

Blue Rodeo

BY KATIE TINKER

Rounding off their *Days in Between* tour, Blue Rodeo gave a typically crowd-pleasing performance last Thursday at the Metro Centre. And if the band seemed a little more mellow than usual, it was mellow in a comfortable, confident sort of way — perhaps a reflection of their current success.

The *Days in Between* is the ninth album the band has released in their 13 years together. It is a solid collection of songs that should give these well-established Canadian musicians every reason to be happy with where they're at.

Blue Rodeo has a sound all their own, one which defines all their music. Yet they're constantly growing both as musicians and as songwriters, and with every album they put out there is a marked development. This latest work contains some of their most well-crafted lyrics yet, combined with a spontaneity reminiscent of their immensely successful *Five Days in July*.

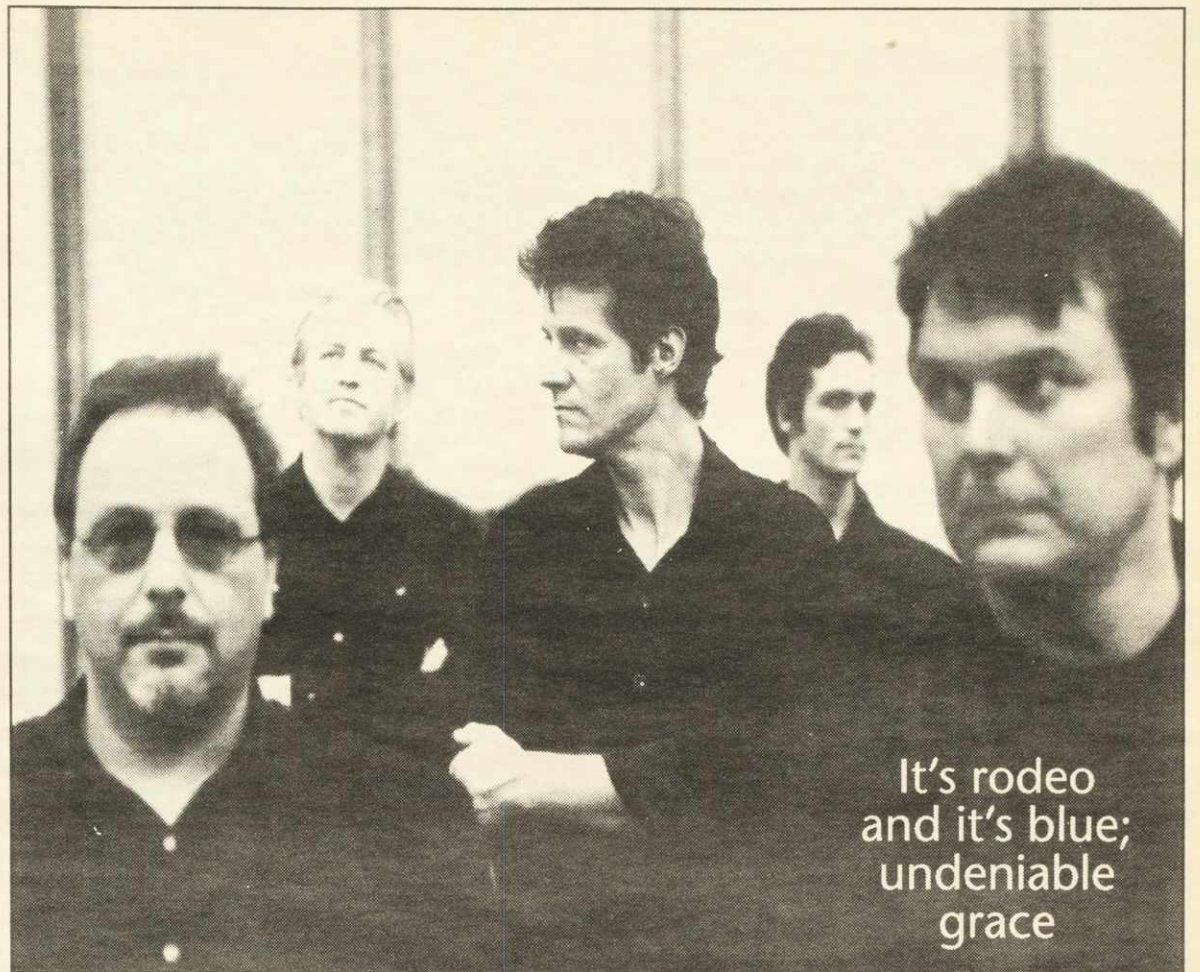
The newer songs they played at Thursday's concert were met with an enthusiastic reception by a crowd already well warmed-up by the Sadies, a Toronto band. Enthu-

siasm swelled when Blue Rodeo returned to traditional favourites like "Try", "Till I Am Myself Again" and "Five Days in May".

Lead singers Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor struck up an easy interaction with their audience, at times joking around with the people dancing under the stage. It was amazing to see how the crowd responded so strongly to both of these two very different personalities.

Cuddy has an undeniable grace when he sings; his whole body becomes caught up in the pure, natural melodies and rhythms of his songs in a way that captivates anyone watching. Yet people were equally drawn in by the quiet, sometimes troubled intensity of Keelor — most memorably when he sang his solo ballad "Motherless Son," about his recently discovered Cape Breton heritage. Every other band member had their shining moments, too; drummer Glenn Milchem was particularly impressive in one spectacular solo that was enhanced by creative lighting effects.

One of the remarkable things about the appeal of Blue Rodeo is how broad it is. You'll see people of all ages, all inclinations, every-



It's rodeo
and it's blue;
undeniable
grace

one caught up in the excitement and having a fabulous time. A Blue Rodeo concert is an experience which rarely disappoints those who are there.

Is hip hop an art, culture or sexual lifestyle?

BY ASHA TOMLINSON

Windsor, (CUP) — Many young people are confused as to the true meaning of hip hop. When viewing most hip hop videos, negative images of women scantily clothed and sometimes even bare breasted are shown shaking their "thangs" in front of the camera. Usually male artists and other men in the video watch and touch these women.

Q-Tip, an artist who has been known to write lyrics with a deeper meaning, has recently released two videos filled with women who leave little to the imagination. The women are present in the video only to show off their bodies wearing nine-inch heels, barely-there shorts and skimpy tops.

According to an insider involved in one of Q-Tip's video shoots, three of the women were actual dancers, one was a stripper and the rest were models.

Although we are sexual beings by nature, the fantasy-like images created in these videos produce a beauty type many young women feel they must emulate.

But videos are only the tip of the iceberg — hip hop lyrics are not much better. Artists such as Juvenile have created songs about women "backing their ass up." In their video, there are various women showing their "asses" to the rest of the world. Some look as young as 16-years-old.

Women being called bitches and ho's are common terms in songs by Jay-Z,

Eminem and Snoop Doggy Dog. Even Canadian hip hop personalities have been resorting to misogynist lyrics about women.

Choclaire, an artist who is rising to the top quickly, has lyrics like "I like my girls face down. Ass up. Pillows on their mouth so they can muffle out the sound."

In a recent article published in *the Excalibur*, York University's main student newspaper, Choclaire said his lyrics are part of a stage persona and not an indication of his real identity and beliefs. He compares it to acting.

"When you go and see an Al Pacino movie, you might see him shoot people, but you never ask whether he does that himself," he said. "He's an actor."

Unfortunately, these explicit lyrics are being taken at face value by many, which is creating a culture of gender hierarchy and a degradation of women and their bodies.

This "blatant and explicit" sexuality appears in hip-hop stage shows in which artists such as Redman and the Alkaholics have been known to "encourage bitches to take off their tops and expose themselves."

This quote is from an Internet article written by a young, black man named "Davey D."

"Women were being grabbed and consistently accosted. I happened to run into two women who stopped to chat with me and for the next 15 minutes everyone who walked by made it a point to grab their asses or poke some other body

part."

Davey D documented his experience on his website, www.daveyd.com, after attending a Redman concert. He says disrespecting women is becoming a disturbing trend.

In Davey D's article, he indicated that the hip hop culture is permitting this kind of behaviour, and young men are getting more aggressive with young women.

"During a recent Uncle Luke show in San Jose, fools decided to tear the clothing off a female concert goer. This is unfortunately an increasing phenomenon. If females "get out of hand" and "don't respond accordingly," there is a good possibility she may find her clothing being torn off her body."

There are many things other than videos and lyrics that contribute to such behaviour, but these are two of the largest influences on the hip hop culture.

Critics say that what hip hop needs is an alternative image that promotes sexuality in a tasteful way and eliminates gender hierarchy. A positive change that starts with the viewers and listeners of hip hop music. They need to be aware and take an active role in what they deem acceptable.

"All of us are responsible for helping create that demand because we support the supply," wrote Davey D. "Those of us reading this article may not be doing the actual slapping of women, but we are directly and indirectly supporting an environment, myself included, that allows this to continue."

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