

Baby, you can drive my car

by D.A. Robson

Why can't we love? A friend of mine often asks me this question. D—, he says, why can't we just love?

My first reaction is condescending and critical. The more he asks, the more I roll my eyes. Don't you see? We can't JUST love. We must "be sensible". We must "be careful". Very simply, loving and trusting is out of fashion. People who trust simply have not been burned yet. They have not LEARNED yet. Our society has not yet stamped their psyche with the pain and frustration of betrayal.

This problem for me is summed up in one issue: Hitchhiking.

Hitchhiking!! What? In this day and age? There are too many crazies! You know... you can't be too careful during these dangerous times... and on and on. These attitudes are simply in line with the fashion. Young people grow up with an attitude and perception constantly being drilled into them. We are indoctrinated. Hitchhiking is dangerous - one must be ever-vigilant.

That there are exceptions is clear. There are many happy-go-lucky

hitchhikers thumbing along the roads of the world. Likewise, there is a loving community of trusting, loving and friendly drivers out there whose first instinct is to pick hikers up. Members of this family of the road will be quick to tell stories of the joys of an interesting and interactive ride. The learning and goodwill which is shared is like the start of a wonderful relationship ... almost a reuniting of long-lost old friends.

And then ... SLAM. For every thousand positive experiences, something goes horribly wrong. A scare, a rape, a murder ... and this incident is told, repeated and fostered. It grows out of proportion, out of reality. The fear is fed by a mentality skewed by a violent and perverse standard of thinking. Hitch-

hiking, far from being seen as a beacon of kindness, develops an image of psychos, danger and tragedy. This becomes the norm.

And so it goes with the way we think. Everything we wonder about becomes a conflict. We want to open up, trust, and believe, yet there is a deep and pervasive power holding us back. Our capacity to love others reels under this vague shadow of mistrust. Cynicism is winning this battle. It's everywhere: the family, politics, culture, hitchhiking - it doesn't matter where. It is within.

So J—, in answer to your question of "why can't we love?", let's try. Let us reverse the trend and set a new tone. Maybe we CAN love. Maybe we SHOULD hitchhike.

But let's not do it after dark.



Black Pool Seahorse sinks

by B. Tude

Local music veterans Black Pool present us with *The Seahorse*, the third album from this Halifax band since their debut in 1989. This album is beautifully packaged with a full-colour cover and attractive layout, an oddity for an independent release.

Black Pool has seen some big changes since their last album, with former members leaving to become lawyers (Chip Sutherland, former drummer), students (Phil Sedore, formerly guitar, lyrics and writing), and, in one case, international recording artists (Chris Murphy, bassist in Black Pool and now in Sloan). In fact, only one original member is left, lead singer John Wesley Chisholm.

The new line-up is an impressive display of some well-known local musicians. This includes Dave Marsh on drums, Tim Brennan on bass, Catherine McKinnon on violin and Matt Murphy on guitars and vocals. They have been playing together since before the summer and put on a live show full of energy and great music.

If it looks like I am avoiding discussing the album, it's true, mainly because I don't like the album. It is always hard to be honest when reviewing local music, especially when you may see the artists in question, either in bars or in dark, unlit side streets of Halifax.

Despite the risk of excommunication from the local scene for being unsupportive of home-grown talent, I will attempt an objective and impartial review.

The Seahorse was released about two weeks ago to much fanfare in the local papers. The album's nineteen songs were recorded in Halifax at Adinsound Studio earlier this summer. This is problem number one for this album. The sound is unbalanced, with Chisholm's vocals way, way out front, the drums woody and cymbals tinny, and the overall production is messy and uneven. It is hard to tell if this is the result of technical limita-

tions or production difficulties. These same problems have faced other local bands who have recorded with Adinsound, the most notable being last summer's wooly-sounding demo by Halifax locals Thrush Hermit.

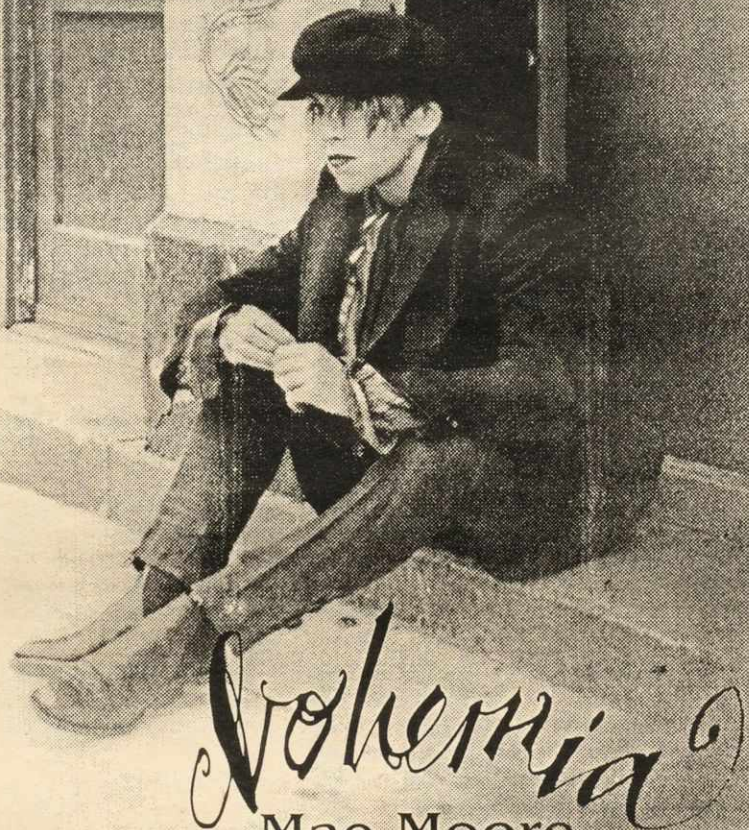
The songs themselves are problem number two. While several songs are really good live, and few songs are really bad, the album's overall limp sound fails to make any of these tunes sparkle. "Don't Go Knock on That Front Door" is typical of Black Pool's Celtic-influenced sound, and while this song is really enjoyable live, I find the recorded version drags, and is just a little too contrived and too country for my taste.

Some of the slower songs are better, with "In Memory of Elizabeth Lindsay" and "Haul Away Joe" standing out, and sounding very traditional. Some surprises on this album include "Teenage Hippie in A Supernatural Food Store", which is an old, old song from pre-album demo days of Black Pool, and which also rather rocks.

Black Pool's new album is named for the Seahorse, a smokey Halifax pub where much of the local music scene intelligentsia has been known to hang out. The name may be an attempt to capture the energy and sense of innovation embodied by a mid-summer night's schmooze with local talent at the Horse. Memorializing this institution is a good idea; having this Black Pool album as the tribute is not.

But don't get me wrong, I like Black Pool live. It's hard to put your finger on, but the energy of Black Pool live, with the requisite hoedown of audience members pseudo-Celtic dancing in front of the stage, clapping and hooting along with the band just does not translate to the album! The new Black Pool is an entertaining show band, a Celtic version of local ska and reggae band The Hopping Penguins. However, the album is simply not innovative enough and the recording is so underpowered that I cannot recommend that you shell out the twenty dollars for the album.

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