

of bell-like tones (like something from the minimalist canons of Steve Reich or John Adams) before branching out into an elaborate textural fantasy. She was also strong on a tune dedicated to a percussionist friend from Sierra Leone, which combined the lithe grace of African rhythms with the serpentine elegance of jazz inventions.

England's Escape Club (of "Wild Wild West" semi-fame), originally part of the bill, used their escape clause to back out of the show and left an all-woman cover quartet called Mistress as the opener. As uncomfortable as the restless 86 Street crowd, the band begged the question: Isn't it time for a moratorium on disco-ized Motown hits? **Ken Eisner**

Marilyn Crispell

Review: Vancouver East Cultural Centre

Keyboard acrobat plays with strength and lyricism

Pianist Marilyn Crispell lived up to her advance billing by delivering an action-packed hour's worth of keyboard acrobatics, as her solo contribution to the last night of the Coastal Jazz and Blues Society and the New Orchestra Workshop's *Time Flies* series.

Her power was amply evident, especially on her opening number, an improvisation that began with a series



Marilyn Crispell proved she's a keyboard acrobat.

Crispell displayed the lyrical side of her abilities on tunes by Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane: Monk's "Ruby, My Dear" was given an ornate but not overly florid reading, while Trane's "After the Rain" got a straightforward but beautiful interpretation that gradually dissolved into sounds that suggested low brass choirs and celestial voices. Coltrane would have approved.

Crispell re-appeared for the second half of the second set, sitting in with the recently formed N.O.W. Orchestra, but was largely drowned out in the organized clatter of this large group's public debut.

It's hard to make a big band—even one that's been together for years—really soar, and while composers Bill Runge, Pat Caird, and Coat Cooke often evoked the spirit of the late Gil Evans' rich and evocative orchestrations, the N.O.W. Orchestra never quite achieved the effortless buoyancy of Evans' own bands. But for a premiere it wasn't bad; many of the Orchestra's soloists are quite outstanding, and a few more months of rehearsal should take care of the occasional hesitations that kept the music from flying. **Alex Varty**

Faith Nolan and Lucie Blue Tremblay

Preview: VECC, Sunday, November 13

Salsa picante and lemon meringue pie

This is decidedly the "singer/songwriter with guitar" season, judging by the Vancouver Folk Music Festival offerings. Faith Nolan and Lucie Blue Trem-

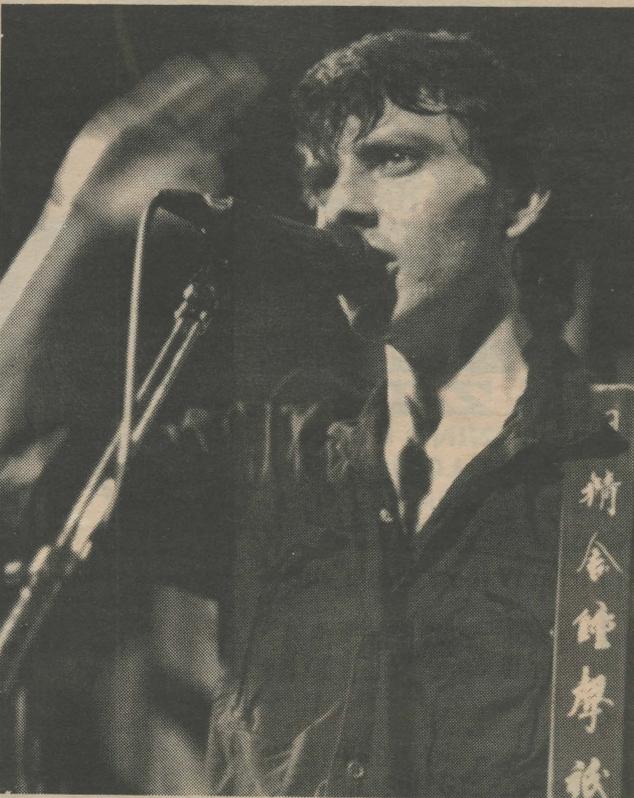
blay extend that season this Sunday (November 13) at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. These two are both feminists from back east, but stylistically they're as different as salsa picante and lemon meringue pie. Both have a sweetness and a bite, but in different proportions.

Faith Nolan, a black activist and organizer as well as singer, songwriter, guitarist and pianist, was born in Nova Scotia. Her bluesy guitar style and gutsy vocals draw from the province's long-established black community, while some of her subtler influences come from her present home base of Toronto. Though her songs address many issues, two recording projects, *Africville* and *Sistership*, reflect the two main directions in Nolan's work. *Africville* is a celebration of Nova Scotia's black history, with wonderful songs of little-known early black heroes. "Sistership" steers into different waters, celebrating women's community, culture, and love. The effect is impressive—uplifting, exhilarating, and eye-opening—like a good salsa.

down. The sweat was just a-flyin' off the bodies of guitarist Mike Weiley and bassist Cliff Grigg, the front-line attack force of Australian power trio V. Spy V. Spy ("just call us Spies"). And you could see it soaking through the baseball cap of thundering drummer Cliff Grigg after just one song.

With a speedy, no-nonsense barrage of to-the-max rock'n'roll that would make Midnight Oil proud, the Spies won over a packed house and made it known that they're one Aussie band to keep an eye on. The majority of the group's material was culled from its latest album, *Xenophobia (Why?)*, and there wasn't a ballad in the bunch—just fierce rockers like "Test of Time", "Mingle 'N' Mix", and "Clarity of Mind".

As is the case with most Australian bands, it was obvious that these guys had honed their skills with countless pub gigs in their native land. The idea that Australian bands are the best live acts in the world was certainly given more credence by their gutsy performance. **Steve Newton**



Spies guitarist Michael Weiley is another Australian who wants to make people stomp. Kevin Statham photo.