game, setting the ball up nicely for Mr T and Body Count to run with it and achieve their goal.

During Therapy? the crowd doubled, no doubt a goodly number forced to trek from the Town Hall. The change of venue was a smart move. Given the reduced capacity of Victoria, the concert was comfortably full, allowing for plenty of atmosphere as Ice T entertained the crowd as a rapper, rocker and japester. As gangsta rapper, Ice T came out wearing a fedora, suit coat and gold chain. Flanking Mr T were DJ muthafuckin' evil E, resplendent in evil black shades, and to the right, his brother G. Appearing intermittently was LP, a young whippersnapper featured on Ice T's latest album.

As rapper, Ice T was in laidback, but not lazy mode, interspersing his greatest hits package of rap for people who don't listen to rap (probably around half the audience) with X rated jokes and a great Frank Sinatra impersonation, referred to as Las Vegas Ice. Being able to distinguish every word, thanks to the sound quality and diction, was something of a novelty, but much appreciated, especially when Ice T told a potted history of his own life. Watching Ice T baring his soul was reminiscent of Iggy Pop telling it like it was back in 93. Both shared the same raw honesty that transcended the genres they work in. But tonight was not just an Ice T solo show, and closing the set he promised to return and "show rock music's got nothing to do with race".

Returning as the leader of a metal band, Ice T had swapped his fedora and suit coat for a beanie and T-shirt. With the cosmetic changes, everything seemed to have gone up a gear. Behind the band stood two staunch looking dudes whose job was to be staunch, and I must congratulate them on a job well done. Even stauncher than the staunch 'still dudes' was the rhythm guitarist, who stalked the stage in a selection of evil looking hockey masks. It was uncertain if the drummer was a figure to invoke trepidation, as he was hidden behind a mammoth drum kit, surrounded by more cymbals than some drummers would use in a lifetime. The only sound bigger than the drums was Ice T's voice, which had been cranked up a couple of notches, but retained perfect clarity.

Opening with the Body Count theme, 'Body count, body mutha fuckin' count [+30]', the scene was set for a ballad free evening. The only interruption from the mighty ferocious sounds was the equally ferocious banter. "You girls get out of the pit. That goes for the girls with dicks as well. Let's see some blood." Finally some blood was seen, and the lucky claret encrusted punter was dragged on stage as an example of what you should look like after

a hard night's Body Counting. Try as he might, Ice T was unsuccessful in getting the really roguish members of the crowd into the action, and the front rows remained largely content to pogo up and down. "What's with this pogo shit? You guys are supposed to crash into each other."

Leaving out the slower numbers, Ice and his boys crunched through a heavy duty set, closing with an awe inspiring heavy version of 'Born Dead'. Running off his list of unfortunate minorities who are born dead: 'Born Asian, born Jewish, born Latino... born white, born poor, born dead,' Ice T managed to include most of the audience, even the middle class, so long as they gave a fuck. But this show stopper was not to stop the show, as 'Cop Killer' was still to be played. Following a quick mineral water, it was time to get everyone punching their fists in the air and yelling: "Fuck the police."

Wandering outside, I noticed the prominent presence of the boys in blue. Fired up on testosterone overdose, I swaggered towards the fuzz, full of reckless abandon... "Er, which way do I go to get back to town?"

KEVIN LIST

WEEN

Powerstation, April 23.

Best way to write live reviews is to find out the morning after that you were meant to do one. Hey, it was Ween after all — like I'd want to be organised. Garageland: hits, crowd pleasers. Yup, you guessed it — I missed them. Mea Culpa. Mea Culpa.

Ween rocked, freaked, fucked up and laughed around like a bunch of your friends that surprised themselves by discovering some talent. And the audience embraced them as friends, with mediocre solos from Dean being greeted by whooped euphoria from an audience going along with the joke. "Well thankyou," came the startled response in the middle of the song.

Joints were passed between strangers in the mosh pit like some student party. Sweat everywhere. And after the bass guitar blew up, the drummer strutted around showing why drummers get all the babes. Bastard.

Ween took the piss out of everything, especially themselves. They played most of *Chocolate and Cheese* ('Spinal Meningitis' and 'The AIDS Song' made so much more sense). My all time fave, 'Mr Won't You Please Help My Pony' ('He coughed up snot in my driveway, I think it's his lung'), was met by a crowd not knowing whether to dance, listen or laugh. One reviewer did all three — vigorously.

No 'Freedom of 76', no 'Push th' Little Daisies' (in fact not much of *Pure Guava* — all the voice warping restricted the live translation I guess), which disappointed a lot of people. Instead they played loads of old stuff (and was that Alice Cooper?) that no-one knew. That just added to their "fuck rock, lets party" presence.

It was the best of nights, it was the best of nights. They played, they conquered, they scored the two girlie dancers after the show. Wahy!

JOHN TAITE

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