

# Entertainment

## Go West!



Photo by K. Rainville

By Stephen Mason

The biggest test a band can face in order to prove its talent lies in the concert. Live, it must live up to the precedent set forth on its recordings in terms of sound, style and quality of its music. On Monday November 8, Spirit of the West proved their talent.

The popularity of this band on campus was evident from the large and enthusiastic crowd that packed the Sub Cafeteria, despite the fact that it was the beginning of a week with midterms, assignments and essays for most. After watching the concert, there remains no mystery about the source of their popularity. Spirit of the West are incredible performers, and they played a great set of songs with the most energy and enthusiasm I have seen in a long time.

The set focused mainly on their brand new fifth album *Faithlift*, although they infused their act with a

healthy mixture of songs from previous albums, especially from their landmark album *Save This House*. The result was a guided tour of the evolution of the band, a generous interspersed of old and new material that showed how they have grown and changed as a band while always remaining a definite crowd pleaser, a solid fixture of the Canadian Music Industry.

Each of the five members of the band is multi-talented, often juggling between two or three instruments in one song. Hugh McMillan especially seemed to be the "catch all" member of the band, playing at least ten different instruments, some of which I had never laid eyes on before. Geoffrey Kelly added the Celtic flavor to many of the songs, playing the flute, bodhran and whistles and taking over the lead vocals to sing a couple of good ol' drinking songs. The drummer, Vince Ditrich, offered comic relief to the show, dancing

around like a maniac with a tambourine, and singing solo "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire", opera-style.

But John Mann, the lead vocalist and front man of the band, was the real driving force of the show. His stage presence is overwhelming, his voice is strong and compelling. And his face — in it, you could see the raw anger that pervades the lyrics to many of the songs, especially in the opening numbers "Dirty Pool" and "5 Free Minutes".

Amazingly enough, the entire crowd seemed to know every word to every song, and they were not willing to let Spirit of the West go, especially since the last two songs performed were "Save this House" and "Home for a Rest". After two encores, the band finally called it quits much to the disappointment of the audience, who were begging to hear the old favorite "(Putting Up With) The Joneses". The band, however, chose to ignore the rhythmic chanting of "Joneses! Joneses!". A minor setback in an otherwise awesome concert.

Although Spirit of the West was the definite highlight of the evening, I can't neglect Andrew Cash and the Little Ones who opened up the concert. Cash provided a tight and polished set with considerable enthusiasm. Unfortunately, his voice was pretty well drowned out by the music and his words were, for the most part, incoherent. However, he was still an exciting performer to watch, and his set of forty minutes was just the right length to show off his talent without boring the audience, who was there mainly to see S.O.T.W.

I've heard that people are complaining that the Student Union needs to branch out and bring in new bands instead of the same ones year after year (this was S.O.T.W.'s fourth time here). Well, judging from the audience reaction, I certainly don't think that the S.U. will be getting any complaints from concert-goers on Monday night. Spirit of the West is definitely a band that has proved itself worthy of repeat performances, a band that is a pleasure to watch every time.

## Crossing the Border with Rawlins Cross

by Jethelo E. Cabilete

So...anyway, I walked into the Bruns office Wednesday afternoon and like I always do, asked my editor if she's got any work for me. "Not at the moment," she replies tiredly. "Well okay," I answer "Oh by the way, I'm gonna go see Rawlins Cross on Friday." At this, my esteemed editor's eyes lit up considerably, and she asked me if I had already bought tickets. I said no, at which point I suddenly found myself in possession of two tickets to a most excellent group. So I asked my friend Katherine if she'd go, and meeting with an affirmative reply, proceeded to the concert on Friday night, where we met a mutual friend, Ben.

Now then, for those of you who don't know the group, Rawlins Cross is a Maritime based band whose field of expertise goes off towards Celtic rock. What you ask is Celtic rock? Well lads and lasses, its a blend of Irish folk music with good old, solid rock and roll, which in this group's case, produces a terrific sound that can be powerfully uplifting or poignant. The members of Rawlins Cross, coming from such areas as Newfoundland,

P.E.I. and Nova Scotia and each one playing a variety of ancient and modern instruments, are: Dave Panting (acoustic/electric guitar, mandolin, vocals), Ian McKinnon (highland bagpipe, trumpet, tin whistles, harmonica, bodhran), Geoff Panting (keyboards, button & piano accordions, vocals), Brian Bourne (bass, chapman stick), Howie Southwood (drums) and Joey Kitson (the band's new lead vocals). Dave Panting and Brian Bourne were just jamming, playing the strings raucously or with cascading beauty in the slower sets. Ian McKinnon played his instruments with a lilting gaiety and lots of soul, while Geoff Panting provided rousing solos and supporting music on his accordions. Howie Southwood beat the skins superbly, and last but not least, Joey Kitson's gravelly baritone was sung with plenty of feeling, an excellent accompaniment to the music that was played. They even provided extra entertainment by dancing jigs, making witty comments in between sets and Brian Bourne's son, Charlie, was in the audience providing some humorously charming quips of "Hi daddy!" No doubt about it, these guys

knew how to have fun, and it showed in their music playing.

Rawlins Cross performed several songs from their two current recordings, *A Turn of the Wheel* and *Crossing the Border*, and a new release coming out in December. The music is a well blended mosaic of Celtic rhythms and gutsy rock, sometimes going off into a Blues-type mixture ("Stray Cat") to rollicking ballads ("Reel and Roll" and "Ghost of Love"), danceable folk-rock ("Colleen," and "A Turn of the Wheel") or haunting instrumentals ("Wedding Gift," "MacPherson's Lament" and "Memory Waltz"). The audience was receptive enough, and a few people even clapped and moved in their seats to the beat (my friends and I being one of them). After their second set, the guys came back for an encore performance called Dancehall, to which Katherine, Ben and I went to the front of the stage and danced. It was a tremendously fun night, and for those who missed it on Friday, the guys are coming back on New Years for the First Night Festival in Fredericton. Its a show that you don't want to miss!

## GENRECID

MICHAEL EDWARDS

September Child  
*September Child*

This CD came accompanied by one of the most impressive press releases that I have seen in a long time, not to mention a rather splendid cover ripped off from a Degas painting. They also come with quite a reputation for their live show roundabout their native Ottawa but I'm afraid on record they are...well, pleasant. They are neither wonderful nor terrible, they just are. In fact, I cannot remember feeling more ambivalent about a band in quite a while. I know it sounds rather mean but I can't help but think that some heavy-handed production may have removed some of the edge they are said to possess live. As for the actual songs, the shorter ones such as "Sunflower" stand up a bit better than the longer ones that tend to lean a little bit on the pompous side (especially "Vampire"). But the band is coming to town next week so I will give them a chance to redeem themselves by attending the concert - I will keep you posted on the outcome.

KRS One

*Return of the Boom Bap*

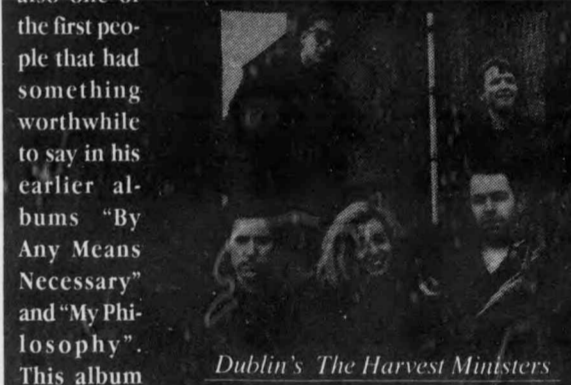
KRS One has always been one of the more interesting rappers be it in his work with R.E.M. to his ambitious "Edutainment" project. And he was also one of the first people that had something worthwhile to say in his earlier albums "By Any Means Necessary" and "My Philosophy". This album

Al Jourgenson among others. It doesn't have the same mechanical feel as, say, Ministry but there are some growled vocals and ear-bleeding guitars. And there lies the main problem for me - the vocals really begin to grate after a few songs despite some wonderfully weird lyrics; try "Madness" or "Creepy Fingers" for starters. So if you can turn up the volume, get past the shrieks and screams then this will be a rather fruitful experience; a decent debut, but one that promises more than it delivers. Fans of Bryan Adams need not apply. (Widely Distributed Records)

The Harvest Ministers

*Little Dark Mansion*

At long last releases from Sarah Records are getting regular North American distribution via Chicago's Widely Distributed Records, and the first to hit this side of the Atlantic is the debut from Dublin's Harvest Ministers. The Harvest Ministers have been winning accolades from the British music press not to mention the great John Peel and quite rightly so on the strength of this album. The first thing that hits you is the unusual sound that they have; the occasional guitar but usually more 'archaic' instruments like clarinet, violin and harp which gives a sparse, melancholic feel to the album. Combine this with the fragility of the voices and the tender harmonies and... Sigh. It's all rather wonderful. It seems as if this year the best music



Dublin's The Harvest Ministers

stays in the old school of rap (before everyone and his dog started sampling James Brown) and he still has plenty to say. He's angry, cynical and very bitter especially about the various other rappers that have sold themselves out for the sake of money; he names the guilty parties throughout this record. But the standout track is "Outta Here", a potted history of KRS One, Boogie Down Productions and the general fall and decline of rap music including the sad demise of Scott La Rock, KRS's DJ. The inevitable politics are handled intelligently and the macho bullshit is kept to a minimum and the end product is not disappointing. (Jive)

Hip Deep Trilogy  
*Cannibal Smile*

From a really tasteful cover to a rather disturbing one with an eyeball looking out from a smiling mouth. Hmm. The music follows a similar disturbing path - the influences of the Chicago scene are there; acknowledgements go out to

has been of the more mellow variety - Red House Painters, Epic Soundtracks and now The Harvest Ministers. Through the 16 songs (three of which have been released on singles), varying emotions from regret to joy to pain are all felt, and felt through the skill of the performances. Its not nearly as depressing as it sounds because they have a way with a melody that will get so far under your skin that you will want to play the album again and again. Comparisons to The Go-Betweens have been made - fair perhaps but The Harvest Ministers have put together a debut album more consistent than the Antipodeans ever did. Definitely one of the highlights of the year and one that should be near the top of everyone's wish list. (Widely Distributed Records)

You can contact Widely Distributed Records at 1412 Touhy, Chicago, IL, 60626, USA. Remember to include an International Reply Coupon and to tell them who sent you.