

snarlingly used 'Punk's Not Dead!!' as a byline, I still remained only semi-convinced until the widely misspelt Dreadstayne did their turn. Wonderfully messy, their bass heavy mix was worth hanging around for, and provided the highlight of the night for the by now sadly decimated crowd. Pure grinding garage, the band did what they did in fine fashion. Guitarist Antoni Baker was more than capable of some skilfully delicate fingerwork against the backdrop of Marcus Callen's rhythms, making the group definitely the most surprisingly innovative and un-dead punk crew of the evening.

CRAIG CEE

SEBADOH, GARAGELAND, DRILL

Powerstation, Auckland, July 16.

The drunken lecher includes me in the fraternity of man, saying: "Man, look at those beautiful chicks. Woooah! What I'd do..." Not exactly the polite geek-boy loser you'd expect at a Sebadoh concert, but it was that type of audience tonight - what you'd politely call the good-time gig goers. They wanted to be rocked.

Drill rocked for their last gig ever. Drill do not sound like their name suggests. They are far more tuneful than a boring tool. Their set was full of stop-start songs and guitarists twiddling with their amps. It suggests art wank, but Drill were too unpretentious and melodic to ever wear that label.

Garageland, too, rocked. They looked marvellous on stage, like a band with something to prove. Their style may reveal influences in places, but the songs are perfect moments. The new country lounge-lizard angle they displayed just added to the show. If their forthcoming EP traps the right songs, they're assured success.

Sebadoh rocked. And rocked and rocked and rocked... for 135 minutes. The Lou Barlow ballads were rare, with 'Bouquet for a Siren' a highlight. The set was mainly anthemic power-pop. Barlow did most singing, with bassist Loewenstein's louder, rawer voice complimenting his bandmate's restrained style. Contradicting popular wisdom, it was Loewenstein's songs, particularly off *Bakesale*, that were the best bits.

The crowd were mean to Barlow, throwing things at him and not really clapping loud enough for him, until he whinged: "You're taking us for granted!" Oh, we did treat him bad. Barlow was lucky to be kicked out of Dinosaur Jr.. Whereas Dinosaur's recent Auckland gig was lethargic and mediocre, Sebadoh showed all the fun and excitement of being in a band and making cool music.

DARREN MITCHELL HAWKES

PALACE BROTHERS

Toast, Burlington, Vermont, USA, June 2.

Received wisdom about Burlington is that it's a rich college town, outpost of trust fund liberalism, gloating over its own supposed 'character', or, worse still, 'old world charm'. This is all pretty much true, but it's still the United States, so the first car we see after crossing the border from the rural waste-space of Southern Quebec into the Vermont forest (exulting all the while, incidentally, in the hot and cold and colder flushes of the extra suave new Tindersticks album) isn't a car, but a pickup truck sporting a bumper sticker that says: 'My wife, yes. My dog, maybe. My gun, never.' Just the kind of opportunity a professional rock journalist is always on the lookout for (in the absence of a press release to rewrite): the chance to draw a facile analogy between this trifling piece of redneck iconography and Will Palace's evident readiness to explore/exploit at least some of the hillbilly trappings of his Kentucky background. This should, in turn, serve to remind us once more that, come judgement day, professional rock journalists will find themselves only a circle or two higher up in Hell than, say, whistling bus drivers, or professional musicians.

A large cowboy hat and a Southern accent aren't intended to disguise for a second the fact that the Palace Brothers don't play 'authentic' country or bluegrass, and never have. Rural Gothic tradition is no more 'in their blood' than is the influence of urban socialites like Cave and Cohen, and for that matter, Russian symbolist poet Alexander Blok. That's why their audience is mostly college kids and sundry middle class idlers. The support act

does a wretchedly soft-boiled version of 'Candy Say', and they're not, to my knowledge, played on Country FM.

Anyway, four so-called Brothers are assembled to show off a fairly slick new sound tonight: a drummer whose unobtrusiveness, both as a physical presence and as a player, is almost exaggerated; a discreetly long haired keyboard guy struggling manfully with all the piano, organ and bass parts; and an electric guitarist who looks like Otis from *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer*, whose job is quietly to gainsay whatever the vocal melody is doing with his delicate, absent minded inventions. Then there's Will, who confirms the mythology that sprang up when he wasn't paying attention by looking about 18, in a denim jacket and the aforesaid cowboy hat, playing an acoustic guitar several sizes too big for him. When he sings, he sounds as young as he looks and, curiously, about a hundred years older at the same time. On record, this effect is heightened by a habit of using two almost identical vocal tracks just slightly out of synch, like the phantom of his old age haunting his youth, or something (which isn't necessarily all that deep or mystical — think of Coppola's silly *Dracula*). Live, though, it's just the strangest symptom of a generalised, almost systematic, perversity (slow learners, please note: this is in no way the same thing as perversion).

Whenever one of the young Werthers of Burlington or Montréal is foolish enough to call out for the song by which he likes to cry himself to sleep, it's immediately struck from the set list, and Will isn't shy about telling him so. They do 'All Gone, All Gone', and a weirdly synco-pated version of 'Agnes, Queen of Sorrow', from the recent *Hope* EP, but most of the set is brand new, and as cold and dry as a heart could desire. Country, stereotypically all about honesty and reassurance, becomes a slippery, deceptive surface, belying an unsentimentality that's so far from down home it might have been beamed in from Neptune. Sure, the lyrics are about horses and death and drinking (subject matter that leads you to expect a nice warm rush of instrumental emotion every so often), but it never comes, and you're left confused and shivering. The beauty of these songs

is that, in the words of Hitchcock (Robin, not Alfred), they were 'born with something missing'.

MATTHEW HYLAND

PREMATURE AUTOPSY, DELUGE

Exchange Tavern, Hamilton, July 20.

The Exchange is new territory for me, and boasting an interior look somewhere between Cobb & Co and Auckland's Boardwalk Bar, it's an odd place to see a band or two. A motley mix of bikies, punks and metallers were gathered around the bar to catch tonight's dose of heaviness, and certainly they weren't let down.

First on is Auckland band Deluge. The guitarist is wearing a Napalm Death shirt, and this is as good a reference point as any. Deluge play slightly less beats per minute, but play for many more minutes, and like the UK speedsters, they deal to their audience in a brutally heavy fashion. The roundhouse knockout of their three quarter hour set was a bombastic number called 'Bloating Beast', where the vocalist's guttural howls battled for supremacy with wave after wave of maximum velocity guitar. Despite an atrocious sound mix, from where I stood Deluge definitely pleased the assembled, although the vocalist's parting comment — "thanks for that great round of indifference" — suggests he underestimated how much this scene was being dug.

This was Premature Autopsy's sixth show on their *Modus Operandi* tour, and they have this live caper sussed. Their set consists of super-fast noisesome notions, propelled by a solid rhythm section that's tight without sounding regimented, while, blessed with this supportive base, monstrously heavy riffs are dropped by the two guitarists. The true spark to this performance, though, is a raucously charismatic frontman who stomps and staggers across the stage, all the while roaring his vocal chords into oblivion. Without the knowledge of song titles, it's impossible to single out exceptional 'tunes', but each and every one was an exercise in intensity, and a thrill I hope to repeat before too much longer.

JOHN RUSSELL

Video

AIRHEADS

Director: Michael Lehmann

This film has less cred' than a nose goblin in a pâté sculpture.

A righteous rock band looking for an unsolicited record deal can't get one because they never get played on the radio, and can never get played on the radio because they don't have a record deal. They accidentally on purpose take an entire radio station hostage in an attempt to get their demo played. The in-joke is, their guns are loaded with nothing but capicum juice and tobasco sauce — good for temporary blinding, but hardly lethal. That's the main gag on which this lame-fest' is built. A handful of flat rocker jokes are thrown in to pad out the package. I won't bore you with examples.

Don't make the mistake of thinking a bunch of your friends and a table full of giggle inducing goodies will turn *Airheads* into a fun night in. They won't. It's crap.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU

Director: Andrew Bergman

I must confess, I had to steel myself before I thought I could stomach this light romantic number. However, it stars my man Nic Cage, so I managed to suspend my scepticism.

Cage plays a good cop married to a nasty beautician (Rosie Perez). When her dead father visits her in a dream, bearing the winning numbers to the New York State Lottery, she instructs her husband to go and buy a ticket. When Cage gets stuck without enough money to tip a waitress (Bridget Fonda) having one of the worst days of her life, he promises her half of any proceeds the lottery ticket might win. When the ticket does win, he makes two million dollars worth of good on his promise. Understandably, this makes things stickier than usual between he and his horrible wife, and all gooey between he and the waitress. The original relationships get a shake-up (no prizes for guessing where Cage and Fonda end up), and the money goes everywhere.

There are plenty of simple morals here, namely: a promise is a promise; money can't buy happiness; good things come to good people, and vice versa. If you like hearing this kind of stuff, you'll like this.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

Reel News

Cameron Diaz has just finished shooting her follow-up to *The Mask*, the low budget feature *The Last Supper*. She plays one of a group of liberal graduate students, who turn their apartment into a slaughter house for invited dinner guests who dare to oppose their leftist views ... *Romper Stomper* director **Geoffrey Wright**'s latest youth gone wild flick is *Metal Skin*, starring **Ben Mendelsohn**, **Aden Young** and **Tara Morice** ... **Antonio Banderas** will star in the sequel to *El Mariachi*, *Desperado* (its working title was *Return of the Mariachi*). Originally intended as a bigger budget remake of the original, now an entirely new plot line is emerging ... **Mike Newell** directs **Hugh Grant**, **Alan Rickman**, **Prunella Scales** and big screen newcomer **Georgina Cates** in the theatre world tale *An Awfully Big Adventure* ... **Sean Connery** stars as King Arthur, **Richard Gere** as Lancelot and **Julla Ormond** as Guinevere, in the medieval epic *First Knight* ... **Julla Ormond** and **Tim Roth** star as a prison dentist and an inmate (respectively) who fall in lust behind bars ... **Tim Roth** stars as a hit-man despatched to his home territory in *Little Odessa* ... **Helena Bonham Carter** plays **Woody Allen**'s wife in his latest (yet to be named) metropolitan romance ... REM's **Michael Stipe** has set up his own film production company, Single Cell Pictures. New Line Pictures have given Single Cell a two year, first look deal to develop and produce feature films. Stipe is looking to produce projects which will "bridge that chasm" between independent film and Hollywood fodder. Single Cell is already being swamped with submissions ... **Johnny Suede** director **Tom DiCillo**'s latest project puts the kind of low budget induced dramas which are usually kept behind the camera in front of it. *Living in Oblivion* is an indie film making satire which boasts a cast of indie film survivors, including **Steve Buscemi**, **Catherine Kenner**, **Dermot Mulroney** and **James**

LeGros ... Aerosmith video babe and *The Crush* star **Alicia Silverstone**'s next film is entitled *Clueless* ... *The Joy Luck Club* director **Wayne Wang**'s latest film is *Smoke*. With a screenplay by *The Music of Chance* writer **Paul Auster**, the film focuses on the way people talk. **Harvey Keitel** heads a cast which includes **Stockard Channing**, **William Hurt** and **Forest Whitaker** ... the latest **Michael Crichton** book to get the big screen treatment is *Congo* ... **Ken Russell**'s latest film is *Mindbender*, based on the life of legendary spoon bender **Uri Geller**. Towards the end of the film, Geller himself appears on screen to psychically fix any broken watches viewers may have brought. The experiment has tested well in a UCLA study and at a film preview in Israel (where a 60 per cent success was reported) ... **Cindy Crawford** makes her big screen debut as the star of first time director **Andrew Sipes**' action movie *Fair Game*. **William Baldwin** co-stars ... screenwriter **Melissa Mathison** has scored her first produced screenplay since *ET* with *The Indian in the Cupboard*. **Frank Oz** directs this tale of a boy and his walking, talking, three inch tall, plastic Indian companion ... **Russell Crowe** plays a virtual reality serial killer who escapes into Los Angeles, 1999, in *Virtuosity*. **Brett Leonard** (*The Lawnmower Man*) directs ... **Sandra Bullock** also surfs the Internet in the upcoming *The Net* ... **Gus Van Sant**'s latest movie is *To Die For*, starring **Matt Dillon** and **Nicole Kidman** ... **Liv Tyler** plays a record company denizen in *Empire* ... *Hellraiser IV* is on the way ... **Rick Moranis** suffers at the hands of childhood tormentor **Tom Arnold** in *Big Bully* ... **Anna Paquin** and **Charlotte Gainsbourg** play the young and elder **Jayne Eyre** in **Franco Zeffirelli**'s film adaptation of *Charlotte Brontë*'s classic novel ... *Like Water for Chocolate* director **Alfonso Arau**'s new film is *A Walk in the Clouds*. It stars **Keanu Reeves** as a choco

late salesman who poses as the husband of a pregnant woman ... **Vanessa Redgrave** and **Uma Thurman** star in *A Month By the Lake* ... **Ryan Slater** (Christian's little bro') stars in *The Amazing Panda Adventure*, a black and white and furry all over take on the *Free Willy* theme ... *Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home* has its original human star (**Jason James Richter**), while animatronics and stock footage take the place of its original whale star (**Keiko**) ... **Jason London** plays a student who beds his saucy maths tutor (**Tia Carrere**) in *Learning Curves* ... **Patricia Arquette** loses her passport and gets caught in the cross fire of a Burmese uprising in *Beyond Rangoon* ... the Mortal Kombat video game has been made into a movie ... **Ben Kingsley** and **Forest Whitaker** star in the upcoming alien flick *Species* ... **Jeff Bridges** stars as the legendary gunslinger and title character of *Wild Bill*, with **Ellen Barkin** playing Calamity Jane ... **Julianne Moore** suffers from suburban neurosis in *Safe* ... **Atom Egoyan**'s latest film is *Exotica* ... **Alfred Molina**, **Helen Slater** and **Stephen Fry** star in the bank heist comedy *The Steal*.



Tara Morice and Aden Young in the upcoming Geoffrey Wright film *Metal Skin*.