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On the road

Playing 40 gigs in less than 50 days on the back of their fourth album suggests the Datsuns' ethic of playing hard and working hard hasn't waned. **Chris Ormond** reports.

IT'S six years since Cambridge rock quartet the Datsuns relocated to Britain, but they've remained on the radar here with regular summer visits. They seem to be constantly on the road in the northern hemisphere and will wrap up an exhausting 40-date tour of Britain, Scandinavia and Europe late next month before heading to Australia and New Zealand. The band this month released their fourth full-length album, *Headstunts*, on which they have maintained their song-writing principles.

"To me, it's quite a basic record and we've always been exponents of making rock music quite simple," bassist and vocalist Dolf de Borst said.

The Datsuns' first two albums of simple, high-energy rock defined them, but their impressive third album, *Smoke and Mirrors*, was more toned down and complex, with a range of genres showing through.

De Borst said *Headstunts* was not quite as broad as *Smoke and Mirrors*. "But it's quite high energy, and at the same time it's quite a pop record as well."

Much of the music on the album was created in Germany, where the band lived for a while last year and had the use of a barn and studio. De Borst said it was an ideal place to write music while playing festivals and gigs in Europe.

"We could spend days or hours there. We were kind of free to come and go and were not 'on the clock' as it were."

He said it enabled the Datsuns to write plenty of material and add it to older material which was reworked with the input of new drummer Ben Cole. The Datsuns have been a solid unit throughout their career, but *Smoke and Mirrors* was the last album for original drummer Mat Odment, who departed for family reasons.

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To lead us you must be able to relate to us

MATE
MARK WILSON



IT'S that time of the political cycle again. Kiwis, due to the wonders of democracy, get the privilege of choosing who we want holding the reins of the country, who we want photoshopped on billboard hoardings and in those ridiculous Apec outfits each year.

Elections bring out the best and worst in our politicians, pennies of ideological wisdom thrown into Kennedy-like speeches, a good old hand-out or two and, if you're lucky, you get some of your own money back.

On the down side, we get what so often descends into a competition to spend money on exposing the personal failings of the competition, advertisements taking quotes out of context, wire taps, e-mail leaks, recorded conversations and the like all cobbled together in a war of claims against one and another.

Now more than ever we need our leaders' eyes to be on the game yet we have squabbling and petty name calling.

Newsflash: all politicians at some point have said one thing and meant another or made a conflicting set of statements in the heat of the moment. It's got to be better to focus on what they will do for our country.

We encourage our children to be constructive and not resort to calling names and telling tales and the example we get from the top does nothing to reinforce these messages. Yet Kiwis are told we don't know how to raise our children and need a myriad of insightful laws to guide us. Lead by example, not by legislation.

I attended a political debate in Queenstown recently. Nothing strikingly revolutionary really eventuated.

I observed most politicians are good speakers. Don't dare leave yourself open when you ask questions at these events or they will crucify you.

They squabbled about the usual and had as many divergent views as there are religions.

What was interesting was afterwards — these are the leaders of the common men and women of this country so how could they relate to them?

One senior MP (who I can't name today without being smacked over the head by the chief electoral officer) was ushered in by his minders while a couple of the invited leaders weren't there. Maybe the weeks of incessant badgering by the press had wearied them. One party, possibly put off by ethical issues surrounding keeping the bar open late, did not attend.

It was two veteran politicians wearing ties of different colours who joined the common Kiwi for a good yarn and a few cold drinks.

It begs the question, do we want leaders who are decent, ordinary Kiwis or those who see themselves as elevated individuals taking pleasure in leading the so-called ordinary Kiwi.

It was great to see that, under the suits, ties and parliamentary personas, some MPs are still just like us.

Rocking: Dunstons lead guitarist Christian Datsun playing at the University of Canterbury.

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