

Entertainment

GENRECID

MICHAEL EDWARDS

Some reviews this week...

BIG STAR

COLUMBIA—LIVE AT COURI UNIVERSITY

The most amazing thing about this release is the fact that the concert actually happened. I mean, Big Star actually reformed and played a concert!!! Perhaps I am the only one getting really excited here but Big Star were one of the most influential bands of the seventies, and anyone that has heard 'Bandwagonesque' by Teenage Fanclub will have a good idea of how they sound - chiming guitars, vocal harmonies and shiny choruses. They are cited as influences by bands as diverse as R.E.M., The Posies, The Replacements and Teenage Fanclub, and have had their songs covered by bands such as This Mortal Coil and (ahem) The Bangles. Not too bad for a band that only released two albums in the two years they were together although the almost mythical third album appeared some years

later but it was more like a solo album for Alex Chilton. Alex Chilton was the lead singer whom was fresh from his success with The Boxtops and together with Jody Stephens are the only original members who play on this recording. The other original members were Andy Hummel whom has since dropped out of music completely and Chris Bell whom was tragically killed in a car crash in 1979; their places are taken by Ken Stringfellow and Jon Auer from The Posies for this concert. And how did this concert actually happen? A college radio station in Columbia asked Alex Chilton if he would reform Big Star - a band that he had refused to even discuss for 20 years - and he said yes as did Jody Stephens (taking any notes CHSR? Got George Harrison's number?) The whisper went round the music press almost instantaneously and soon the concert was sold out. It could have been sold out five times over. On April 25th it actually happened.

I felt a little bit cynical about

this concert as my Big Star albums are well worn and I really wondered if it could come close to the original sound. But I couldn't have been more wrong - from the first chords of 'In The Street' to when Alex starts to sing the magic is there once more. You can even hear the buzz of the amps and begin to wonder if it is really 20 years since these songs first came out. Everyone takes a turn on lead vocals and when Stringfellow sings 'Feel' it's like Chris Bell is back on stage again. Of the fourteen songs, most are from the first two Big Star albums, although they delve into the third album and

not unlike Boris Pickett (of Monster Mash fame...) and the lyrics very often sound as if they have been translated into English by a member of the Sugarcubes - if you don't know what I mean then read the lyrics to the Sugarcubes first album. The acknowledgements on the sleeve tell most of the media to f*** off and the same sentiment is made to anyone else that doesn't like the band. Luckily I am not taking it personally. One song which seem to sum up the band philosophy is 'We Hate Everyone'. Kind of self explanatory. They also cover the Islay Brothers 'Summer Breeze' turning into a dirge which is amusing the first time you hear it but seeing this style continues through the entire 73 minute album it very soon becomes tiresome. Avoid, avoid, avoid. (Attic)

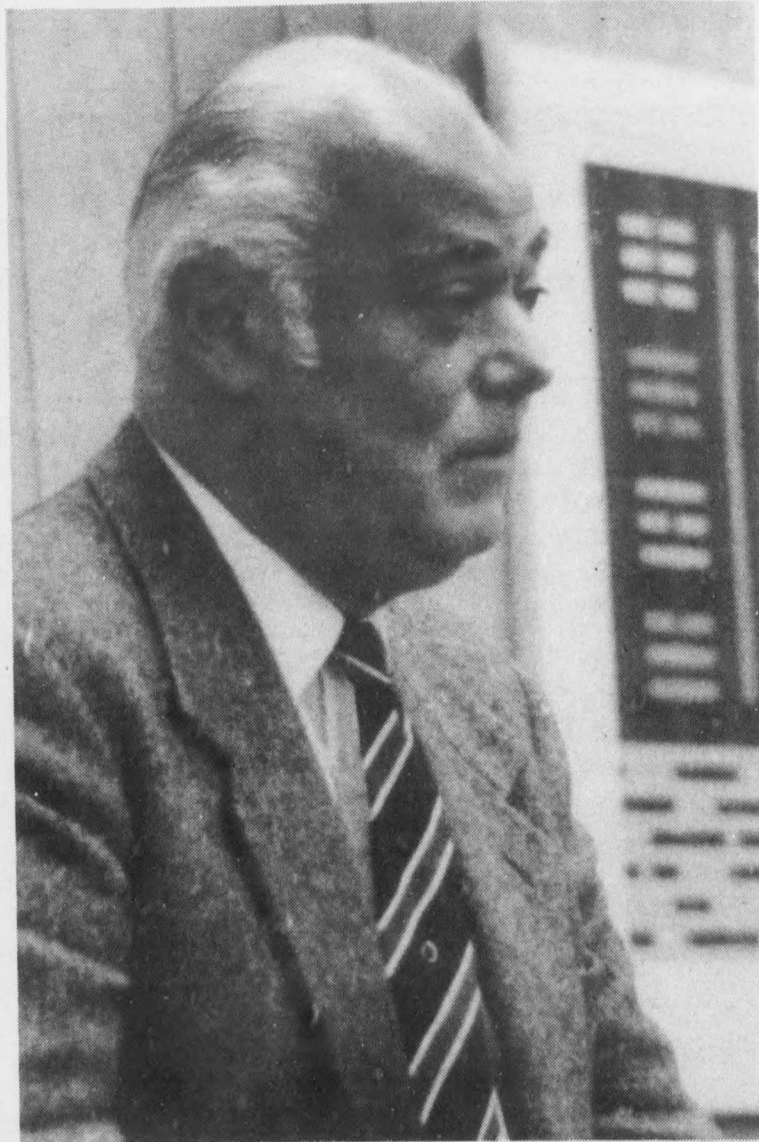
POLVO

"TODAY'S ACTIVE LIFE-STYLES"

The second album from Chapel Hill's finest is a strange experience. Their first from last year was all instrumental but they have added vocals and also a lot more structure to the songs. But one thing persists - the disorientating way that the songs change rhythm shooting off at tangents which makes listening rather interesting not to mention impossible to dance to I would imagine. The vocals are nice and lazy so don't interfere with their stronger side which is the instrumentation. The guitars are nicely distorted making them sound almost like sitars and they also happily boast of using unconventional tunings. The highlight of the album is 'Tilebreaker' which will have you singing along to the chorus and dancing to the rather melodic bridge. This is a charming little album which won't get as much press as most of the more noisy material coming out despite being far superior. A good beat but you can't dance to it. (Merge, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514.)

TYPE O NEGATIVE "BLOODY KISSES"

On the back of the case there is a statement - "Don't Mistake Lack Of Talent For Genius" and this made me immediately suspicious. Were they trying to tell me that they had no talent? It would appear that it was indeed a warning because this is one of the most awful things I have heard in a long time. From the rather tasteless cover to the even more bizarre lyrics I just can't decide if this is a joke or not. The singer sounds



Carrie Ramsey photo

Alistair MacLeod at UNB

By Carla Lam

Alistair MacLeod's October 13th appearance drew quite a crowd. I arrived in advance to an already over-capacitated T28 and had to sit on the floor at the authors feet. Kent Thompson read announcements while waiting for MacLeod, who arrived fashionably late, and the reading got underway shortly after 7:30 pm. A colleague and former classmate, Dr. Anthony Boxill, made the usual introductions.

Boxill provided a brief background on the author outlining his education and experience. Upon completion of English graduate studies at UNB MacLeod taught at Notre Dame, briefly at University of Indiana, and eventually University of Windsor. Although academia has gained him foreign recognition, it appeared that the majority of the audience were supporters eager to hear a familiar story teller practice his art.

MacLeod's published work consists of 2 collections of short stories; "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood" (1976) and "As Birds Bring Forth The Sun." (1986). The English and American versions of the latter do not correspond exactly to the Canadian version; the English and American versions containing stories from both collections, plus more recent works. After describing MacLeod as "One of Canada's most distinguished writers," Boxill finished by revealing the author's seeming fascination with death.

Indeed death was present in

both of his readings, but it was not the narrative focus. His fiction instead centered on a main character, and death with concepts, of universal nature, affecting the individual.

The first reading, an excerpt from a 43 page novella entitled "Island", deals with the concept of isolation. The locale, as the title implies, is a small island off the mainland where only a lighthouse keeper and his family reside. The story details the personal effects of the mental and geographical isolation experienced by the 17 year old daughter. Especially pertinent is her reaction to unexpected companionship by a young foreigner who comes to the island for seasonal work, and eventually is killed.

The second reading was an excerpt from a novel in-the-works. "No Great Mischief If They Fall," deals with the concept of loyalty using an orphaned girl as the main character. The same locale as "Island" is in place here, but the lighthouse keeper, his wife and their eldest son drown during a trek across the ice. The symbol of loyalty is the dog of the deceased family who could be appeased from his loss only by his own death.

Kent Thompson closed the evening thanking Alistair MacLeod on behalf of the university. Mr. MacLeod was the third English department sponsored author to read at UNB and precedes Ann Copeland, who will be here on November 3rd.