

Entertainment

Candles, Incense & Tea



By Heather Lam

Candles and incense are burned as fans crowded toward the front stage at Sweetwaters Sunday night anxiously awaiting the arrival of The Tea Party.

The band opened with "The River," a big hit off their album *Splendor Solis*, and fans rocked and sang as lead singer Jeff Martin belted out the lyrics. As the night progressed fans got a little crazy - the band played on, watching as a few fans rose above the crowd and began body surfing—ebbing so surely toward the stage only to be thrown back by the bouncers who stood guard at the front.

This show, the last of an eighteen month run, was a mix of fast and slow, hard and soft - moody music. In an interview on Friday, drummer Jeff Burrows explained that "the band wants to deliver a sound that's not always right in your face so that fans are able to take in the full vibe of the band." This vibe reverberates throughout a wide area of musical sound. In a break from the in-your-face stuff, Burrows joined bassist Stuart Chatwood and Martin at the front of the stage where they played a few new songs which will appear on their

next album. The band demonstrated its acoustic capabilities with Burrows laying down a tribal-like beat, Chatwood adding his own sound in a variety of different instruments and Martin using his arsenal of instruments to create a sound unlike many others in today's music scene.

Fredericton fans seemed more than satisfied with the Tea Party's performance, although it's not the kind of music that leaves you feeling uplifted. As Burrows explained, "fans go with an open mind and I think they're looking for some sort of experience or to be disturbed, not in a bad way but to be moved." If this is the stuff that moves you go to the Tea Party - the band works hard to deliver an energetic performance and they sound as good live as they do on record.

Keep your eyes open for Stellar Dwellar, the Montreal based thrash-worthy band who opened for Tea Party. The four musicians opened for Hole, among others, during a week long tour that finished in Freddy Beach. Stellar Dwellar is Mike Nourse—guitar/vocals Nick Best—drums Andrew Rodriguez—vocals/guitar and Pete Zelmer—bass.



Two Chairs and a Ladder?

By Carla Lam

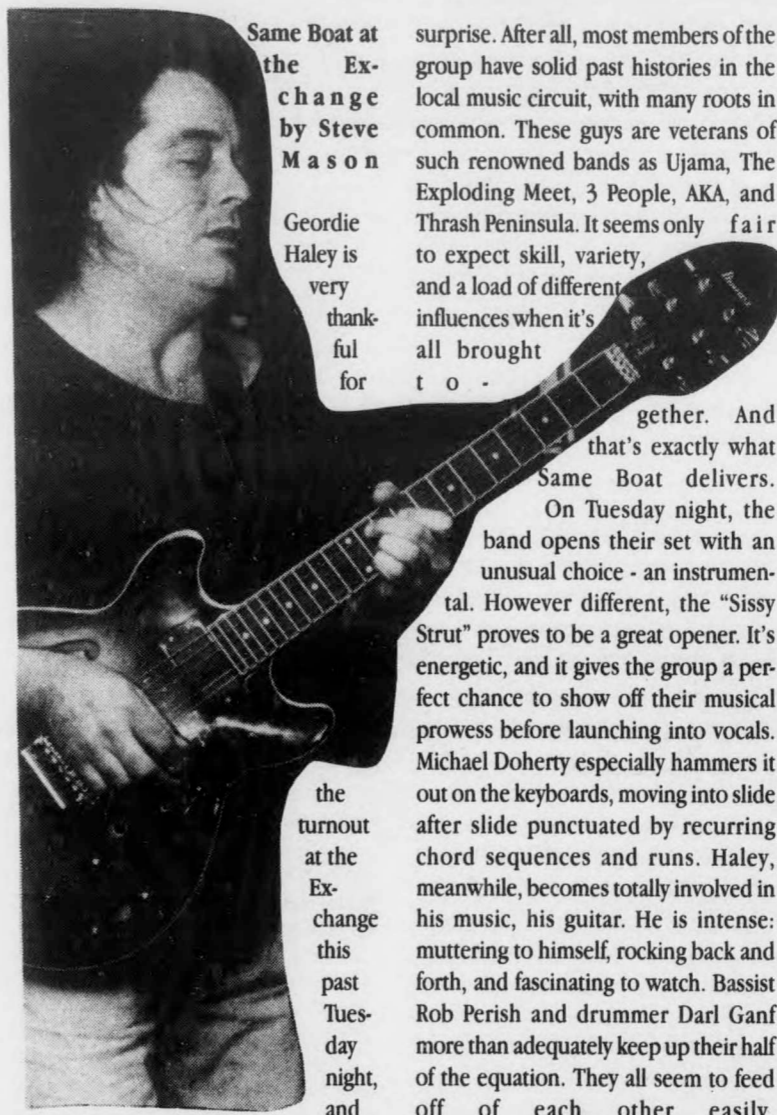
Thanks to the UNB/STU Creative Arts Frederictonians had the pleasure to witness *The* modern dance event of the year to the Playhouse on Monday night. The show was graceful, fluid, theatrical gracing our Capital City about midway through their three week Eastern Canada Tour. The tour was launched October 10th in Newfoundland (a first time performing there), moving on to a sole performance in New Brunswick and will conclude in Nova Scotia on October 30th.

The Danny Grossman Dance Company performed various pieces written over the span of their twenty year history. A wide repertoire with an equally variable score of music. On their Fredericton performance these included *National Spirit*, *The Equilibrist*, *Higher*, excerpts from *People... People ...People ...* namely -

Song of the Wine, *The Watcher*, *Three Women*, finishing with *La Valse*. The dancing was an energetic, sexy, lingering celebration of movement that left me feeling excited, awed, confused or a blend of all and others.

For example, in *Higher*, two dancers tumbled, rolled, slid, held and otherwise manipulated each other. Never in my wildest imaginings could I ever imagine doing such manoeuvres with two chairs and a ladder; but they did so in an erotic "celebration of control, sex, humour and athleticism." This piece, and all the others, expertly exploited the magnificent and versatile beauty of the human figure.

Dancer Monique Trudelle and Associate Artistic Director Pamela Grundy of Danny Grossman Dance Company will be spending several weeks in the upcoming summer working with local dancers in Halifax and St. John's.



Same Boat at the Exchange by Steve Mason

Geordie Haley is very thankful for

surprise. After all, most members of the group have solid past histories in the local music circuit, with many roots in common. These guys are veterans of such renowned bands as Ujama, The Exploding Meet, 3 People, AKA, and Thrash Peninsula. It seems only fair to expect skill, variety, and a load of different influences when it's all brought together. And that's exactly what Same Boat delivers.

On Tuesday night, the band opens their set with an unusual choice - an instrumental. However different, the "Sissy Strut" proves to be a great opener. It's energetic, and it gives the group a perfect chance to show off their musical prowess before launching into vocals. Michael Doherty especially hammers it out on the keyboards, moving into slide after slide punctuated by recurring chord sequences and runs. Haley, meanwhile, becomes totally involved in his music, his guitar. He is intense: muttering to himself, rocking back and forth, and fascinating to watch. Bassist Rob Perish and drummer Darl Ganf more than adequately keep up their half of the equation. They all seem to feed off of each other easily.

he makes no bones about expressing his gratitude to the audience several times. As the frontman of the new band Same Boat, he really couldn't have hoped for much better. The venue, albeit small, is full, the crowd is appreciative, and the band is pumped. At the very least, Same Boat seems poised on the brink of local success.

But that should really come as no

The band follows up the strut with the much slower paced "Ironic Song". Haley on vocals delivering such wisdom as "Maybe he was working class, baby/But he never had a job". In case you were wondering, Same Boat plays only original material, a fact of which they are very proud. Most of the tunes come from their new album "Last Fish Dinner".

By the time that the "Ironic Song" finishes, some of the more observant members of the audience are beginning to wonder why there are only four people up on stage. After all, isn't Same Boat supposed to be a five member band? All questioning glances are put to rest when Haley announces the moment we've all been waiting for: Mr. Glenn Hall. Hall struts through the bar and up onto the stage as the rest of the band break into song. He picks up a notebook, peruses through it for a while, and then proceeds to recite poetry, backed by the music.

After all this, things really start to pick up.

Hall takes over the vocals, and basically takes over the band. A definite performer, he pours emotion into his songs like sugar into coffee. Haley may write the songs, but it's Hall who owns them. He possesses a fantastic ability for working himself up into a screaming frenzy, and then following up immediately with a mellow, reflective and soothing tone. Hall monopolizes the stage, but still manages to bring the rest of the band to a boil. Doherty gets so excited that even Hall comments sarcastically "Mike's not too pumped tonight, is he?"

He is. And so is the audience, applauding loudly and enjoying every minute of the show. They too are grateful to be here tonight. Same Boat may not be the type of band that most people are instantly attracted to, but there's something about their variety and style that encourages you to keep your mind open. And that's what music's really all about, isn't it? Keeping your mind wide open, and letting new sounds and ideas flow in.

Never Drive By a Yard Sale

New Brunswick talent, New Brunswick talent, New Brunswick talent!!! Theatre New Brunswick's 27th season opened last week with *Yard Sale*, a modern, mischievous and raunchy new comedy by News Brunswick's own Bill Gaston. Gaston, an acclaimed novelist and short story writer, delivers considerable punch in his first attempt as a playwright.

Yard Sale is a two man play which deals with the forty something generation as they deal with the traumas associated with the mid-life crisis. Spike, played by Fredericton native Booth Savage, is having a yard sale while his wife is out of town. This isn't any ordinary yard sale though. Spike is selling everything he owns, including his house, dirt cheap. In fact, he is giving it away. This is the only way that Spike, an ex-sculptor and ex-frequent of the "scene" can escape the stagnancy of life which has recently begun to encompass all aspects of his life including his marriage.

The only person who can possibly save him from himself is Ken, who now demands he be called Kenneth. Kenneth is played by Maritimer Richard Donat, of previous Little House on The Prairie fame (tempted as I was I didn't hold this against him). Kenneth is the ex-alcoholic long-time

friend of Spike's who is dealing with his mid-life impotency (literally) by becoming as anal retentive as possible.

Ironically Kenneth is also the cause of Spike's problems. Spike has found out that Kenneth slept with his wife. What is driving Spike over the edge is that he finds himself not caring that his best friend and wife have had sex. Booth does a fantastic job of portraying this feeling of frustration and disinterest found in married life in the post-honeymoon stages. Spike comments that when he now has sex, his biggest concern is that he may be missing Sportsdesk.

Kenneth isn't just there to solve Spike's problems though. He has many of his own which include: being a 15 year employee of K Mart, intellectual and sexual impotency, and the fact that he is in love with Spike's wife. The good old decadent love triangle! Richard Donat is very convincing as the anal retentive oedipal Kenneth. He even walks like he is constipated.

So how do Spike and Kenneth resolve their problems? Well they do something universal to all generations—they get drunk. (Jack Daniels to be exact). They get extremely drunk, take off all their clothes (it has always worked for me) and perform the ever familiar male bonding rituals. This causes Spike

to realise, in the morning, that he really does love his wife and that life must go on and so he might as well make the best of it.

I must admit this ending was a little disappointing for me. I would have preferred to see Spike and Kenneth drive off the cliff, a la *Thelma and Louise*, rather than stop at the edge. However this is not how life usually works, and fortunately so for there would not be any one over forty left. Then again we would all have jobs—just joking!

Credit must also be given to director Miles Potter who did an excellent job. Mr. Potter also directed Theatre New Brunswick's production of *Cat* on a Hot Tin Roof and acted in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In my opinion, these were TNB's two finest productions in the last two years, so I am very impressed.

The only problem I had with the performance was that two hours of mid-life stagnancy can be stagnant in itself. As performances with a limited number of characters can do, *Yard Sale* dragged slightly in certain sections. It is also possible to beat a joke or topic to death. This almost happened in *Yard Sale*. Fortunately there was enough crisp wit and dialogue, combined with excellent acting to ensure that TNB's first production was a success.