

# Entertainment

"This will be a new event for a lot of people in Edmonton"

## Contemporary music for the opening mind

by Mike Spindloe

This Thursday night at the Centennial Library Theatre heralds a 'new age' in music for Edmonton, as the theatre will be the scene of a Contemporary Music Concert featuring original works for solo, duet and group by five Edmonton musicians.

The featured musicians will be Dan Bellan on piano, sitar and guitar, Paul Groleau on electric guitars, Tom Price on guitars and percussion, Tim Friesen on piano and Matt Klemm on saxophone and flute. All have various previous playing experience and backgrounds of musical education, but this concert is the first time they have played together as a group.

The music, says Paul, falls into the broad category defined as new age and proliferated by such record labels as ECM and Windham Hill. The actual sound can be described as soft free form jazz, characterized by plenty of improvisation. "This will be a new event for a lot of people in Edmonton," he adds, "so we're hoping for a good turnout."

The group does not have a name other than the *Contemporary Music* banner they have united under, in keeping with the experimental and open nature of their work. As well, they have not done any recording other than a demo tape which you will probably be hearing on CJSR occasionally. Paul is optimistic about future recording possibilities but would also like to create a live following for their genre of music.

The concert will build in momentum, climaxing in a grand finale featuring all five musicians on stage together. "That's the part where we put ourselves out on a limb," laughs Paul, "but that's one of the most exciting aspects of this kind of music."



All five musicians live in Edmonton and pursue other, but often related, endeavours to make a living. Paul, for instance, teaches guitar part-time at La Guitar Classique and Tom works for Alberta Culture, which could be a valuable inside track on some funding for their efforts in the future.

The group hopes to present concerts on a regular basis, and, taking into account the size and diversity of the Edmonton artistic community considering the size of the city,

are optimistic about finding a regular audience.

Their concept is relatively new for Edmonton, although one record released last year, Andrew Creaghan's *Rainbow Bridge* predates their work, albeit in a slightly mellower context. This quiet album consisted of two side-long pieces performed on acoustic guitar by Creaghan, a U of A Music Department alumni. Other recordings in the "new age" genre include most of the Windham Hill catalogue and

many ECM releases. As well, Polygram has just created a new age label, featuring a variety of artists, one of the first releases of which is an LP of solo piano pieces by Rick Wakeman, formerly of Yes and the Strawbs.

The group would like to encourage any "open-minded listeners" to attend the concert Thursday evening. It begins at 8 pm. and tickets are available at La Guitar Classique and Sound Connection.

## Blues made to order

The Phillip Walker Blues Band

by Melinda Vester

Phillip Walker is one of the best blues guitar players of our time.

Unlike musicians whose music controls them, Walker controls the music. The sensual drive of the blues rhythm reveals his absolutely profound ability to make his guitar sing the blues.

The Yardbird Suite's heart will beat to the Phillip Walker Blues Band until this Saturday, November 29th.

Other than minor technical difficulties, (ie. a broken bass guitar string), The Phillip Walker Blues Band's performance was smooth and polished. It is quite obvious that these men have played together for many years.

The first set warmed the audience and the second left them wanting more. Though the band played two one-hour sets, the show seemed to end all too soon.

The Phillip Walker Blues Band consists of four members and Phillip Walker. An excellent bass guitar player, an energetic drummer, an alto-saxophone player, a blues pianist and, of course, Phillip Walker on lead guitar, create the southern blues sound.

Born in 1937, Phillip Walker has been a professional guitar-player since he was 15 years old. This Louisiana born bluesman has played with some of the greatest blues musicians alive (ie. Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown, Little Richard and Fats Domino, to name a few).

His band has toured North America, Europe, Australia and Japan in his professional career. He was not well known to blues audiences outside of the southern United States, although, until he put out his most recent album, *Tough As I Want To Be*, (Rounder Records, 1984). This is the album that he is promoting while in Edmonton this week.

Presented by The Edmonton Jazz Society, The Phillip Walker Blues Band gives the Yardbird Suite that southern blues flavour and atmosphere. It is dark and cozy. The small audience adds to this roadhouse atmosphere with its enthusiasm and appreciation. Definitely blues lovers.

The Yardbird Suite tries to book blues performers about every four to six weeks. Most of the time, though, they book jazz musicians. There is, of course, a student deal on Thursday nights (half price admission with valid student I.D.). Volunteers have even more privileges, for anybody that cares to get involved contact The Edmonton Jazz Society.

Phillip Walker's view of blues is shared by his audience: "Make it loud, and make it soft, and make it clean."

## Parachute Club comes in for a landing

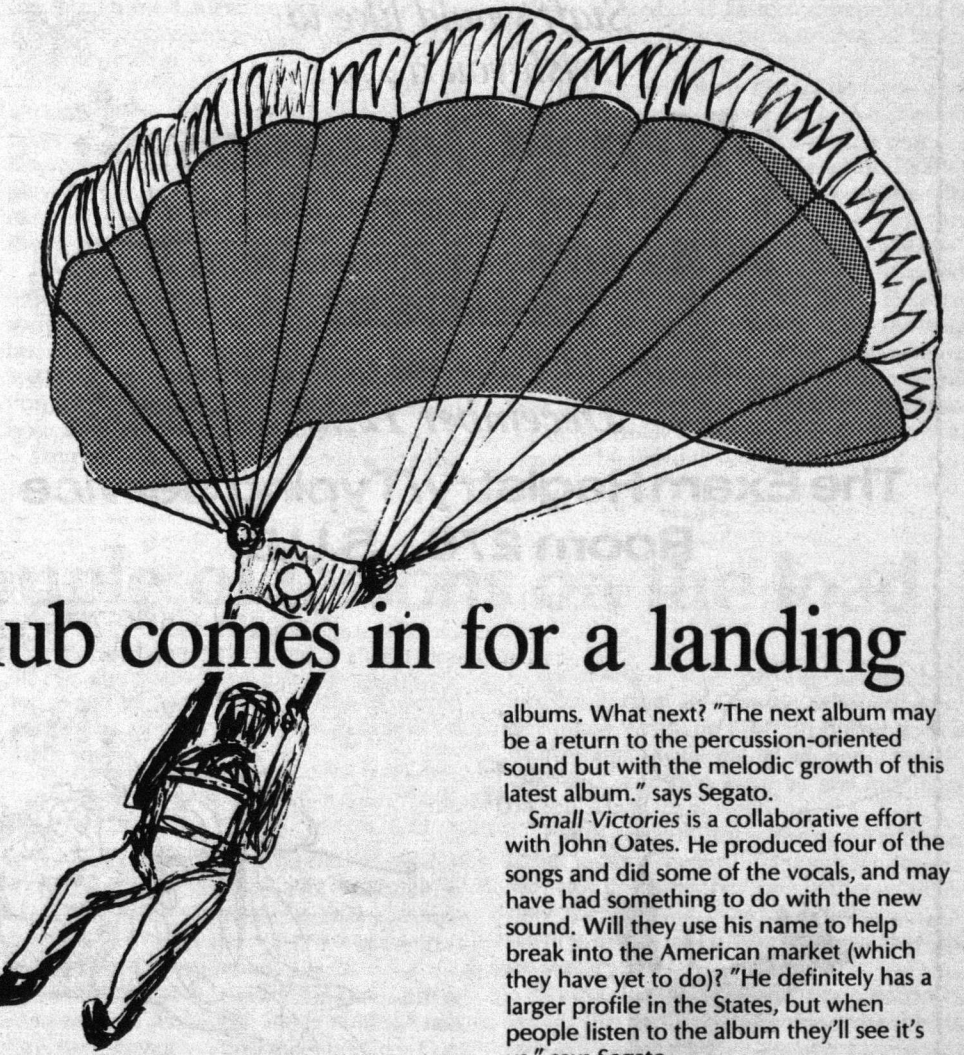
by Sherri Ritchie

The Parachute Club is more than just surface glitz. This group is a combination of musical prowess, good business savvy, and social consciousness.

"Awareness was our original focus," says lead singer Lorraine Segato. "I came from a feminist and arts-related background as did most of the rest of the group and we always felt we wanted to make music different from what we were hearing."

And that they did. They broke onto the scene with their smash single "Rise Up" and have been shooting to the top ever since. What makes Parachute Club different from most is the combination of a raw rhythmic sound that is all their own and the message with the music — freedom, love and equality (instead of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll).

Are there those who miss the message? "Yeah," says Segato, "but what are you going to do? You can put it across clear,



but they only hear what they want to or are ready to hear."

Success hasn't changed or diluted their original focus. "What changes is the way you say what you say," explains Segato. "A new album is a new skin you're putting on." Their latest "skin", *Small Victories*, is more polished and melodic and has a less radical song structure than their first

albums. What next? "The next album may be a return to the percussion-oriented sound but with the melodic growth of this latest album," says Segato.

*Small Victories* is a collaborative effort with John Oates. He produced four of the songs and did some of the vocals, and may have had something to do with the new sound. Will they use his name to help break into the American market (which they have yet to do)? "He definitely has a larger profile in the States, but when people listen to the album they'll see it's us," says Segato.

So they have massive success in Canada — what does the future hold? "It's hard to say," says Segato. "It's all random speculation at this point. We want to break internationally. We want people to realize Canada has cultural exports beyond Corey and Bryan."

You can catch The Parachute Club this Saturday at the Convention Centre.