

# TALENT NIGHT HOT AND COLD

by Sandy MacDonald

One of life's most trying moments must occur while in the shower, when the hot water tank seems to acquire a mind of its own and, at will, the temperature of the water fluctuates from scalding hot to cardiac-arresting cold.

This same phenomenon seemed to rule last Tuesday's Talent Show, held at the Grawood Lounge. The room warmed up occasionally during the evening when the performers were able to hold the audience's attention, but most of the evening the Grawood remained drearily lukewarm.

After a fifteen minute delay, which one comes to expect from these productions, Ariane Clemens opened the show. In a difficult spot as the first act, her performance and her material were overwhelmed by the restlessness of the audience. Her folksie sound would have been more appropriate in a more relaxed coffeehouse atmosphere.

Hardly making an impression upon either the judging panel or the audience, the first act quickly relinquished the stage to a formidable foursome, Tom Regan and Friends. Beginning their set with an impressive accapella version of "Rocky Road to Dublin", the group was able to revive the masses and did their part to liven up the occasion. They followed with one of Tom's satirical compositions "The Cover of the Dal Gazette". The group, consisting of Tom Regan, brothers Sean and Jim, and Danny McKinnon, all playing acoustic guitars, offered a further selection, penned earlier in the afternoon by Sean, indelicately entitled "Sit on my Face". While not scoring a big hit with the judges, it none-the-less added some comic relief to the evening.

Tom and Friends commanded the audience's attention and prepared the room for the following acts, but again the selection of inappropriate material cost them in the final

scoring of the competition.

The stage was now set, so to speak, when Mary Kelly came to the mike. To an excellent piano accompaniment, she sang an Elton John composition, "Think I'm Gonna Kill Myself." Her professional attitude and stage presence, combined with her torchy vocal style to create a relaxed

tude of all those within earshot of Gordie's rhetorical ranting, Bernard Butler, a musical clone of John Prine, took the stage. Like the first act, his material would be better suited to a coffeehouse atmosphere, yet his songs were well performed, especially Prine's "Take the Star Out of the Window".

die" Neal and his infamous pigeon impressions.

The pace of the show, which had been gradually slowing down, ground to a complete halt by this time. Then, like a oasis in a desert of musical mediocrity, came Dan Plasse and violinist Wolfgang Westhouse. The audience was once again awakened by the lively Irish material, including "The Wild Rover" and "The Irish Washerwoman". It became quite evident that the audience was set for a loud and lively time, certainly not provided by most of the early acts. Plasse's performance was timely, as crowd response was increasing with the amount of liquor consumed. Although neither were particularly adept at their instrument, together they formed a unique sound, which offset the tedium of poorly played acoustic guitars all evening.

Tom Evans, another coffeehouse, followed, but his small voice was lost in the muddled sound system and he made little impact with the judging panel.

The final competitive performer was Dan Baker, a banjo-picking John Denverite. "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" and Denver's "Grandma's Feather Bed" were performed spiritedly, but an uninspired rendition of "Tequila Sunrise" on twelve-string left the audience wanting less.

Amateur talent shows are designed primarily as an entertainment spectacle, but with the poor sound system and uneven pacing it barely was that.

The main problem most of the groups experienced was the lack of appropriate material to satisfy both the judges and the audience. The performers who stayed with up-tempo material seemed to fare better than those who performed slower ballad style.

Incidentally, first prize of \$100 went to Mary Kelly, second prize went to the Plasse duo. Judging the competition was CKDU station manager Michael Wile, entertainment editor of the *Gazette* Margaret Little, and Gina Wilkins and Kathy Kerr of the *University News*.



Mary Kelly

yet entralling set. "Love Me Like a Man" bared the best elements of her voice, revealing a sound much like Maria Muldaurs. It certainly was the most polished act of the evening but not the most entertaining.

The audience, having been warmed by the Irish charm of Miss Kelly and the raucous Regans, were quickly cooled by the inimitable but inept master of ceremonies Gordie Neal. The only thing possibly worse than stand-up comedians are unrehearsed, ad-libbed standup comedians.

Finally, to the eternal grati-

Next up were Gale Perry and friends, who unfortunately fell victim to the poor sound system, which had plagued the show all evening. Gale, playing piano, performed an inspired version of the Bee Gees old hit "Got to Get a Message to You".

Steve Madden, who was scheduled to appear earlier in the evening, should have appeared later, much later. Woody would be appalled if he knew this sort of travesty would be inflicted upon his music. The only act that could possibly follow that musical fiasco, did; Gordie "never say



-Dan Plasse Duo

Dal Photo / Grandy

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