

# Live

**THE MAGICK HEADS, CANESLIDE**  
Squid, Auckland, May 27.

An English man came up to me and told me he was reviewing this gig for *Rolling Stone* magazine. He said he'd give me a beer in exchange for a verbal review, which sounded fair enough. The Magick Heads are either very famous, or he was plain lying.

It was a select crowd (euphemism for '50 people showed') that viewed Caneslide, who include a person each from Treehut and the Lils in their number. They had a fine line in Sugar-like guitar pop, and powered through their melodic set with nary a backward glance.

The Magick Heads have the Bats' Robert Scott as chief songwriter; but singing duties are covered by Jane Sinnott, who was discovered down South, of course, singing in an 'alternative' covers band. Her vocals don't so much differentiate the band from the Bats as emphasise the folkie leanings of Scott's songs. Although Scott is supposedly on backing vocals, they were mixed so high that when he sang, he overpowered Jane's lead. Next thing you know, he's asking for more vocals! You'd think he wanted to be the lead singer.

It was all rather warm and friendly, reminding one of home knitted woolly jumpers and cups of tea. Jane added to the feeling, with her wide eyed inter-song intercourse along the lines of: "Auckland is such a big place... there's so much traffic," etc. It was a short set, and as the band left the stage, nobody yelled for more, or whistled, or even clapped loudly. The punters simply put their beers down and left quietly.

DARREN HAWKES

**FUTURE STUPID, MUCKHOLE**  
Kurtz Lounge, Auckland, May 26.

Admittedly, I'd had a hell of a lot to drink, but tonight was one damn fine evening. Kurtz Lounge, normally notorious for having the atmosphere of a morgue, is close to packed and buzzing.

KAFM. favourites Muckhole clamber on stage just short of the witching hour, and slam through a tremendously powerful set at an indecent pace. They've got that post-hardcore vibe going on — a tight, punchy rhythm section that boosts a superfast, grunty pairing of melodic

guitars and vocals. Muckhole borrow the sheer energy of Minor Threat, and match it with the pop sensibilities of Husker Dü and the Clash, and it's a winning combo. 'Subterfuge' was a Top 10 hit on bFM, and deservedly so — live, it's blistering in its speed, as is the thunderous pop of 'Don't Wanna Know', while shades of Youth Of Today are all over the manic 'Overdrive', their top song by far. Muckhole's calling card is a wild collection of first-rate, overzealous pop tunes, and I'll be glad to see them with alarming regularity.

Ditto for Future Stupid. The standard of this former Christchurch trio's live show continues to rise. Having played almost non-stop since they shifted to Auckland, Future Stupid have evolved into a well oiled, brutal band of heavies. A kind of Fugazi meets Rollins deal is what goes down, except singer/guitarist Tony Hallum writes melodies Hank could only dream of. Opening with 'Shovel', the threesome weave an intense web of grooves, built on huge slabs of heavy rhythms and sharp, dynamic guitar riffs. 'Speed Kills' is a perfect example, tossing and turning in a flurry of rampant chord changes, before guitar, bass and drums combine to strike a killer blow when the chorus hits. Much of the appeal of Future Stupid lies in their refusal to play 'angry young men'. Though they may produce music of a nasty nature, there's no sign of affected sneers or calculated animosity directed at their audience — both parties appear to be having an equal amount of fun.

Unfortunately this feast of enjoyment is over way way too soon, but it would be bitter to bicker, for the previous two hours have notched one up big time for the pleasure of rock 'n' roll for the pure sake of it. Cheers.

JOHN RUSSELL

**THE MUTTONBIRDS**  
Ultrasound, Toronto, Canada,  
May 26 and 27.

It's Saturday night at the Ultrasound, in downtown Toronto. I came here last night with my Canadian resident sister to see the Muttonbirds. Proudly we wore our Supergroove and *Mountain Rock* T-shirts. We danced, we yelled, we clapped, we screamed for 'Nature', and we sang 'I Wish I Was in Wellington'. We had a great time, and tonight I'm back for more.

I've just spent two hours at Massey Hall, in the court of King Crimson. Whilst their Royal Highnesses of prog rock were, as ever, at their technical best — I'm feeling the need for some good ol' rock 'n' roll to round off the night.

A small but appreciative crowd, with a healthy kiwi contingent, attended both nights. But it was on Saturday night that the Muttonbirds crossed over to the other side. OK, so I happen to be one of those who believes that Don McGlashan's songs just keep getting closer to perfection — but I gotta tell y'all back home, this was easily one of the best gigs I've witnessed anywhere, by anyone!

The set opened with the sublimely atmospheric 'White Valiant', and included such first album gems as 'A Thing Well Made', 'Dominion Road' and 'Big Fish' (the latter reworked as a stunningly beautiful ballad). But the songs from *Salty* were the real stars. 'The Heater', 'Ngaire', 'In My Room' and 'Anchor Me', of course, were all present, along with the ethereal 'Too Close To the Sun' and a rendition of 'The Queen's English' that took my breath away.

Folks, if you haven't already, you gotta see these songs live. On Saturday night, our boys didn't put a note wrong, and infused their songs with intensity and emotion. Thanks for stoppin' in TO guys. It was a night I'll not forget in a hurry. Maybe next time you'll have a song — as someone in the crowd requested — about sheep!

JOHN CLARKE

**THE CRAMPS, KIM SALMON AND THE SURREALISTS**

The Powerstation, Auckland, June 4.

I turned up just in time to catch Kim Salmon kicking off with that song that goes 'ow, ow, ow,' really loudly, which I had first caught at Squid two nights earlier. That night, the band played to a packed and enthusiastic house. They were less warmly received at the Powerstation (no thanks to the unusually prominent redneck contingent), but their performance certainly didn't suffer because of it. 'What's Inside Your Box?' and Kim Salmon's tiger print shirt were the highlights of the performance.

I swear I heard I heard a crypt door rip off its hinges when the Cramps took to the stage. The Vincent Price and Vampira of rock, Lux Interior and Poison Ivy Rorschach, stalked on like a perfect equation of mischief and menace. Lux took care of titillating the audience, while Ivy's icy stare beamed unadulterated disdain on our bad and sorry presence. Yes, we did deserve to be punished. How could we even attempt to be worthy of such a harsh bitch? As for bassist Slim Chance and drummer Harry Drumdini — I swear their expressions (blank) and hairstyles (immaculate) didn't shift once during the set.

Nevertheless, Harry's drumming reclaimed the phrase 'skin splitting' from the *101 Ways With Saveloys* cook book, and Slim played some mean slide bass.

Whether it was the music or the spectacle the crowd had come for, they got gluts of both. Material from *Flamejob* predominated, with 'Ultra Twist' calling the shots for the dance-floor. The new material was shaken up with Cramps classics like 'Bikini Girls With Machine Guns' and 'Human Fly' (but no 'Can Your Pussy Do the Dog?'), and Crampified covers, like 'Surfin' Bird'.

The spectacle side of things was more than adequately taken care of by Lux. Clad in black rubber and high heels (and a bondage mask for a while), he spanked, crotch grabbed and microphonally assaulted and gagged himself into a frenzy. Some of that rubber simply had to come off, as rivers of sweat were visible beneath the shiny surface. When he unzipped the shirt, it let out such a splash, I thought he'd... anyway. Perhaps not sufficiently cooled, he unzipped his stovepipes and pulled them down until there could only have been one thing holding them up (the view was a pubic jungle). Then it was time to scale the speaker stacks. There isn't anything quite like the sight of a near naked ghoulish man simulating sex from on high, while his heels wiggle deliriously above him. The slack jawed, goggle eyed stare of one close encountering mezzanine floor patron said it all.

Lux wrapped up the show by destroying his microphone (he'd long since turned it's stand into metal spaghetti). After several concerted attempts with a Bic flick, he managed to render the instrument impotent. The mic stand, however, will live on. I saw some proud lads clutching it outside the venue. There were fire breathers outside the doors too. It was an insane evening which restored my faith in staying sick and getting fucked up.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

**THE POINTER SISTERS, THE PETER MORGAN BAND**  
Auckland Town Hall, June 9.

While an audience of 3,000 Silverchair fans screamed their lungs into submission at the Logan Campbell Centre, a crowd less than half that size, but more than twice their age, did the same for the Pointer Sisters at the Auckland Town Hall.

Arriving in time to hear just two songs by support act the Peter Morgan Band was a stroke of good fortune, as they were the funk equivalent

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