



Richie Sambora

Live

BON JOVI, DOGSTAR

Mt Smart Supertop, Auckland, November 8.

There were two very different generations of fans gathered at the Supertop on this windy Wednesday evening. The first bunch were very definitely there to see the headliners, their faded *Slippery When Wet* t-shirts worn like medals, a sign of their commitment to the cause. The second group on the other hand, were female, they went to school the next day, some had 'Keanu' scrawled on their upper arms and faces, and their underpants probably smell like roses. Often their screams were loud enough to drown the phenomenal blandness of the openers.

Dogstar were a dreadful

bunch of no talents, who did nothing I haven't heard a squillion times before. As horrible as Soul Asylum are, Dogstar were 20 times more tedious. The singer couldn't sing, the drummer had a better voice than the singer, but he found it difficult to keep time. And Keanu? He stayed in the shadows playing one string bass. But they persevered, for seven very long songs. The third one started slow, yet the drummer's bobbing his head around like an ostrich on speed — he couldn't have been any more out of time if he had the co-ordination of Stephen Hawking.

The roadies setting up the stage for Bon Jovi let down a painted backdrop ten minutes before their arrival. It was of a

red brick wall, adorned with photos of James Brown, Chuck Berry, and Elvis Presley. Here lies Bon Jovi's problem. They no longer want to be known as good ol' boys, stadium rockers to the max. Bon Jovi desire to be 'muso's', inductees into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall Of Fame. They want to be on a par with Little Richard. But it's a hard luck story, 'cause Bon Jovi are quite simply, a damn fine, kick-ass stadium rock band, who send their audience home having seen a show worth every cent.

Neil Young's 'Rockin' In The Free World', as opener, was a total, but pleasant surprise, as was what followed. A gigantic 'Livin' On A Prayer' reached a crescendo that slid straight into the mighty 'You Give Love A Bad Name' — this was all your Bon Jovi dreams come true at once. The tent erupted with roars from the faithful, though where I was standing, Keanu's flock watched with eyes that reflected bewilderment rather than recognition.

Predictably, the stars were Jon BJ, and Richie Sambora, who both had their stage moves nailed to perfection. This display of 'comfortable' choreography would look cheap in the hands of many others, but this is where Bon Jovi betray themselves. The looks on their faces say they love this kind of shit. Sambora has joined the legion of guitarists who mouth the riffs simultaneously as they scream from the axe, while JBJ pouts, thrusts, and gyrates with gleeful abandon.

The new single 'Something For The Pain' is welcomed like an old friend, yet this was nothing compared to the wild ovation that greeted 'Bad Medicine'. And I'm wrapt to discover I can still recall all the words.

Unfortunately Bon Jovi strayed, albeit briefly, with a dodgy medley that included 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' and the Isley Brothers 'Shout', plus their own ballad, 'Always', though much face saving is done during the encore, with a monumental 'Wanted Dead Or Alive'.

Tonight Bon Jovi did what they do, to the absolute best of their ability. They may want to be serious musicians, and to others they may be the butt of ignorant jokes, but Bon Jovi are members of a select group of bands, who deliver a show that defies you to

go to the toilet just in case you miss something.

JOHN RUSSELL

NOMEANSNO, THE WARNERS, THINK TANK, FIGURE 60, PACECAR

Powerstation, Auckland, November 9.

Pacecar play far too early for this reviewer, so a detailed documentation of their noise at this time is not forthcoming. At least they still got their name in print three times. Pacecar.

A reborn Figure 60 are in full supersonic flight by the time I arrive. The King of Fir and his Knights of the Periodic Table, featuring new guitarist Cameron Bain, ream the audience's ears with a concentrated Dynamo Liquid drum-guitar frenzy. A little on the stain and the rest in with your whole wash. Fir leaves the crowd stunned at the end of the set by tearing all the strings from his mighty perspex 'excalibur'. A definite improvement on your average lead break. The band are obviously enjoying themselves, which I'm sure is their Number 1 priority.

Think Tank up next, self-confessed seekers of "that big Aerosmith sound", and in possession of the best one-liners in town. They're all very competent musicians, and the singer-guitarist (also of Evilis) has a strong voice, presumably from many hours spent practicing with the limited edition karaoke laser disc of *Bela Lugosi's Dead*. But apart from the third number, which was kind of cool and epic, their songs don't really gel, the tight riffs stuck together much like black and white pieces of aural Lego.

The Warners leave no doubt that they are about to play by projecting what I think is the cover of their new CD *Bogans' Heroes* on the front-of-stage video screen. I wonder if they'll play behind it and finally transform into the avant-garde performance art ensemble they were always threatening to become. Not. The screen rises and the Warners do their thing, which is just about the same thing I saw them do a few years ago, apart from the bassist having lost his hair and the drummer having found Krusty the Clown's Pork Products. But seriously: a great Osmonds cover ('Crazy Horses'), some fancy fretboard

tappin', a sense of humour, and still the ability to rock your world, especially if you're a Warners fan. Best dancing award in the Whiteboy Black Category goes to the skinny backspinner in the Jamiroquai hat, while nouveau-punk demerits go to the nancy boy mincing around obviously trying to keep his blonde mohawk straight. No future!

And finally, NoMeansNo, whom famous and talented Auckland drivetime radio host Wendy Havoc says are, "one of the best live acts I've ever seen in my life, ever." Their bassist/frontguy (described pretty accurately as a "big greying old fucker who loves life") says he'd be happy playing to crowds of 200 until he expires. Cool. What NoMeansNo deliver to the crowd in ample quantities is powerful, honest-to-goodness, no-bullshit punk rock; grander than a two-bit canyon you may have heard of, and harder than the callouses on their hands must be after well over a decade of doing it. However, no band can compete with a total power blackout, which leaves both band and audience twiddling their thumbs for about 15 minutes (someone suggests going to *CHOGM* instead). Power is eventually restored, and NoMeansNo play on under a single white stage light, giving the whole thing the feel of being in a large lounge with a very large PA. Two things become apparent at this point: firstly, NoMeansNo are the kind of guys who would be happy to come and play in your lounge; secondly, they could be playing acoustically by torchlight at Dave's Discount Disasters and it would take

away none of their power as a truly awesome live band. When they play the anthemic 'I Need You', I succumb to primal urges and throw my feeble physique around like a fool. They leave the stage, apologising for the fuck-ups and promising to return. When that happens, I strongly suggest you attend.

DAVID HOLMES

HEAD LIKE A HOLE, JAWLOAD, MUCKHOLE

Powerstation, Auckland, October 27.

Head Like A Hole and their manager Gerald Dwyer were not expecting this. Their all-ages Powerstation show is sold out, and over 300 have been turned away at the door. Later on, HLAH will rise accordingly.

Once over initial sound problems, Muckhole blast through a set that makes it a joy to be alive, and unbelievably, blows their awesome Kurtz (in May) show to pieces. Energised to the point of spontaneous combustion, and with heavenly melodies coming out their ears, Muckhole tear through 'Overdrive' Subterfuge', 'The Muckhole Theme', and 'Don't Wanna Know'. No other local hardcore band has sounded this good since the salad days of Salad Daze.

Wellington's Jawload have been Head Like A Hole's companions for the duration of this nationwide tour, and the odds that they've had a harder act to follow must be exceptionally low, if not zero. Therefore, their time on stage must be considered a triumph. With a unique sense of style (the guitarist standing spreadeagle with a cig-

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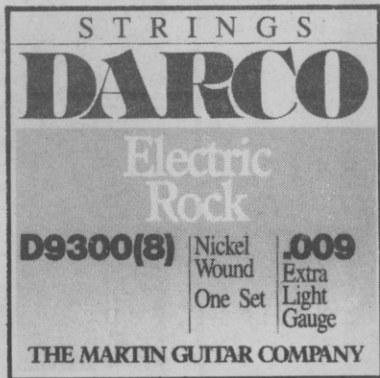


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