Hartford, Udow and Godfrey combine

Label-less threesome prime future legends

By TED MUMFORD

There is no justice in the music business. John Hartford appeared with Len Udow and Pat Godfrey at Bethune College last Friday and both delighted the audience. Yet neither of these acts has a record contract.

Hartford, despite his almost legendary reputation, does not have a record label. Udow and Godfrey have been playing their excellent music together for three years, but have had no recording opportunities, because they are not "prime choice material", as Godfrey says.

When Hartford's name is mentioned, one naturally thinks of the banjo picker on Glen Campbell's TV

NEW YORK SCHOOL

show, who also composed Campbell's hit Gently on My Mind. Hartford has come a long way since then. On his half a dozen albums and in session work for the Byrds and James Taylor, (to name only two) he has helped to bring the Earl Scruggs tradition of banjo playing into current folk and rock music.

But banjo is not Hartford's only forte, as he amply demonstrated Friday night. He started with a couple of songs on banjo, then played two more on guitar, and two more on fiddle, proving that he is a master of all three instruments.

Hartford does not sing the average folk lyrics. He sings about dishwashers, chords, tits, radios, boogie, and televisions. He also has an arsenal of sounds he can make with his mouth and cheeks. Between his playful lyrics and masterful playing, Hartford left the audience both amused and awed.

Udow and Godfrey made the Hartford engagement their second show at York in a week, having played at the Absinthe the previous Sunday. Godfrey — whose intricate piano has adorned the albums of Bruce Cockburn, David Wiffen, Murray McLachlan, Paul Stoddart, and Fraser and DeBolt — and Udow, a graduate of York and veteran of the Patrick Colony Band, are a pair of songwriters and musicians to be reckoned with.

At the Absinthe gig, Udow, who does the larger part of the group's

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Comedy Programme at 1 p.m. writing and singing, played guitar and Fender and Absinthe pianos. Godfrey stuck to pianos, playing up a storm one wouldn't expect from someone who has formally studied piano only one year in his 10 years of playing.

At the Hartford show, Udow played guitar only, and Godfrey elec-

tric piano only, (in the first show, at least) as they let saxophinist Bruce Pennycooke fill out the sound. Together they make a team that all record companies should be damned for ignoring.

The duo will appear on February 27 at Burton Auditorium with Pennycooke joining them again on sax.



John Hartford at the Bethune Concert.

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