

Hot Demons Cool, Catssss

The Shuffle Demons
Sidetrack Cafe
Tuesday, October 17

by Philip Preville and Ron Kuipers

Hey catsssss! Like, open your ears to the groovy, swingin', crazy, hepcat sounds of the Shuffle Demonsssssss.

Cool. Cool cool cool.

These guys may say they're from Toronto, but in fact they dwell in Plato's realm of ideas. They are what it means to be cool. If the universal 'coolness' could take on physical form, it would look like these guys — coloured hightops, zazzy zoot suits, goatees, and skinny black sunglasses. A band from the flipped. Anything else on this earth that claims to be cool has a bit of the Demon 'cool aspect.'

Anyone who has seen the Shuffle Demons in any of their previous trips to Edmonton has not seen this version of the band — only two of the original five members still remain, horn players Demon Rich Underhill and Demon Dave Parker. The addition of the new players, however, has not changed the band's chemistry or the absolute insanity of their live show.

The Demons opened the show in their usual way, parading through the audience on their way up to the stage, tootin' them

horns like there was no tomorrow. By the time they reached the stage, goateed pied piper Demon Rich leading the way, the crowd was so into it that they didn't need to introduce themselves. Nevertheless, they did so musically, playing their theme song and singing "We are the Shuffle Demons, we intend to do some screaming".

Scream they did, man. The band has gained a most colourful bassist with the addition of Demon George Koller. He did everything with that standup bass but have sex with it. He stuck a drumstick between the strings and slapped it to make the strings go 'doingg'. Then he began sawing and chopping the strings with his bow. Then he did both at the same time. Man, did that stringbox sing. He also engaged in something that we will call 'vocal art' because there is simply no other way to describe it, except perhaps Tarzan with asthma. Suffice it to say that it was more than euphonic.

The band's sense of humour is, unlike their music, offbeat. Songs like "Out of My House Roach" and "Cheese on Bread" will attest to that fact. And the Demons raged, tooted and joked their way through the entire evening, playing well past midnight. They're the sort of band that glued a smile on your face for mondo-extended periods of time. We're tellin' ya, those smiles didn't fade too fast.



Dragos Ruiu

Demons Dave Parker and Rich Underhill turn the Sidetrack Cafe into the grooviest pad in town.

Guest Maestro conducts ESO

interview by Mike Evans

"The myth of the maestro has very deep roots and, as a woman, I have had to work very hard to be accepted in a traditionally male profession."

Guest conductor Gisele Ben-Dor debuted in 1982 with the Israeli Philharmonic conducting Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* to wide acclaim. She has since been appointed the resident conductor of the Houston Symphony, which she led at the Presidential Inauguration, and now travels extensively, conducting orchestras in Europe and North America. She is in Edmonton this weekend to conduct the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra in a program including Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite* and Sibelius' *Violin Concerto in D minor* with Joshua Bell.

Ben-Dor is one of only two women with major orchestras currently in the United States, both, ironically, in Texas. Though the music world is gradually becoming more receptive to women in leadership roles, she is still fairly unique. The patriarchal tradition, she says, "begins with the composers themselves" who comprise the literature, and has

been perpetuated by the difficulty the establishment has had in accepting that women possess the same "innate talent for music, for creativity, as men, though I cannot prove it. It is a nature versus nurture argument. But it is a younger generation of women making change."

She suggests that the comparative sluggishness with which the music world has accepted women conductors could be due, in part, to



the spiritual component of the conductor's role. "There are more women every day in politics, medicine and science, but in art we are kind of stuck in the middle in that we must embody all the qualities of those other professions. Conducting is art and science. By comparison, there are no women in leadership roles in the religious sphere. And a conductor is a leader in a spiritual sense

because you must convince people to play the way you want them to." Because art is such an intensely personal pursuit, it follows logically that the leadership role of the conductor would have spiritual elements.

"However," Ben-Dor observes, "there are more women overall in music today than in even the recent past." On the other hand, she says "women still have a long way to go before they will be accepted unconditionally as leaders."

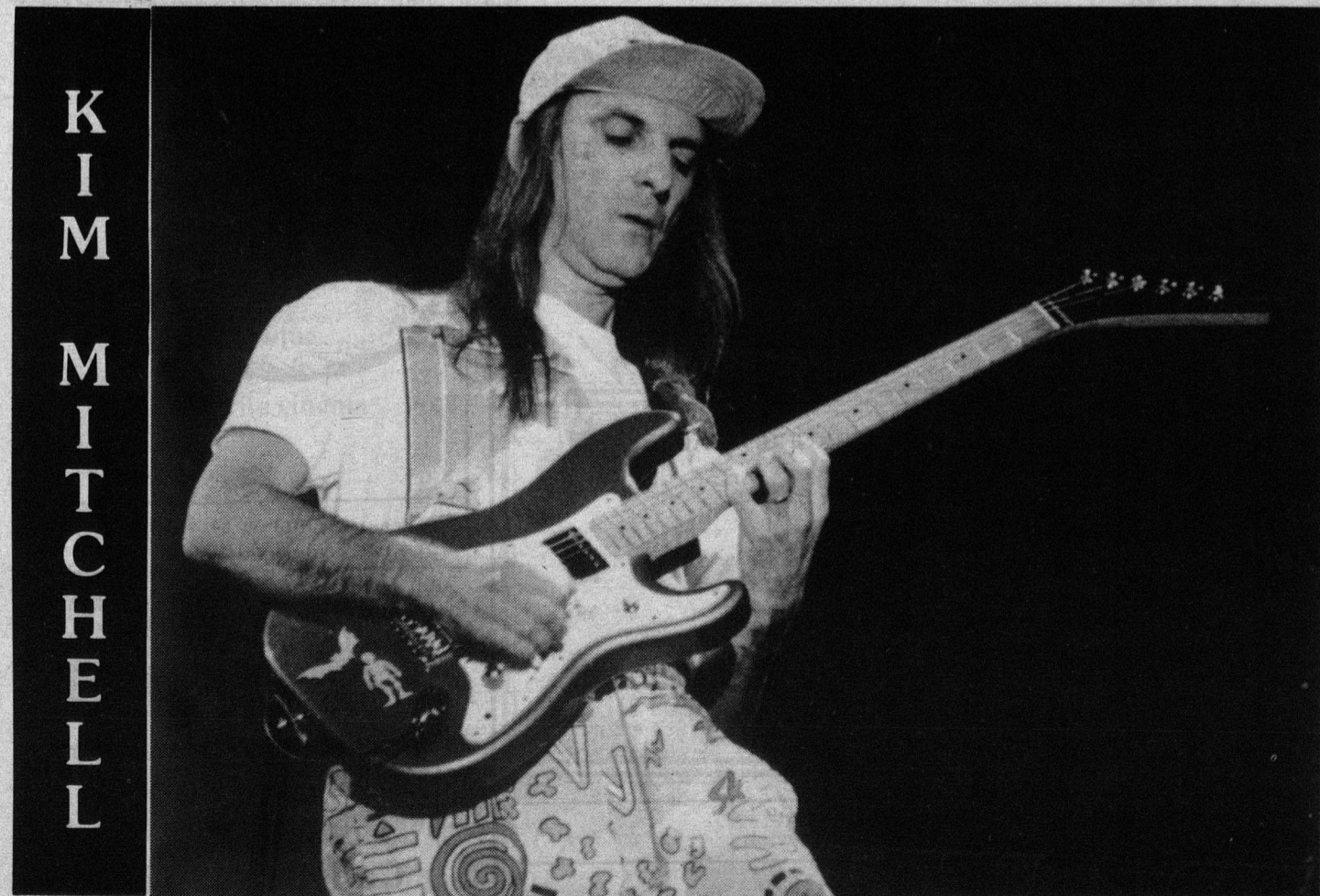
She also says that "relatively speaking, for a conductor, I'm a baby. But this is not a position for children. To be a conductor requires much maturity." The difficult aspect of conducting is that because you are working with "a group of artists" you must be sensitive to their individual needs while inspiring a

performance of unified integrity.

Ben-Dor acknowledges the difficulty of pursuing a professional life and reconciling that with family. She is married and has a seven year old son who "up to the age of three" accompanied her on tour. "Now," she says, "I do not wish to dislocate him from his own life when I travel. He is busy too."

Ben-Dor confessed to a love of Russian music during the course of this interview, and though she will be leading the orchestra through Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite*, she stressed that it is very different from the more familiar *Rite of Spring* which was her professional debut. "*Rite of Spring* created a big scandal when it was first performed in 1913. It is an incredibly difficult composition with very difficult rhythms for the orchestra. But Stravinsky was very prolific, he wrote in a wide variety of styles. This piece, the *Pulcinella*, is much more accessible, very delightful, almost a divertimento."

Ben-Dor also expressed an affection for Edmonton. "I like the city. It is very clean, very nice." Of course, "it was a bit of a shock to come from 90 degree weather with 80 per cent humidity in Houston," but the "dry and cool" climate in Edmonton is a refreshing change.



Ron Sears

Kim Mitchell played a hot guitar at the Jube Tuesday night. But he's nowhere near as cool as *The Shuffle Demons*.



Guest maestro Gisele Ben-Dor