



Human

of painting by numbers.

Ruth, June, and Anita boogied on stage at 9.15, decked out like Vegas showgirls, and launched straight into 'I'm So Excited'. For the next 80 minutes, they pulled the best from themselves.

Their four-piece backing band eased into a groove slowly, and were left to catch up, 'cause the Pointer Sisters were primed and unstoppable. 'Hot Together', a lascivious 'Automatic', a cruisy 'Slowhand', and an explosive rendition of 'Dare Me' followed in quick succession, before the first scheduled costume change was cause for interruption.

Black evening gowns signalled the arrival of the 'sophisticated' segment of the show, where the trio performed tributes to Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith in turn. Fine for some, but it was the high-steppin' pop/funk songs I'd shown my face for, and the wait was graciously short.

By now sporting shiny gold outfits, they had it nailed, and almost raised the roof with Aretha's 'Chain Of Fools', then tripled the pace for the *Beverly Hills Cop* theme, 'Neutron Dance'. The faithful had left their seats by now, under instruction from June, who was practically dancing out of her shoes. A celebratory 'Jump (For My Love)' (what else?) was performed as an encore.

In the end more a party than a concert, the Pointer Sisters fulfilled all expectations to overflowing and, once again, the oldies were the goodies.

JOHN RUSSELL

#### HELLO SAILOR

Timberlands Hotel, Tokoroa, June 8.

When Hello Sailor played their first ever public gig in Tokoroa on June 5 1975, I had been living in the timber town for three months. Technically, I could've been there, but most parents will only accompany a four year old to a pub with tremendous ill grace. Twenty years on, I leapt at the chance to see their anniversary show, but it's a great pity the 300 or so locals gathered at the Timberlands didn't do the same.

Hello Sailor are a band who thrive when feeding off the enthusiasm of an appreciative audience, but on this occasion they performed to a bunch of braindead stiffies. They played two hour-long sets, disinterest spread like a disease amongst the assembled, and it wasn't until midway through the second set that a few pissed-up lads began to flail about spastically on the empty dance floor. Consequently, Sailor played without their characteristic spark, and the all-important 'edge' was absent.

Still, by no means were they bad. Brazier's voice boasts the strength of 10, and the songs, especially 'New Tattoo', 'GMT', 'Million Dollar Hand', 'You Bring Out the Worst in Me', 'Fugitive For Love', 'Gutterblack' and, of course, 'Blue Lady', are beyond question. But for this one evening, the element that makes them a great rock 'n' roll band just wasn't there. For that, the crowd only have themselves to blame, for they totally failed to recognise that this was an occasion.

JOHN RUSSELL

#### BANSHEE REEL

Ultrasound, Toronto, Canada, June 9.

With apologies to local scenesters here in TO, I must admit that this time I missed the opening acts — owing to a bad movie and a couple on Yonge Street doing Neil Peart imitations on their drum kits!

Being a Wellingtonian, it was difficult for me to admit to the handsome chap at the door (he being a member of a Dunedin Celtic rock band whose name escapes me) that I had never seen Banshee Reel live or, indeed, heard any of their music. This was to be my first live dose of Celtic rock 'n' roll, kiwi style. So, with me trusty

jar o' Upper Canada ale in hand, I sallied forth to investigate.

Banshee Reel live resembles watching an onstage party in progress. The impressive lineup of Allan Clark, Julia Deans, and Chris O'Connell, sharing bass, guitar and vocal duties, is raucously augmented by the flying Scotsman, Gavin Duncan, on fiddle, and the world's first headbanging accordion player, Tony Coughlan, along with drummer Andrew Moen.

To the great misfortune of the band and Toronto punters, the 'deal' releasing their two albums over here suffered from the unscrupulous nature of the Canadian company involved. Both *Culture Vulture* and *An Orchestrated Litany of Lies* were available at the door though. It was just as well too, 'cause it was the songs off the latest offering that fair blew the place away — In particular, 'Sorrow', 'Lament', 'Horses' and the rollicking 'In Yer Dreams' in particular. The crowd was small, but appreciative, and refused to let the Reelers off without a couple of encores, including a furious rendition of the Stones' 'Honky Tonk Woman'. But let's not be too picky — Banshee Reel's whole set partied in my head long after the weary drive home.

JOHN CLARKE

#### DRILL, FIGURE 60, CANESLIDE

Pod, Auckland, June 10.

Outside it rained and it poured, while under cover at Pod there was enough room to swing a million and one cats when the trio named Caneslide ambled to the stage. With a lineup featuring Nicola Rush on drums, former Treehut bassist Andrew Moore on guitar, and Boyd Thwaites of the Lils on bass, Caneslide unsurprisingly didn't stray too far from the latter two's past musical outings. Short and noisy pop songs were on offer, the rhythm section remaining straightforward and solid, while all melodies were carried by Moore's guitar and vocals. Any nod in the jangle direction was thankfully avoided, with smooth dollops of feedback and squealing chords being dropped into the mix, giving the whole affair a Pavement meets Buffalo Tom feel. However, the similar nature of each tune meant they fell some way short of keeping your full attention for the whole set.

The numbers were up slightly for the arrival of Figure 60. When they last played Pod in March, I left early, tiring quickly of what sounded like a pot-induced practise room jam, but tonight they were on top of it. The pulsing heart of what's known as 'Figure 60 on a good night' is a guitar that seeps everywhere, at times a luxurious blanket of catchy swirls, and just as often, a collection of high frequency howls with no trimmings. Kept under control by an appropriately rigid bass and drum combo, songs eventually wind there way out of the sonic guitar chaos, and rise to a melodic peak, just as you expect a tune to lose itself in a heap of Xpressway-style indulgence. So, it's good to glean enjoyment from them once again. Most reassuringly, Figure 60 continue to realise that tightness, slickness, and presentation don't matter for shit.

It's perhaps unfair to accuse a band that ventures out as infrequently as Drill of experiencing fluctuating form, but for that reason they can only be seen as being good or bad. For the first time, I voted them the latter. Drill aren't a band known for their prolific output, but two new songs served as openers. Both were unstructured jumbles of twin feeding-back guitars, and busy drum beats that belonged elsewhere. There was no evidence of the deceptively simple structures and melodies that plants Drill in a league of their own. The brilliantly twisted strains of 'Fishy' followed, but an immediate return to the vacant extravagance of the first two numbers invoked the red card treatment, and sent me home for an early bath.

JOHN RUSSELL

#### BLAST OFF, DELIRIUM TREMORS, HUMAN

Quadrophonia, Christchurch, June 11.

Aye, it were a good nite to shelter from inclement weather. Out looking for the Stag and Poacher or Rovers Return, I had been immediately attracted to the bilious yellow portal of the mysteriously named Quadrophonia. For only a small monetary sum, shelter from inclement weather and lovely music is available, so in I ventured.

Inside it doth be mightily warm with bodily heat of young patrons. On itty bitty stage in little bitty bar are Blast Off, playing a collection of good time oldies and classic hard rocking hits for appreciative patrons. One over awed patron comes away with tears in eyes. "They played My Sharona," said the emotional young man. Indeed they did, and plenty more, making sure

evil Jack Frostiness is kept well at bay.

Keeping the stage toasty warm, next up were young hopefuls Delirium Tremors, playing their own all original tunes. 'Chug a luga chugga,' goes Mr Guitar, pumping out loud brain pounding riff after riff. 'Rump a thumpa lumpa,' go Mr Bass and young Master Drums. Whilst funky yet hard rocking vibes are being crafted by aural artists, the bouncing around and vocal gyrations are provided by a small wiry figure. Lyrics are chanted repeatedly, a lá Zach de la Rocha, and throughout the entire set the curly haired jack-in-the-box makes certain his bounce goes the full distance. The DTs manage to keep the interest up throughout most of their set, although the epic 'The Wheel Turns' could perhaps use a little CRC.

Near set's end, good humoured and self deprecating frontman tells audience they can all start having fun soon, because Human are next up. Me thinketh Mr DTs doth protest too much. Although only new around town, Delirium Tremors have played some awesome gigs.

However, tonight was to be Human's night. If Body Count and Pantera had popped along, chances are the evening still would have been Human's. There's little one can say about a band that goes to the trouble of crafting sheep skull cod pieces, so instead I'll let the picture tell the story of glam/death metal's finest hour.

KEVIN LIST

#### MASSIVE ATTACK SOUND SYSTEM

Shed 21, Wellington, June 17.

Massive Attack's music melds heavy, melodic dub with a soulful take on the underside of the psyche. Born of the tough UK city of Bristol, where drugs and gang violence provide a backdrop to the strong and largely black music scene, the Massive Attack crew lives up to its name, delivering a sound which is impressive in both size and force.

Shed 21 is a cavernous and impressive building standing empty on Wellington's waterfront. Saturday night saw it transformed into the venue for the biggest dance party of the year for the capital city.

As the crowd trickled in through the tight security, the 'warm-up' DJs sent eddies of chilly techno bouncing off the brick walls. Coats stayed on for the first few hours, until the combined body heat of the 1,800 people present warmed the air and loosened the atmosphere.

Some of those who forked out \$50 for a ticket seemed to take awhile to stop anticipating and start enjoying themselves in the unfamiliar venue. Although the impeccably behaved crowd were predominantly young, clued-up and out to make a night of it, the range of people who turned up was very broad, and a proportion of them must have not known quite what they were in for musically.

Nevertheless, the collection of musicians put on a show which sucked the crowd into a dense and deep groove, from which there was no escaping. There was little they could do but be moved. This was a dance party rather than a concert, and some truly funky moves were being busted. A not insubstantial amount of flirting also went on. Although Massive Attack's music is not always warm and fuzzy, it is certainly sexy.

Mounted video screens repeated a sequence of computer generated images, while the sound equipment took up a huge area of floor space and spat out a bass so fat and chunky that the vibrations could be felt clearly though the asphalt in the carpark outside.

Built around a core of three musicians (3D, Daddy G and DJ Mushroom), the group managed to deliver a rich and diverse sound by working with a variety of other musicians and singers. Sister Deborah, in particular, had the crowd right where she wanted them, under the spell of her powerful voice and awesome stage presence. Mushroom blew a few minds in the final phase of the set, as he took control of the wheels of steel.

Overall, an impressive show which left the crowd happy but not sated. With a farewell salute (which, in true rude boy stylee included a well received insult to the French), the British crew sent the crowd out into a chilly rain, complaining that it was only 3AM, and asking each other if anyone knew whey they could get some more of this fresh UK import. Massive.

Postscript: Rumour has it Shed 21 should have cause for alarm about its future. Apparently this impressive historic building is under the shadow of the demolition ball. If somebody doesn't realise its historical value and future potential fairly quickly, this two storey brick hall, with its cathedral style windows, will be razed so logs can be stacked in its place.

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