

ARTS

Dance crowd visibly shaken by the Villains

The Citizens - The Villains
Dinwoodie Lounge
October 1

review by George Koch

Dinwoodie Lounge was jammed to capacity Saturday evening as the Villains put out the best of their light-hearted, eminently danceable brand of Ska. People were obviously not deterred by the \$8 cover charge as tickets were sold out well before the doors opened at 8 PM.

Opening for the Villains were the Citizens, four lads hailing from Sherwood Park. Obviously excited about doing their first high-profile gig, they enthusiastically

belted out a dozen or so hard rock and New-Wave tunes before clearing the stage for the main act.

Enter the Villains, and watch a sea of humanity surge on to the dance floor before the music even starts. From the moment the music began until the final encore, people jumped, gyrated, shouted, and had fun, because the Villains are a fun band - fun to dance to, fun to watch, fun to talk to in the dressing room. The Villains are unpretentious, not building themselves up in any way or trying to convey two-bit political messages. They just love to make people dance, and their joy at doing what

they do comes across song after song.

The five band members are all more than competent enough to pull off the rhythmically complex music they play; their 3 years' experience together certainly showed for they formed a cohesive unit, without drowning one or the other out or turning everything into a formless mass of sound. From the strong beat through the guitar solos to the wailin' sax, the band showed talent and imagination - they sounded fuller with five players than some seven or eight member ska bands and they didn't lean on bizarre clothing or onstage buffoonery to hide thin talent like so many bands these days. The Villains stuck mainly to original material, written during the last two and a half years of touring. As well, they

played such old classics as "Midnight Hour," and "Tequila"-standard fare for Ska bands.

The Villains consist of Tom "Jock Strap" Perry on saxophone, Johnny Niemann on Keyboards, Tom Robertson on Bass, Steve Bye on Drums, and lead vocalist Dave "Leggs" Neal on guitar. They have toured almost constantly in North America since forming in London three years ago. Despite the long weeks spent on the road, they've managed to record their first album, in a private studio in Vancouver. Negotiations with "a major record label" are still under way, so an album could be out any time. Watch for it, and for those of you that missed them on Saturday, watch for the Villains, they're certainly worth seeing the next time they're in town.

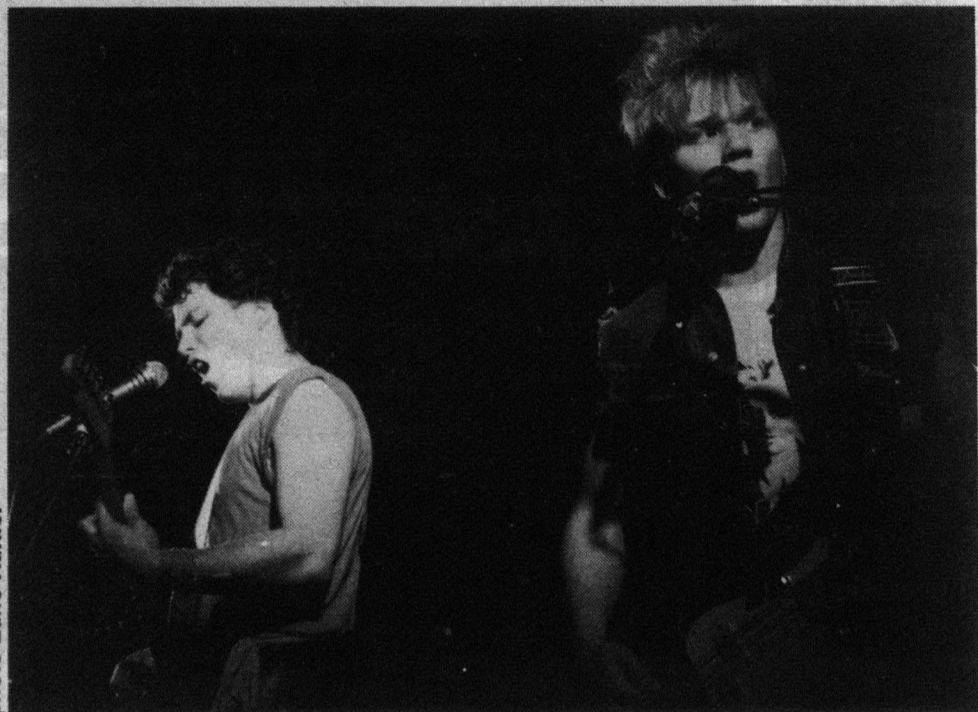


photo Zane Harker

Citizens moving up fast.

Miscast players ineptly directed

Lucia di Lammermor
Edmonton Opera Association
Jubilee Auditorium, Oct. 1, 6, 8.

review by Stewart Lemoine

The romantic melodrama of Sir Walter Scott met head on with the *bel canto* lyricism of Gaetano Donizetti in Edmonton Opera Association's season-opener Saturday, *Lucia di Lammermor*. The production should have been a calculated crowd-pleaser, but it failed on several counts.

The opera concerns Lucia, a Scottish lass, whose cruel brother thwarts her love for the son of a rival clan, and forces her into a political marriage. The hapless girl loses her mind and stabs her husband to death on their wedding night and then dies of grief. Her true love, Edgardo, stabs himself hoping to meet Lucia in heaven.

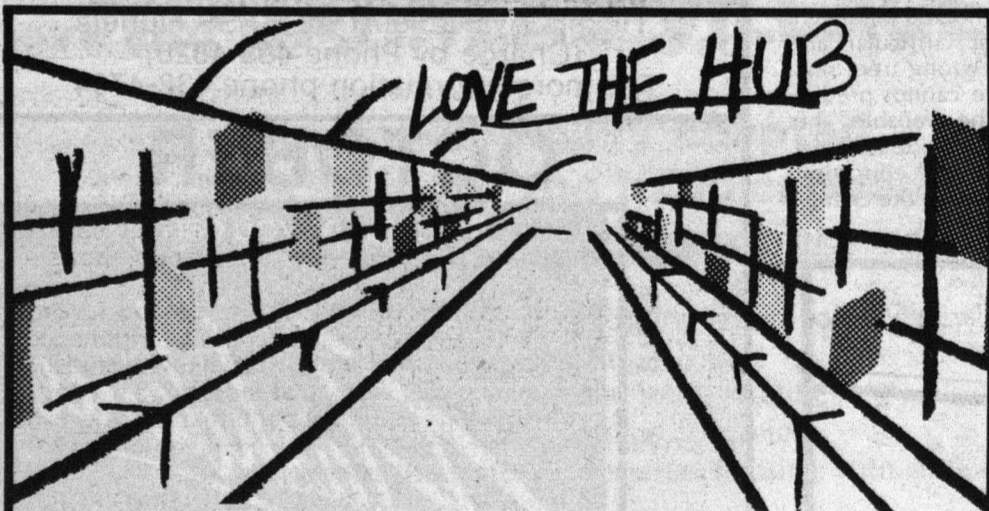
All this is told very melodiously and there is ample opportunity for heart-stopping vocal exhibitionism, particularly in the heroine's third-act "mad" scene where, as Lucia's mind wanders, she sings some dazzling and quite difficult music,

while running around her wedding party in a blood-spattered nightgown.

It would be presumptuous to expect a modern audience to take this story seriously, but given a conscientious production, Donizetti's opera can have a rousing effect. The music is memorable, the dramatic situation is emotionally charged, and the Gothic setting is intriguing. It may be impossible for the performers to act the drama convincingly, but if they sing beautifully and work up a suitable romantic frenzy all should go well. This did not happen in Edmonton.

Blame must rest on the shoulders of Irving Guttman (EOA's Artistic Director) who cast middle-aged overweight singers in the roles of young lovers and then ineptly directed them so as to maximize their short-comings. Obviously, we were meant to be impressed enough by their singing that we would forget their ridiculous physical appearances, but this was not the case at all. Tenor Adrian Van Limpt, east as Edgardo, sang intelligently with a well-disciplined voice, but one

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