

Paul is calling it quits, so a big set is in order. They throw in a few old songs ('Dig You Up' and 'Weep Woman Weep') and a cover of the Cosmic Psychos' 'Pub', but concentrate mainly on their newer material. 'Girl With the Luger' is followed by 'Hate Remains', then a naggingly familiar intro leads into the ultimate driving song, 'Vanguard 6 Hell Ride', where Craig sings the classic line: 'It's always better getting drunk on stolen alcohol'. They follow a new song, 'Astronaut', with a spastic boogie, groove monster called 'Jahbulheebosay'. Pheweee! This is the meat! It's everything Sticky Filth do well rolled into one — pure sickness. They finish off the set with 'Too Deep', 'Scrapmetal Man' and 'Mother'.

An hour later, Paul, having supposedly played his last gig with Sticky Filth, stands in the centre of the brightly lit, deserted hall. Craig's girlfriend Emily, her blonde dreads fallen about her face, is on stage at the piano playing Beethoven's 8th, the melody dreaming its way through us. Paul acknowledges those that remain, takes his wife's hand and departs.

GREG HAMMERDOWN

URGE OVERKILL, KING LOSER
Powerstation, Auckland, September 26.

For the finale, Urge Overkill drummer Blackie takes over the vocals, and asks all the girls to join them on stage. By the end, no less than seven girls are up there, boogieing and shaking it with the band. The last chord sounds and the girls look audience-wards, ready to jump. But too late, a roadie has rounded them all up and they're herded off backstage. Auckland's innocence is shattered.

But first up, King Loser. In Chris Heazlewood they have an interesting, opinionated, loudmouth singer — someone who, in interviews, slaps off New Zealand bands for being so bloody boring. He definitely talks the talk, but tonight doesn't walk the walk. The collected highlights sound great — Chris sets fire to Tribal's cymbal, Celia does some mad karate dancing, Chris abuses the late 20-somethings, collectively supping their Macs Ale upstairs — but it's not enough to cover their lacklustre playing. They should shock, they should rock. They should be the most exciting band in New Zealand. When they finally warm up, with three songs to go, they are.

Urge Overkill keep the audience waiting for an appropriately rock 'n' roll amount of time, before exploding onto the stage in a wave of power chords and sing-along choruses.

There are two theories on enjoying a concert — that enjoyment goes up directly in proportion to familiarity with the songs, or that enjoyment goes up directly in proportion to the amount of artificial stimulants taken. Neither apply to UO — every song has 'Classic' tattooed on it's rocktastic forehead. No chemicals necessary. You know the chorus before you hear it, you sing along and you don't know the words. It's why they pack the Powerstation on a Tuesday night.

All the band seemed to be actually enjoying themselves. Nash Kato chatted amicably about the local bars, an extra guitarist, looking like Animal, beamed at the audience throughout, and Eddie Roeser thwacked the crap out of his guitar. More importantly, not a single hit song was missed out of their speeding set, even that song. They left the audience totally satisfied, except, er, what happened to those girls?

MITCHELL HAWKES



Desperado

Five for Five: Culture Clash

New Zealand short films are hot property these days and, in the wake of their international success, the New Zealand Film Commission are now marketing them back home with an eye to an audience beyond the film festivals. There are two attractive video compilations on the market, and now five new films are playing the theatrical circuit as part of the Commission's new *Five for Five* programme.

The five films in *Culture Clash* all address the theme in question with varying success. I was expecting more of Lisa Reihana's *Maori Dragon Story/He Korero Mo Te Taniwha*. The puppets are splendid but, apart from one marvellous moment when the hero's shell eyes spin with passion, unimaginatively used. Although there are lovely moments when Reihana explores an interface with graphic art, or when a human limb intrudes on the action, this dragon tale drags somewhat.

Annelise Patterson's *Black Bitch* and Poata Eruera's *Mananui* both suffer from that embarrassing 'non-acting' that's plagued New Zealand film since Rudall Hayward's early efforts. *Black Bitch*, I found inconsequential; *Mananui*, simply crude in its depiction of racial tension in a small New Zealand community.

The stand outs were Stewart Main's *Twilight of the Gods* and Christine Parker's *Hinekaro Goes on a Picnic and Blows up Another Obelisk*. Main's film, rapturously shot by Simon Raby in black and white, is an erotic fable with a cutting edge in more ways than one. In colonial times, a British soldier and a Maori warrior

are thrown together with unexpected results. Greg Mayor's skittish Maori warrior is kapai kamp, and the bilingual subtitling is a hoot. Yet, for all its outrageousness, *Twilight* has an elegiac beauty, with poetic insight and images of extraordinary tenderness.

Parker's filming of Keri Hulme's *Hinekaro* comes complete with nifty animation, impressive effects and a full orchestral score composed by Peter Scholes. Indeed, it was such a temptation just to sit back and enjoy Rima Te Wiata (on screen as the bewildered writer) and Rena Owen (off screen as the sly Hinekaro) banter about everything from haute cuisine, humiliation by turd and phallic obelisks. Although it was pretty clear that many of its barbs were aimed at Pakeha patriarchy, *Hinekaro* possibly dazzles more than it enlightens; but if you've got style, you can get away with this in the magical medium that is cinema.

WILLIAM DART

DESPERADO

Director: Robert Rodriguez

One comes away from films like *Desperado*, realising that they are made by people with an immense fascination for the potential of the cinematic medium. Rodriguez, who burst onto the scene a few years back with *El Mariachi*, a feature made for a mere fistful of dollars, has shown that energy and imagination are not necessarily incompatible with a fatter budget.

I was warned I was in for 'Pulp Fiction south of the Border', and, in a nutshell, that's *Desperado*. Current Latin heart-throb Antonio Banderas is a soulful outlaw. He's equally adept on guitar and machine gun, sworn to revenge the death of his girlfriend — a mission that leads to some extraordinary revelations.

Be warned: the body count is prodigious, and the villains are so mean they stalk the streets with bared teeth. There's not a slack frame in the whole film (talking of frames, Rodriguez is his own editor and it shows in some of the most effective montage I've seen for years), and there are some chucklesome set pieces — Steve Buscemi's bar monologue about the killer that's lurking on the horizons, Quentin Tarantino's water sports tale, and Salma Hayek's gory bookshop bench operation on the wounded Banderas are just three.

"A little money, music by Los Lobos and Antonio Banderas, and we could pull off a good movie," is what Rodriguez suggested to Columbia Pictures. He wasn't kidding.

WILLIAM DART

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Director: Fred Schepisi

On the New York stage, John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation* was a singular experience, a sparkling comedy of discomfort about a cynical Fifth Avenue set whose lives are impinged upon by a mysterious young con man.

On stage, we in the audience played confidant to the cast, who stepped forward and opened their souls and psyches to us. In the screen version (scripted by Guare) there's a good deal of intercutting between past and present, which is pretty breathless till you grasp the underlying structure.

Yet, despite this, *Six Degrees* is very much a performer's film, led by the wonderful Stockard Channing from the original Broadway cast, and including such seasoned players as Donald Sutherland, Ian McKellen, Mary Beth Hurt and Bruce Davison. Into their over privileged coterie comes Paul (Will Smith); who prepares a chic pasta meal around their kitchen table, brings home a hustler, offers them roles in *Cats*, and throws their lives into almost as much turmoil as Terence Stamp did his victims in Pasolini's *Teorema*.

When Guare's ambitions stretch beyond brittle repartee and slick social irony, the film lumbers. A couple of truly dreadful scenes have Sutherland musing on the wonders of second grade painting in a school art room, and Smith appearing as a vision to Channing, pontificating on the limitations of the imagination (a theme which has been subtly underplayed throughout the film suddenly becomes embarrassingly obvious). The final scenes of the movie, in which Channing suddenly finds her conscience, rushes from a dinner party and, sans heels, strides along Fifth Avenue a free woman, is just silly.

But these are quibbles. They don't come much classier and wittier than this in mainstream cinema.

WILLIAM DART

JUDGE DREDD

Director: Danny Cannon

A few minutes into *Judge Dredd*, you come to the conclusion that this film barely needs any human component, so spectacular is its vision of New York (sorry, Mega-City One) in the year

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