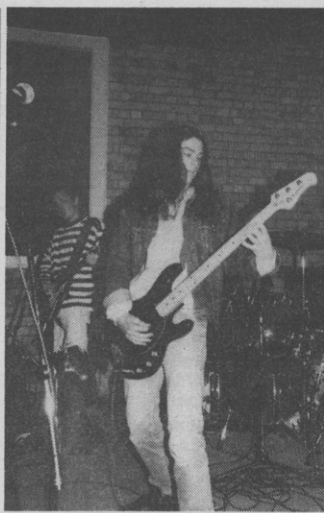




Mike Edwards, Jesus Jones.



Emma Higham, My Deviant Daughter.



Michael Scott, Nixons



Tosh, Semi Lemon Kola.



Marnie Wilton, Cuban War Poets.



Peter Buckton, Cuban War Poets.

PHOTOS BY GARY BILDON

live!

SEMI LEMON COLAS DAS PHAEDRUS ANONYMOUS GURU Gluepot, Thursday, June 6.

Anonymous Guru combine '78 (AD or RPM) punk force and focus with more than a hint of Mission style rock revivalism. Thus, you might think they are the Wonderstuff and deserve public flaying. Well, actually, in this case no. Like the Axel Grinders (do I hear a cry of "blasphemy" from the assistant editor?) they have an anger-energy that makes their hairbanging seem somehow excusable. Singer Jason flings himself against anything and everyone with drunken abandon, and his motivation isn't the will-to-vigorous-exercise of the funk metal tribe but good old fashioned suffering. He'd dearly love to be Iggy Pop and the knowledge that he doesn't have the cool or the songs gives him the angst and double the pathos.

Anonymous Guru also have a feel for structure that many similar bands would kill or even cut their hair for: the spaces between guitar, bass, verse and chorus are exactly where they should be. But does all this make up for a finger-tapping guitar solo and a T-shirt of deceased hippy bozo Jim Morrison? It must be a matter of personal taste, so go and see them for yourself.

Das Phaedrus are on stage and into it so quickly that the audience can barely keep up. Initially they suffer at the hands of a mixer who played the Charlatans between bands and evidently thinks bass and vocals are far more important than guitar, which is a shame as Andrew Spittle plays like a swarm of killer bees, but eventually either the mix improved or Das Phaedrus magically transcended it. For most of the set they play faster than anyone other than crusty metallers seem to these days but their pace has purpose. It gives the music a feeling of unnatural, disturbed agitation, as we're much more used to hearing their kind of melodies played more slowly by the likes of Buffalo Tom or (circa 87?) Straitjacket Fits. I didn't want to lumber them with yet another Husker Du comparison but I can't think of anyone else who sounds so compressed and complex, fluid and furious all at once.

Lots of people, I'm assured, like Semi—Lemon colas. I suppose it's my fault then that a band who sound like Stone Roses, Red Hot Chili Peppers, U2 and the Eagles (or some such 'laid back' bluesy twaddle) and play for up to twelve hours at a time seems to me

to be about as much fun as life as a battery hen. I left before they finished (for all I know they might still be going now) because with inexcusable prejudices like these I could hardly have given them a fair full length review.

MATTHEW HYLAND

PUSH PUSH MC OJ & RHYTHM SLAVE, THESE WILDING WAYS HALLELUJAH PICASSOS Town Hall, Friday, June 7.

The big one, the triumphant last date of the Push Push national tour which celebrated the monster success of the long haired ones' debut single — over ten thousand units shifted to date. But were teenagers breaking down the hoardings and rushing the stage? Not quite. Arriving at 8pm in time to see the Hallelujah Picassos, I was surrounded by some of the tiniest people I've ever seen out unescorted in public, let alone at a "rock gig".

Anyway, these seven year olds were introduced to "Picasso Core", the band's own brand of reggae which they alternate with all gangs barred rock and the occasional wonderfully winsome ballad. They can be spooky and intense as when wildman with tattoos and cornrows Roland booms 'Murder', or really tender, as when the quiet sensitive one, guitarist Peter, sings a wonderful song called 'Rachel' off their new cassette. This band has fallen through the cracks to end up in a groove all their own and should be checked out.

Next up, These Wilding Ways... easy to be cynical here, lead singer / guitarist Michael O'Neill rising from the ten year old ashes of chart toppers Screaming Memmies with stars in his eyes and a new bunch of boys to help him catch a ride on the rock n'roll gravy train. They even underlined the point by playing a "funked-up" version of yesteryear's monster hit two songs into their set. These Wilding Ways can sound like U2 or the Happy Mondays or whatever else is currently hot pop poop for the toe tapping classes. But you have to admit Michael O'Neill conjures up a damn fine ballad, he can sing, and he's got enough self-belief to exude the necessary charisma. If the Exponents can do it why shouldn't they?

And then, MC OJ & Rhythm Slave. What is there left to say? They're already bent double on stage under the weight of all the critical superlatives heaped on their baseball capped heads. Funny, funky, every word a winner, from 16 to 60 they make you wanna shake a shank. All this and a social conscience too.

Finally, Push Push erupted on stage in a blaze of fairy lights and dry ice and proceeded to steam through a set that included the hit single plus the ace

B-side 'Blondes'. They also gave the Push Push rush to four artfully chosen covers: 'My Sharona' (a stomper from Power Station days), 'I See Red', 'Leather Jacket' ("This one's for our friend Martin Phillipps") and Iggy's 'I'm Loose'. Mikey kept removing one T-shirt to reveal another thus cleverly managing three costume changes without once leaving the stage. Push Push were loud, brash, kinda silly and lotsa fun for all the family. Like the Jam say, that's entertainment.

DONNA YUZWALK

STEPFORD FIVE SLUTTY SMELLY SPACE CLINIC Dog Club, Thursday, May 23.

I was not sure what to expect in the way of crowd size on a Thursday night but the Dog Club was surprisingly full, probably partly due to the Stepford Five hype reinforced by their entertaining presence on BFM's *The Wire* show that morning and partly due to a rareish live performance by Clinic.

Slutty Smelly Space were already on when I arrived — they were not as I expected an interpretation of Fatal Jelly Space by another band but were in fact FJS in the flesh, minus their keyboard player who I believe has left. While their stage presence was still powerful (the bass player Barbara looked far closer to this plane of reality than I had previously seen) their sound seemed stretched. Desperate sounding vocals could not prevent my attention wandering although the solid rhythms which bind their songs lifted them above mediocrity; more vocal interplay would be cool. Excellent name though.

Is Clinic a superb band? Super in the sense that it is of members of various other wacky bands (at least one of them competent) rather than "oh goodness weren't they super?". Their performance tonight was far below the neat "sick boy finds an old microphone and guitar in the basement sound" captured on their Unloaded recordings. As someone remarked to me, "I don't know why they bothered wearing masks, everyone knows who they are". As it is I've been to too many fourth form parties and Compulsory Joy performances to be particularly impressed and so too had the audience it seemed after an initial period of interest.

Nice Kylie as an old man type Wool samples, though a tad boring to sustain for a 45 minute set. At this stage I'd have to say hear the tape... um, probably don't bother seeing the band!

Definitely a super band in both senses were the Stepford 5, Get off the road girlies these badasses are tuff — we could tell. Dyed black hair too long, tight black skirts too short, bitching grunge pelvic core — hard as.

Auckland could well learn a thing or two about putting its trousers on straight from these chicks and perhaps a thing or two about petrol stations! Runaways with too much distortion for their own good, if a criticism could be made it would be that like a Cramps record, by the eleventh or twelfth song your head can feel too heavy. Yeahhh do it hard and fast.

Thus sated, a hot Dog Club emptied into the Thursday night air.
SHIRÉE LOVE

YES Los Angeles Forum, May 15.

Early this year the two separate factions of Yes (Jon Andrews, Bill Bruford, Rick Wakeman, Steve Howe and the '90125' lineup of Chris Squire, Alan White, Trevor Rabin and Tony Kaye) united to become one group. The recordings each band had completed were combined to produce one album and the Union world tour began in April.

It was a warm Wednesday night in L.A. and the Forum was full to capacity. At 8.20 the house lights dimmed and Stravinsky's 'Firebird Suite' played as the audience of around 20,000 welcomed the eight Yes men to the centre of the sphere. The circular stage began to revolve as they launched into a lengthy version of 'Yours Is No Disgrace' which peaked with some impressive guitar solo swapping between Howe and Robin. 'Rhythm of Love' was next up and then Steve Howe took the spotlight for his amazing acoustic renditions of 'The Clap' and 'Mood For A Day', his nimble fingers meticulously picking the notes with the crowd clapping in time.

'Shock To The System' was one of only two songs taken from the new album and was powerfully performed in the true spirit of Yes. Chris Squire then strapped on his trusty Rickenbacker and the warming sounds of 'Heart of the Sunrise' were recreated with all the intensity and grace of its original form on *Fragile*. The response to 'Owner of a Lonely Heart' was rapturous and following that, the beautiful 'And You And I' with Jon Anderson at his most angelic, singing finely as ever.

After intermission a drum duo between Allan White and Bill Bruford began with Bolero-like beats building up to a thunderous climax. The group then went into 'Hold On' and another crowd favourite 'All Good People' which evoked entire audience participation.

The revolving stage ensured an everchanging view and above that were eight mechanical claw-like arms laden with lights which would lower and surround the band like a pod at the appropriate moment. The musicianship was exceptional in demanding songs like 'Changes' and 'Long Distance Runaround' and the solo pieces were equally stunning. Trevor Rabin put on a masterful display of guitar playing for his instrumental 'Solly's Beard' and later Chris Squire demonstrated his supreme bass abilities to the full in 'The Fish' by scaling fast running arpeggios and accentuating the deepest note to reverberate around the whole forum.

The new hit single 'Lift Me Up' made way for Rick Wakeman's fantastic keyboard spot which included works from his *Six Wives* and *White Rock*

recordings.

His incredibly fast piano playing led into the epic 'Awaken', a 15 minute piece that is almost as many years old yet is still timeless like most Yes music. This brought the three hour show to a grand finish though the traditional encore 'Roundabout' was delivered perfectly before the eight musicians finally bid farewell.

The Union tour is continuing through until early 1992 and should reach Australia around that time. Start planning now if you want to experience this excellent concert celebration of over two decades of Yes.

GEOFF DUNN

NIXONS CUBAN WAR POETS MY DEVIANT DAUGHTER Dog Club, Friday, May 31.

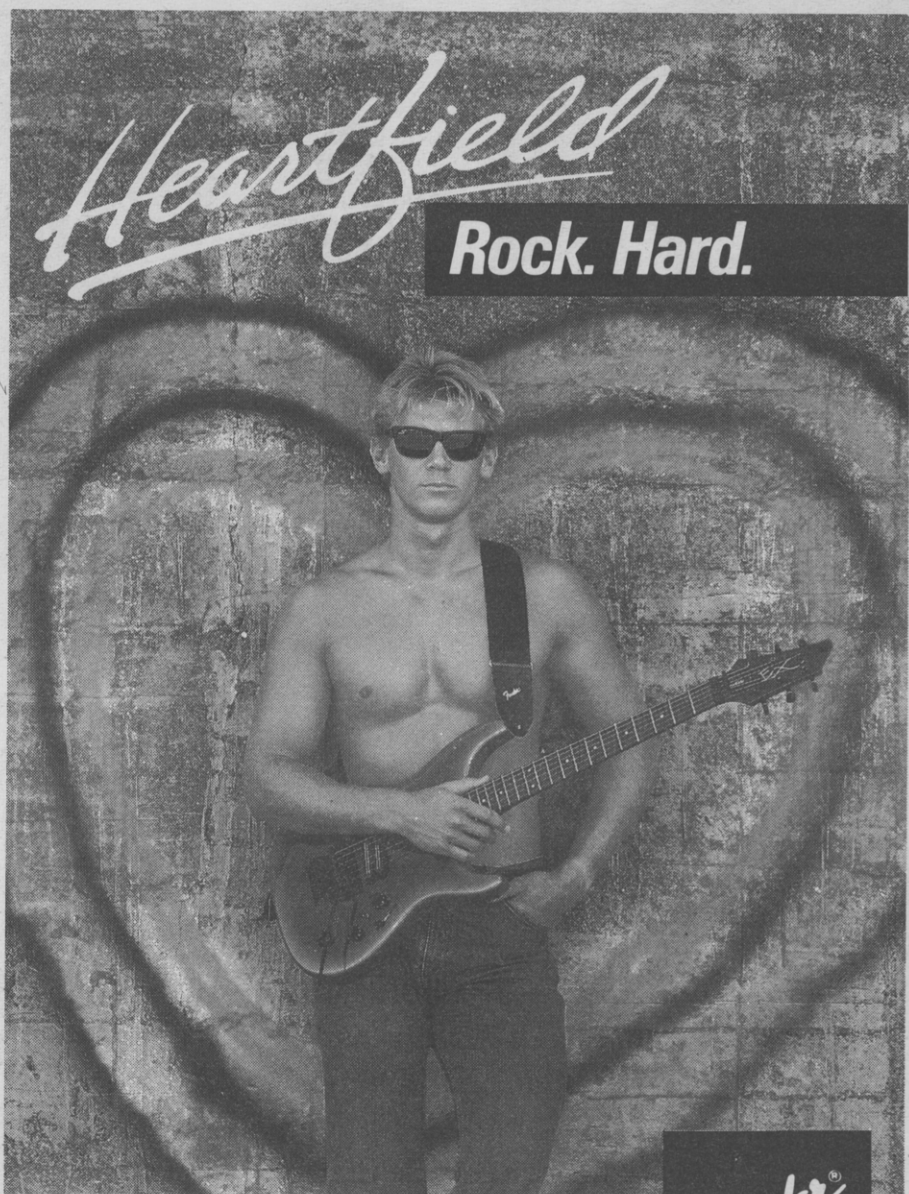
Last time I saw My Deviant Daughter they had an impossible act to follow — namely the Axel Grinders trashing out in a riotous grande finale with 'TV Eye' — somehow the spectacle of three modest looking Dunedinites (female bass and guitar, male drummer) failed to hike expectations. But tonight they kicked off with a strangely riveting bass solo and the female guitarist sang sweet. They attempted some interesting stuff, the drummer leaping from his kit to play guitar on his knees (he was trying to make it sound like a synth), the bass player standing stolid throughout coaxing more unusual sounds outta her instrument. Young and self-conscious but moments of interestingness.

Then the Nixons. Probably the highlight of the evening (can't say for ►

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