

ENTERTAINMENT

Rock and roll at the Yardbird

Story by David Jordan

Photos by Bill St. John

The last weekend of every month the Yardbird Suite becomes Edmonton's outlet for alternative live music, as CJSR takes it over from the Edmonton Jazz Society.

The Yardbird Suite was packed to capacity both nights this weekend. Edmontonians rocked Friday night to the sounds of Jerry Jerry and the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra, along with The Rockin' Rebels. Saturday night Condition and Bolero Lava filled the bill.

If you haven't been to the Yardbird Suite yet, it's a gritty little concrete block building adjacent to a vacant mud patch that serves as a parking lot — the kind of place that would fit right in in the backwoods of Georgia. If you haven't seen Jerry Jerry and the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra, it's a gritty rock and roll band that is right at home in the minimalist setting of plastic beer cups and folding chairs.

Jerry Jerry's roots go back twenty years or so, but this is no revival band. They play old R and B because they like it, not because it's vogue or trendy. The lead singer, Jerry, brings the old songs to life with a genuine feel for rock and roll that transcends historical classifications.

Jerry's vocals are tough — strong enough to rise above concrete block acoustics — and Ace's lead guitar sticks to the basics — a few powerful solos here and there, but nothing that'll get lost in the mix. Roland's solid rhythm guitar and a pair of percussionists fill out the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra.

Jerry Jerry has been an Edmonton mainstay for a couple of years now. What has held the band so close all this time? Ace sums up the band's philosophy in a nutshell: "We have one thing in common — we all like to drink a lot."

Friday night's second act was a real sleeper. Rockabilly revival was big a couple of years back, but buying a tube of Brylcreem and playing a few Gene Vincent numbers is no longer enough to guarantee success. The Rockin' Edsels play it a little harder and a little faster than the dozens of revival bands we've seen recently, but they add nothing to a dead genre. Shut your eyes, and you could be in any cheap beer hall between here and Fort McMurray.

Saturday night's entertainment began with Condition, a Montreal-based band that defies pigeon-holing. Julia's powerful, wide-ranging vocals and Eddy's saxophone lay a distinct jazz foundation, while Philip's pounding jungle-beat percussions drive the songs with a relentless, mesmerizing rhythm.

The crowd didn't quite know how to react — it's not exactly pogo-dancing music — but they expressed their enthusiasm by demanding an encore. Quite a compliment, considering Condition was billed as the opening act for a much-publicized headline show.

After four years of paying their dues on the Montreal club circuit, Condition seems perched on the edge of a breakthrough. A major English recording label recently expressed some interest, but so far there has been no concrete follow-through. Condition is just finishing the soundtrack for a Montreal-produced feature film *Memoirs*, in which Julia stars as a nightclub performer. The film should be released by mid-November, and the soundtrack just might earn Condition the recognition they deserve. If a film and a record aren't enough, the videos Condition plan to produce when they return to Montreal just might push them over the top. Watch for them.

Probably the worst thing that ever happened to Bolero Lava was winning a free recording session last spring. A Radio Shack cassette would have been more flattering than the resulting EP. Nothing short of a determined effort on the part of Keith Porteus, who produced and mixed the EP, could have so desensitized Phaedra's slashing guitar riffs and Barbara's crashing drums. And

who would have guessed, from listening to the EP, that Lorraine's keyboards could fill an entire hall with innovative rhythms and sound effects?

Bolero Lava still need to find a lyricist before the band returns to the studio. Their music is original, and their stage presence is unforgettable, but until they find some sort of distinct thematic character, their records won't rise above the thousand-and-one other amateur bands that are struggling to crack the big time.

Later this month you'll have a chance to hear the real Bolero Lava. Throw away the EP, and tune into CJSR Oct. 22 at 11 pm, when they will broadcast a tape of Saturday's performance.

The Yardbird Suite will be rocking again at the end of October. Stay tuned for news of more alternative live entertainment from Edmonton's alternative radio.



Philip, Julia, and Eddy of Condition: Urban jungle swing



The Rockin' Edsels: a tube of Brylcreem just isn't enough



Vanessa and Phaedra of Bolero Lava

The Album Playlist is based on Airplay — a combination of programmer preference and listener requests. Tune in every Sunday at 12:00 for the **Alternative Countdown** — the favorite albums, EP's, singles and tapes.

TOP 15 ALBUM PLAYLIST		13. Romeo Void Instincts (415/CBS)
1. Rip Rig & Panic Attitude (Virgin)	14. Sonny Terry Whoopin' (Alligator/WEA)	
2. Bangles All Over the Place (Columbia/CBS)	15. Von Zamba No Make Up (Krax)	
3. Carmel — The Drum is Everything (London/Polygram)	TOP EP's, SINGLES & TAPES	
4. The Church Remote Luxury (Warner Brothers/WEA)	1. Condition Lonesome Trails (Tape)	
5. Humphrey Littleton Humphrey Littleton in Canada (Sackville)	2. Bolero Lava Bolero Lava (Mo Da Mu)	
6. Various Artists Something to Believe In (Better Youth Organization)	3. The Dammed Thanks for the Night (Dammed Records)	
7. The Fall Perverted by Language (Rough Trade)	4. Factual Factula (Faction)	
8. Talking Heads Stop Making Sense (Sire/WEA)	5. Jerry Jerry & the Sons of Rhythm Orchestra Rhythm Crazy (Tape)	
9. Stockholm Monsters Alma Matter (Factory Communications)	6. BFA	
10. Art Hodes South Side Memories (Sackville)	7. Condition Stranded in The Jungle (Tape)	
11. Andy Summers/Robert Fripp Bewitched (A&M)	8. US Pride (Island)	
12. Look Back in Anger Caprice (Criminal Damage)	9. Ripchords Final Step (Tape)	
	10. U-Men U-men (Bomb Shelter)	

*** LSAT ***

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