



"He's a big, strapping Wairarapa lad, who one day woke up with a stomach ache, but because boys from the Wairarapa 'don't feel pain', he did nothing about it. A week later when he couldn't walk, he went to the doctor who told him his appendix had burst and he needed emergency surgery."

Cliff Bateman, guitarist with Wellington quartet Short, is describing the medical misfortunes of lead singer Brett Garretty, and the inspiration behind 'Spastic Colon', a track on their new six-song EP *Shagpile*.

Short have led a charmed life since they formed in the summer of 93, as "a Saturday afternoon excuse to drink lots of Broford's Hooker Ale". Bateman, Garretty, and bassist Stuart Brown, having spent time together in various practice rooms over several years, recruited drummer Colin Hartshorn ("10 years our junior"), and played their debut gig to a full house at Wellington's Bar Bodega, supporting the Bilge Festival.

Bar Bodega owner Fraser McInnes saw the band play in front of four people the following week, but was suitably impressed, enough to offer to record the band on his label, Beats Bodega. Armed with a rare-as-hen's-teeth Arts Council grant, Short spent just one day in Marmalade making *Shagpile*.

Cliff: "It was purely financial constraints that we were only in their for a day. Listening back to it now, we wish we'd spent more time on it. It's a little rough, but that's okay, that's not necessarily a bad thing. If you make a 100 per cent record, what do you do next time?"

Prior to recording, Short travelled the North Island as guests of Head Like A Hole, and in recent months have supported both Dinosaur Jr. and Sebadoh, and toured round the traps nationwide with Shihad.

Stuart: "People are obviously coming to see Shihad, and they're saying: 'Who the fuck are they?' It's a challenge. You have to win these people over, but we're getting there."

Short returned to Wellington after the tour to be met by day jobs and University exams, but are hoping their run of good fortune will continue. A long-player is in the works for early next year, and they have their eye on performing at the next round of festivals and big days out. As Cliff says in closing: "We do have a plan."

JOHN RUSSELL

## Otis Mace

Otis Mace is a master of irony. This month the Auckland based singer/songwriter celebrates the release of his debut album *Quick*, 15 years after he first embarked on a career in music.

Mace first picked up a guitar when the punk explosion hit New Zealand in the late 70s. He played in a succession of short-lived groups throughout the next decade, most notably the Psychic Pet Healers, but made his name in underground circles with the persona Otis Mace 'Guitar Ace'. Although he has performed thousands of solo gigs nationwide, his recorded output has been restricted to a handful of singles and EPs until now. His rationale on this matter is a simple one.

"I guess I've always liked performing live rather than having to work hard in a recording studio. It's just more fun to tour round the country. Getting an album out has never been a priority, so it's taken me awhile... to put it mildly."

Technically, *Quick* is a compilation album, as it features a selection of older tracks re-recorded for the occasion (as Mace believed they weren't given the exposure and attention they deserved when first released), plus more recent material, and even an unreleased song from 1982, produced by then-Blam Don McGlashan. Filled with tales about milkmen, pumpkins, the Thunderbirds, vampires, and taxi drivers, *Quick* reflects Mace's penchant for basing songs on the simplest of ideas.

"Ideas come at all different times, and from lots of different experiences. Sometimes it's just reading a comic book, or it can be a sudden blast of inspiration when sitting at home. I try not to let myself be restricted by what I think should be one particular style of songwriting, so I just follow my whims and fancies, rather than commercial writing acceptable to most people. Five years ago, I decided I'd better start writing songs about my own experiences. I felt I had tried to invent things from a surrealistic point of view, but nothing affects you, or other people, like your own experience."

Mace has recently been rehearsing with Ed McWilliams and Geoff Maddock of Auckland band Breast Secreting Cake, and is in the process of nailing down dates for a nationwide tour to promote *Quick*. He's discovering pub owners are a great deal more receptive this time round.

"It makes my performance art a lot more valid in people's eyes now that I've got a CD out."

No one could argue that Otis Mace hasn't paid his dues in the business, but he remains totally unfazed about his lack of 'commercial' success.

"There's a lot of people doing music, and there's a lot of competition. Perhaps my personality isn't quite as pushy or as ambitious as it should be to become a really successful rock musician. I try not to let it get to me, you've got to maintain a positive attitude."

JOHN RUSSELL



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