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PRINCE LIVE



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Eddie Vedder
takes on the world



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LIVE!

FLEADH FESTIVAL

FINSBURY PARK, LONDON
FIRST things first and all that. It looked ominous, sure, but no, it did not rain. And that was the good bit. And so to something very different. This is the bill from hell, the scene that would celebrate itself if only it knew how. Fleadh. God, even the word itself sounds horrible. This is our day out in the fields and we're here, apparently, to celebrate lots of cultural bits and pieces and to have some fun. But what exactly are we celebrating? And for whom? And, erm, why? Well, it's ourselves, of course. So let's just have another drink, then.

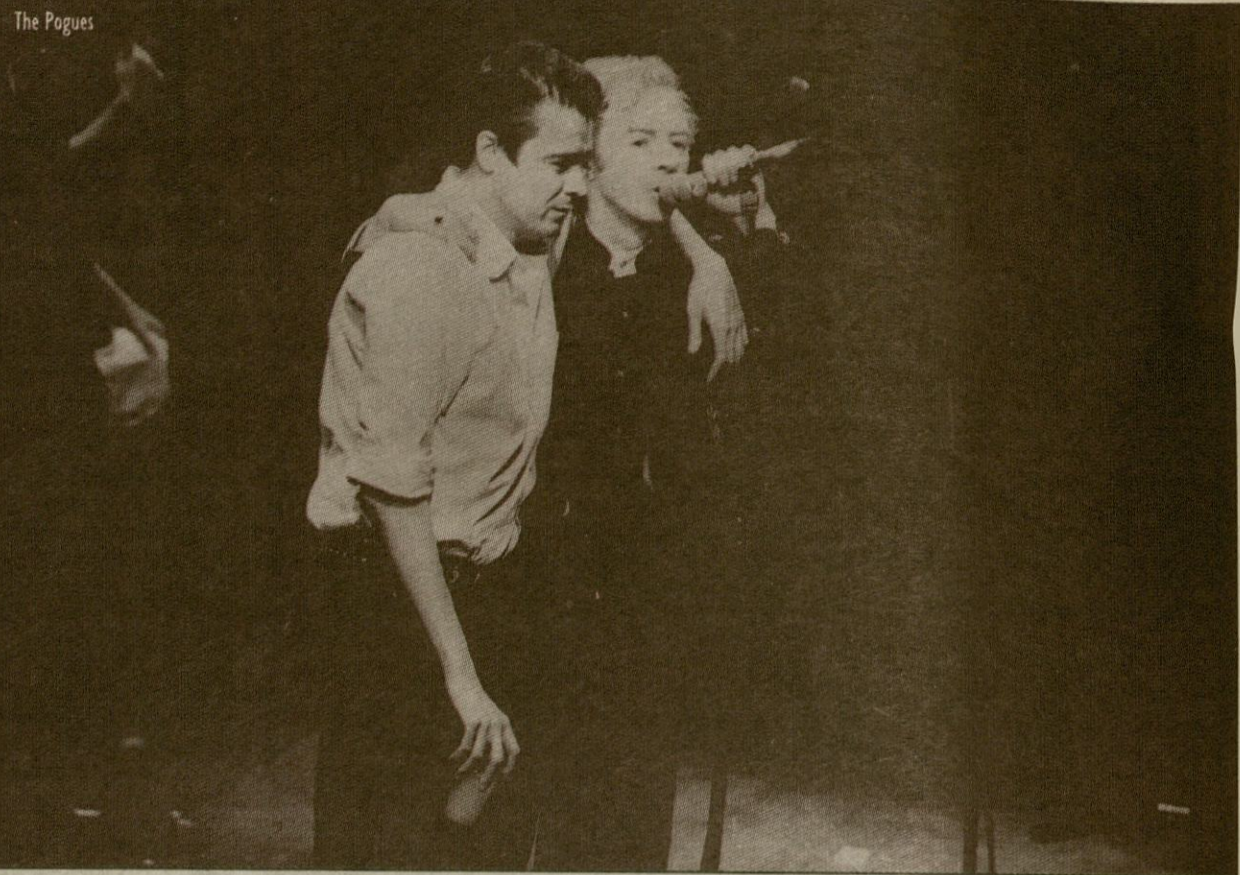
There was a sort of music too, you know. THE PRAYER BOAT did some old Waterboys songs (I think) and are still looking for the big music. Funnily enough, I know someone who found it.

And it wasn't really that good. So we head for the traditional tent and find ARCADY being nice traditional-folk people. They don't have an American tinge either and they're cool as little summer breezes.

ANDY WHITE has some backing singers that hop up and down a bit. But even they can't take away from songs as sadly beautiful as "Six String Street". Or as funny as "Looking For James Joyce's Grave". But Andy White is lost out of doors. And he knows that. THE FOUR OF US pop up next so we wander off, past

THE CHIEFTAINS and their seven creamy pints on the tray and get some TOMMY MAKEM. Tommy Maken is Jesus, the kid who taught Bob Dylan all about being cool. He even keeps his anorak on today. "Gentle Annie" almost has us in tears and he does "With An Inting Of An Inting Of An Aye Do, With An Inting Of An Inting Of An Aye Day" to keep us happy. Oh, the ways on which we were reared, eh? This was like going to Mass.

THE STUNNING weren't particularly stunning. Or anything. And BOB GELDOF & HIS HAPPY CLUBSTERS were, essentially, no more than a disgrace. And then TOASTED HERETIC come on and we've been saved from the noose. Julian Gough knows that all this is nothing more than one big game. His big game. This is his day, his stage, his kids. One day the world might be his too. And then THE CRANBERRIES come on and I swear that some kind of warm cloud came and hung over us for 40



DEAR O'DEAR O'DEAR

minutes or so. The Cranberries are soft and gentle and lovely and nice and a breath of perfume in a piss-filled field. Some real songs at last. Some very real beauty. Passion. They do "Linger" and "Liar" and "I Still Can't Recognise The Way I Feel" and "Dreams" and hey, the sun is out and the people in those green and white hooped shirts have all gone away. Almost.

A muddy walk away. ANDREW STRONG asks us if we're having a good time. Tongue in cheek, I bet. Strong is the fatboy soul singer who's been in "The Commitments" and he does lots of songs that other people used to sing. "Does anyone here like Al Green?" he

asks. Of course. But not like this. Meanwhile, back in the groovy field, THE SULTANS OF PING FC have glamour, sex, yards of stage, the most perfect frontman in the world, a trough filled with abuse and they make utter sense. The Sultans know things. Like that Fleadh is bollocks anyway. But that they're still all that matters. "Kick Me With Your Leather Boots" and "Give Him A Ball And A Yard Of Grass" and, naturally, "Where's Me Jumper?" have the little field tide up in all kinds of big bright beams. Thrills, spills, buzzsaw

guitars and the sun stays out. Metaphorically. And then SOMETHING HAPPENS come on. And then it's back to the big field. "We're us, ye must be ye," announce THE SAWDOCTORS, cheekily. A very typical Sawdoctors moment that, but I guess you had to be there. They



walk that wobblesome plank between solid ground ironies and the slurry pit. And they're covered in muck. They have, of course, a certain pathetic quality about them. They have, in fact, loads of pathetic qualities about them. But God, what a pervy place rural Ireland must be, eh? All of those dead feek

16-year-old schoolgirls on tractors, psychotic fathers in red Cortinas, all that hay wrapping and stuff. Maybe we've all been missing out on something. The songs don't really matter much. "Twenty Five Quid", "Irish Post", "Red Cortina"? The sound of nothing.

THE POGUES, then, are up against it all. They sound tired and cold and wish, I guess, that they were somewhere else. The kids, see, don't really care. They've had their common touch bile and they've taken the easy pieces. It's "I Useta Love Her" over "Thousands Are Sailing" any day. Swine before pearls. It's a sad but that's Fleadh, you know.

I guess that loads of people had loads of fun. And drank lots. And got covered in muck. Oh, and celebrated little bits of Ireland too, of course. Mustn't forget that. On the bus home I met an old friend who's got a nice job and an apartment and likes The Sawdoctors. He asked me if any of my heroes were Irish. I replied, "No". And then I laughed.
COLM O'CALLAGHAN

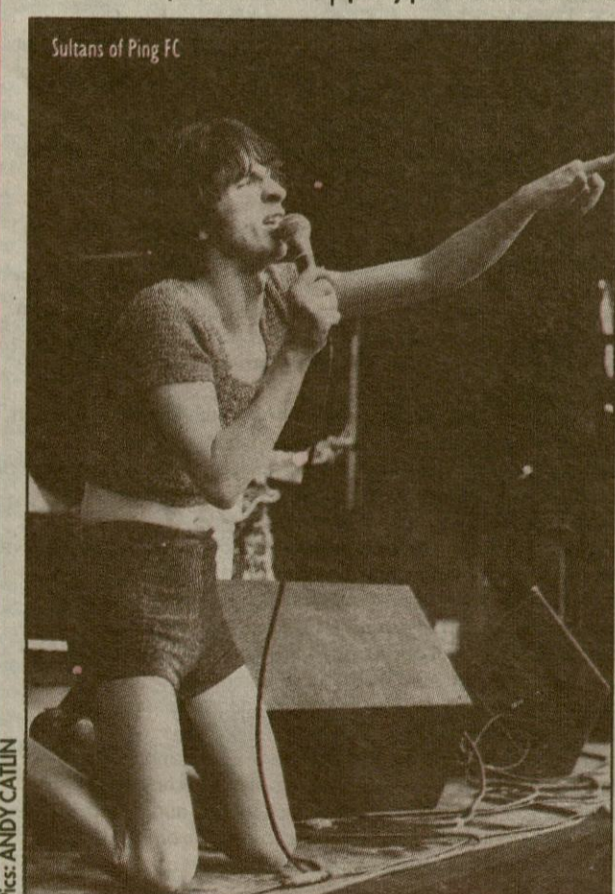


Photo: ANDY CATTIN

LEVEL 42

LIVE ON VIDEO

LEVEL 42



GUARANTEED LIVE



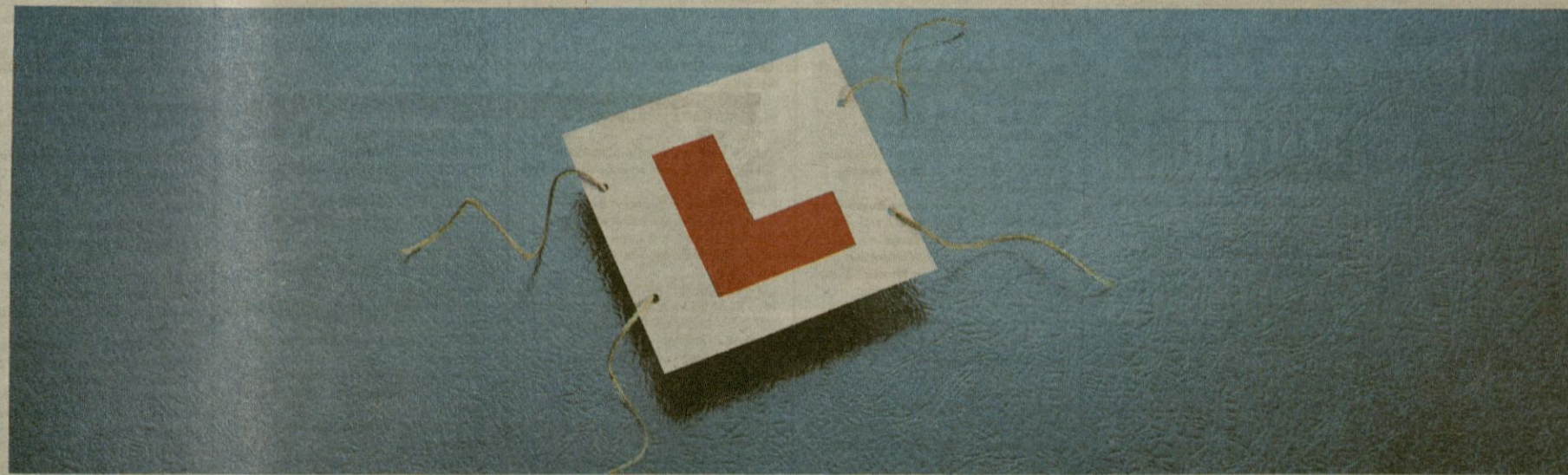
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