

# Video

## SHALLOW GRAVE

Director: Danny Boyle

Anyone with experience in the flatmate lottery sweepstakes will get many a thrill and a chill out of this stylish little black comedy-cum-wince inducing thriller. It tells of the just desserts which befall a group of yuppie flatmates when they succeed in snaring a stranger to make their number four. Given the bastardly nature of the trio, you mightn't be surprised to hear their new flatmate doesn't last long. However, the way in which he exits is rather spectacular — that is, carried out by his flatmates, wrapped in plastic.

They are not responsible for his death, but what they decide to do with his body (after discovering oodles of money in his room) could get them in rather a lot of bother. They decide to bury it, after rendering it anonymous. One flatmate draws the short straw, and is thus forced to carry out the nasty business of removing the corpse's identifying bits. This drives him rather batty.

A nasty degree of paranoia and double crossing ensues between the flatmates. This is understandable, as the cops are investigating a burglary downstairs, a couple of very nasty thugs are in search of the hidden loot, and one of the flatmates, a journalist, has just been assigned the story of the very crime he is party to.

Once you've met this terrible trio, and seen the trouble they get themselves into, it's sure to make you feel a lot better about the flatmates you've got. However, it might make you think twice before calling them friends.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

## DAZED AND CONFUSED

Director: Richard Linklater

It's 1976 and 'school's out for summer'. For a bunch of American graduating seniors, this means hazing the freshmen, driving around town looking for a place to party, drinking beer, and smoking *lots* of pot. For the football team, this also means getting their minds around the no drink/drugs contract their coach has asked them to sign, with a view to protecting their form over summer. Everyone has signed, bar the luscious Jason London, who is torn between his loyalties to his team buddies and his lust for 'livin'.

Linklater has set the pace on lazy and loping. The narrative is more structured and less innovative than *Slacker*, but only because its progression is dictated by the hours from afternoon to dawn, and the supreme wasting they bestow upon seemingly every senior (and even a few junior hazing survivors) in town. Think of an *American Graffiti* for the 70s, and you'll be on the right track.

Plenty of good gags, a vintage 70s soundtrack, and a cast loaded with dreamy looking (in both senses of the words) stoners provide the padding the lack of strong storyline and theme need. While it is hard to relate to some of the American customs (the brutality and humiliation directed at the freshmen, the fascination with constantly driving in and out of drive-thrus), there are some heartening scenes which seem universal to all Western teenagers, no matter what the decade. If this film doesn't bring back those old urges to go on a letterbox wrecking spree or the like, you probably never had them in the first place.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

## FARAWAY, SO CLOSE!

Director: Wim Wenders

This is the sequel to the absolutely divine *Wings of Desire*, Wim Wenders' homage to *It's A Wonderful Life*. That film acquainted us with some of the angels who listen to our thoughts and watch the strange ways in which we pass the time that makes up our lives. One of the angels, Damiel, fell in love with a woman on earth (Solveig Dommartin, who is surely as close as a human can get to being an angel), and eventually made the move, leaving his friend Cassiel behind.

*Far Away, So Close!* tells the story of what happens to Cassiel when he finds himself following in his friend's footsteps, but experiencing a few more teething problems along the way. In fact, Wenders loads so many problems on poor Cassiel, he really doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell (let alone an angel's on earth). Pornography, gun running and Nazi connections, drunkenness, identification problems and arrest; unfortunately, all this makes for a rather convoluted storyline.

Nevertheless, *Faraway, So Close!* is certainly as stylish, visually stunning, and beautifully written as its predecessor. The soundtrack is sublime, and the cast has a real dream-like quality — ranging as it does from Gorby to Lou Reid, and with the addition of Nastassja Kinski and Willem Dafoe to the original stars.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

# Live

gie drooping from his mouth a'la Keith Richards esp.), Jawload laid down half a dozen solid, bleak, mini-epics. With swirling dynamics in abundance, they came across as anger-fuelled Jesus Lizard/Fugazi concoction, and wound up a barely controlled performance by either stagediving or trashing their gear.

Head Like A Hole are now five, with the addition of former Funkmutha guitarist Thom Watson, but one man alone could not be responsible for the new musical direction HLAH are taking. Somewhere in Europe they must have picked up a dose of the blues (the sound, not the state of mind), and brought it back home — that's not to say they're playing badly, just different. Whereas the pre-travelling band operated at a pace suggesting the world would end later that day, now there's a more laborious, structured approach to their new material. That said, 'Spanish Goat Dancer' and 'Faster Hooves' are spun out with reassuring familiarity, and once again Booga proves himself NZ's consummate comical frontman, taking his Elvisisms to a level Mr Hitlist could never compete with. A mass choir dedicates 'Happy Birthday' to Hidee, before he straps on a guitar for 'Velvet Kushion', with Datehole reigning supreme, making it the best rendition I've witnessed them perform. At times the stage resembles a playpen due to the amount of horse play between Date and Thom mid-song, though the audience enters fully into the spirit of fun, which is perhaps why they've been as receptive to the new songs, as they have the old. The finale is chaos, Booga, Date, and Thom have collapsed in a writhing heap, and Tallbeast is abusing his bass with a closed fist. As always, Hidee is the rock that saves them from a total loss of control.

It's easy to comprehend why German label Noise International chose to release Head Like A Hole from they're contract, Noise didn't get the HLAH of three years ago, the one they thought they were signing — but you can't help but know they've still lost out big-time.

JOHN RUSSELL

### EYE TV

Whiskey A-Go-Go, Los Angeles, USA, November 13.

This being the Nixons of course (name changed due to a whole swag of foreign bands called the Nixons), and having found they were in this neck of the woods playing at midnight, it was the sort of thing I just had to see. Even despite it being a chilly Monday night and the hour they hit the stage, Eye TV managed to keep the well jaded LA rock kids hanging around. It's been a few years since I saw them live, and in that time

they've hijacked one of New Zealand's better young drummers in Luke Casey (who just can't help but veer off into his early hardcore/speed metal licks at times), and they have that power trio sound pretty well wired. It's all plenty big, the Scott/Sturm front line aren't afraid to get those dynamics working by taking it from the quiet to the outright thrashing. All up, definitely a night worth the effort of heading out; plenty of stage banter that confused the locals, and a good band who show just what can be done with a great rhythm section and a front man with the musical intelligence to let them go at it.

KIRK GEE

### JELLO BIAFRA, DEAN HAPETA

Powerstation, Auckland, November 22.

Dean Hapeta is not a big man, but, to paraphrase the Butthole Surfers, he stands 10 foot tall with a mic. He begins by addressing the crowd — the largest turnout I've seen for a support act in a very long time — with some Maori lyrics from 'Tangata Whenua', a track from Upper Hutt Posse's latest album, *Movement In Demand*. Backed by some dark ambient noises, which unfortunately cut out part way through, this is quite powerful stuff — the language spoken with a vehemence accentuated by Hapeta's measured pacing of the stage and twitching bodily movements. He sensibly rounds off this first piece by explaining the meaning of the lyrics to the crowd — most of whom would only come into contact with te reo by hearing the odd Posse track, or Ngawai Simpson's show on bFM. A very good start. The remainder of Hapeta's performance is comprised of more a cappella lyrics, with explanations or mini-rants in between. By his own admission, this is Dean's first spoken word performance, and perhaps because of this, there is a noticeable loss of focus in articulating his ideology between the pre-rehearsed pieces. Still, this was by far the best choice as a support for this gig, and apart from a bit of first-time roughness and the crowd's attention wandering towards the end (bloody TV Generation), it worked well. Dean Hapeta left the stage to loud applause.

Next, the daddy Dean Kennedy himself, mayoral candidate, conspiracy theorist supreme, poet, sneer personified — Jello Biafra. Mounting the stage in leather trenchcoat and *Top Gun* style shades (and looking more than a little like Graham Brazier), he starts his verbal assault on the crowd with a version of the 'Shut Up, Be Happy' piece found at the beginning of Ice T's *Freedom of Speech...* album. 'Anyone interfering with the collection of urine samples will... be... shot.' If only this same penalty had applied to crowd hecklers. What is it about New Zealand crowds

that there has to be at least one excessively drunk or deluded (or both) punter who is under the misapprehension that the dude under the stage lights is there not to deliver entertainment to the crowd, but to engage in one-to-one conversation with them whenever they feel like it? Very fucking tedious. Aside from turning around and screaming at him to shut up or fuck right off, the only other solution I could think of was turing up the PA. Regrettably, neither happened, and "Einstein", as Jello named him, bored the crowd with his verbal flatulence throughout the show, reaching an all time low when he started singing 'Holiday in Cambodia'. Sad.

Anyway, after removing shades and coat (and still looking like the Brazz), Biafra gave his audience of old, new, wannabe and never-been punks, at least three hours of their money's worth. The religious right, multinationals, absurd band names, private prisons for kids whose parents would rather pay US\$20,000 than have them misbehave, laughable politicians, downright scary politicians, manuals on how to "de-punk and de-heavy metal" your children, the Gulf War, drugs, Tipper Gore and the PMRC, corporate record company bullshit — all tarred by Jello's broad brush. Most of the subject matter inevitably centred around the States, but to his credit, Biafra did bring things close to home whenever possible; dissing the *New Zealand Herald*, Jim Bolger (who sent a personal thankyou note for the "resources" sent here by some millionaire yank psychologist on how to establish draconian family values), the French and their bombs, and shedding some light on sinister censorship goings on in the Australian music industry which could well happen here.

Although accused of being negative, Biafra points out the first step to combatting bullshit is highlighting its existence. And personally, I'd like to live in a world where some of his solutions were reality.

JUSTIN REDDING

### HIT LIST, THE LURE OF SHOES, FIGURE 60, WRIGLEY

Kurtz Lounge, Auckland, November 10.

Ain't it always the rock 'n' roll way that the best nights are the ones you don't remember? That was true for me, in part, anyway, after spending a way fun Friday night at Kurtz Lounge's *Practice Room Romp*. The efforts of the cover subverting crowd pleasers (Hit List and Wrigley) overshadowed the noisy intricacies of the other bands (the Lure of Shoes and Figure 60), but hey, that doesn't mean I wouldn't want to catch the latter bands in another context on another night. Anyway, it seems they were lucky to get their airings at all, given the late start, shuffling reported line-up and rock 'n' roll end that all conspired to stunt the proceedings — but not their effects — on the audience.

The tone of the evening was set, and not surpassed by anyone other than themselves (more on that later), by (formerly Peter Stuyvestant...) Hit List, a band I've been biting my fist

for missing since the beginning of the year. All the reports I'd heard were true, meaning these guys did the business. Lounge lovers were inspired to hit the cocktails in the presence of a singer who wasn't afraid to get down on his knees for an audience — or kiss them, or play karate chopping Elvis for them, for that matter. His vocals would have sounded familiar to anyone who has ever heard Glen Danzig with his Power and Fury Orchestra (or can manage to imagine the sound such a name would require from that usually most unounge of singers). The Hit List's hit list included a personalised take on the old 'Crying' tune, sung in Maori, a version of 'Mandy', during which the guitarist couldn't suppress a leap, and a truly show stopping 'E Ipo', all accompanied by seriously cheese-o-ponic organ playing from a man in a dress. I must confess, the amount of glass raising this performance inspired boded very badly indeed for my memory's later requirements.

I exhausted myself early in the following band's set by shouting over the din: "The Love of What? The Law of Who?..." and assorted similar phrases. The Lure of Shoes was the name of the band. Their vocal mix was too low, but there were some good harmonies going on in the guitar department. I ended up being about as affected by their sound as I was by their name — that is, it intrigued me, but I couldn't really get a fix on quite where it was coming from, where it was at, or what it was alluding to. Help!

Next up were Figure 60. They were sounding dull, and doing it rather loudly. An errant bass player may have accounted for this malady (according to a fellow punter who, although trying to be helpful, I later realised was probably about as confused as I was), but I later heard the band planned it to be that way permanently, so who knows? Nevertheless, their short set gave me just enough time to figure I would prefer to savour their approach on a more level-headed bill... and night. As if to smack that idea straight across the face, the Hit List retook the stage. This provided a popular remedy for any blight in the proceedings. Their much more warmly received second set inspired even more cocktail clinking and sloshing than the first, which proved virtually lethal from where I was standing.

It was time for some punky pop abandon, which was a good thing, seeing Wrigley were next up. Covers like 'I Think We're Alone Now' and 'Glad All Over' brought the dancefloor to life, and the grinning enthusiasm and number of people (count 'em, five) peddling the tunes could hardly be contained by the stage. It seemed it couldn't be controlled by the venue at all, for at what must have been damn close to the end of a wild and groovy set, Wrigley got to end things the truly rock 'n' roll way. "We've just received a noise complaint," said the bass player. The band left the stage. I left the venue. I hear the disco dancers didn't stop till they dropped.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

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