

NEO A4

"The Hard Way"

by Victor

When most people think of popular Canadian artists, usually they think of Rush, Chalk Circle, or any other of a myriad of groups. Chances are, you've heard something by *this* group at one point in your life, but never really noticed it. This album is designed to change that.

Neo A4 first found acceptance at the CASBY awards for best non-recording group. This soon changed with the release of their first EP, "Desire", when they became one of the best "unknown" recording artists of this country. Later, in 1988, they released a self-titled LP, which gave them more exposure, and elevated them from their "just-another-Canadian-band" status. With this LP, they're shooting for success, and may have found it.

With the impulsive drum intro to the first track, "Again & Again", you can tell that this group is out to grab your ears and move your feet. This song has a very likeable, "accessible" feel to it, and is a good example of the group's changing musical style.

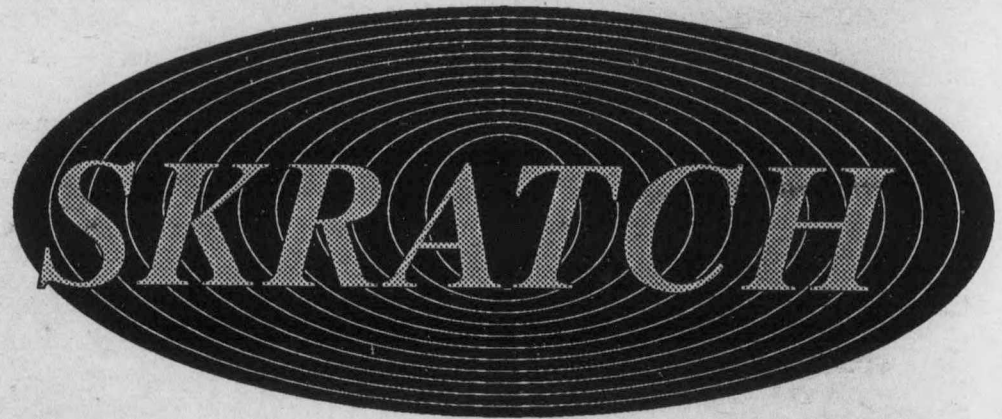
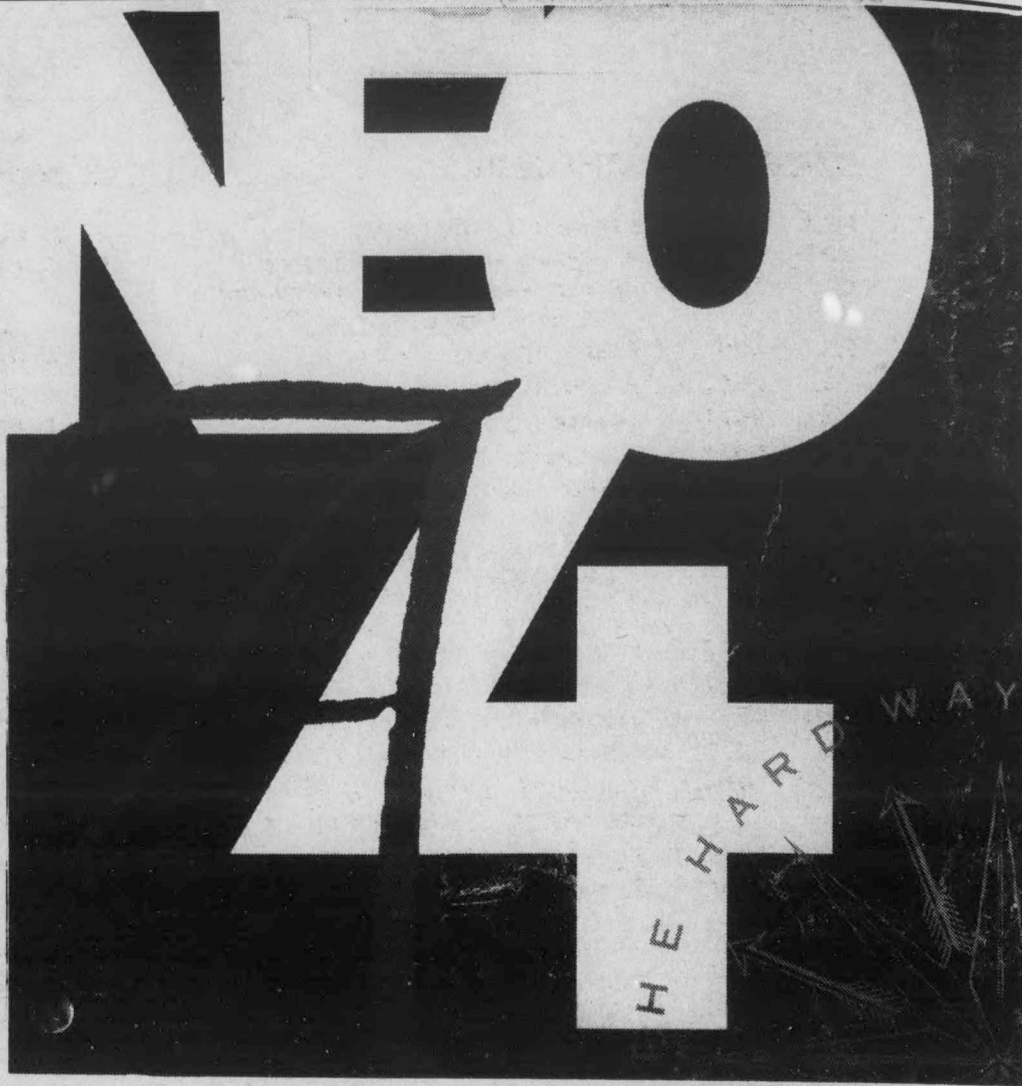
Next, we find ourselves inside a surprisingly well-written (yet sappy) love ballad. You may have heard of this one, AM radio stations just eat up this stuff. It was also on Much Music a few months back. The name of this tune is "That's the Way", (Sound familiar?) It was co-written by guitarist John Tidswell and new member bassist Douglas Radford. (Neo A4 isn't the only Canadian threesome that's found a need for a fourth member. The Grapes of Wrath have done the same.)

The next two songs are real standouts because the musical style incorporated is so much different than that on the rest of the album. They show a much more powerful side of the group, one which I find more musically satisfying. These songs "If your Believe" and "For the Truth" are ones you can really sink your teeth into (if you have a registered dental plan), with their ominous chord structures and deep lyrics, and even some off-time beats. All-around wonderful stuff.

Speaking of wonderful, now comes the time for me to laud my favorite of the songs on this album. My choice here is "Calling You". This song is not so light that it can be dismissed as "fluff", yet also not so heavy that it lays poorly on the untrained ear. Also, the productive genius of Chris Wardman really shines, here, *much* more so than on the most recent album by Chalk Circle, also produced by Wardman. The song is also balanced by careful use of backing vocals, some even being screaming and shouting far off to the sides. Take a sister, you'll see what I mean.

I have only a few qualms with this album, but my major one is this: half the songs are just too damn short. In a way it seems they may have tailored some of them for pop-radio (heaven forbid...), although some songs have strange intros/extros or even vocals-thru-a-walkie-talkie (no, really!) which would make most AM radio types shiver. On past attempts, this group's songs tended to sound similar for my living, but thankfully, they have changed for the better. The song writing is now more evenly dispersed throughout the group, providing a more diverse selection, although some songs still sound like out-takes from the past album.

To say that I recommend buying this album would be an understatement. I would actually say that you *should* buy it, whatever your musical tastes, it's definitely worth it.



SPRINGFEST 90

U.N.B. Student Union

presents

The Hypnotic World of Mike Mandel

"The Most Fun You'll Ever Have In A Trance"!!

Post Hypnotics That Will Leave You Rolling In The Aisles

Quotes From Recent Shows

- "It was great, I'd see him again"
- "It was great, I'd see him again"
- "It was great, I'd see him again"
- "It was great, I'd see him again"

"From Post - Hypnotic Victims"

The Fun Begins As Soon As All Are Asleep. See Your Friends As You've Never Seen Them Before. Catch Mike As He Places Your Friends In A Trance

Monday March 19th

\$5.00

MacLaggan Room 105 8:00pm

