

A band with class

Voice
Scandals
November 10

review by David Jordan

Voice are not working on a new video. That alone makes them a pretty damned refreshing band.

Voice is a collection of five of Edmonton's most talented young musicians, and they have been together for nearly a year.

Two band members are U of A alumni: Bill Damur, on guitar, has an MA in music; and Rod Wolfe, on bass, has a degree in chemical engineering. Rod was also an original member of The Smarties, where he played alongside P.J. Burton, a pioneer in Edmonton's new wave.

Lead singer, Malcolm Swann, says his roots are in '60's psychedelia, and it shows, with the band covering a lot of Beatles material and a few Doors and Hendrix songs.

This is certainly no revival band, though. The cover songs Voice do are strictly '80's music. And the plentiful original material is far from derivative.

What kind of music do Voice play? Well,

Dwayne Goettle on keyboards has a big influence, with his European syntho-pop sound.

And Sherri Iwaschuck's super-tight percussion adds that new wave beat that is so danceable.

But overall, their music defies labels. Take, for example, their cover of "In a Gada da vida," with its acoustic guitar solo, sax and trumpet solos, and the original five-minute drum solo condensed to a very effective half-dozen beats. Rock, jazz, and even classical — it's all there.

Malcolm slips in and out of personae with protean flexibility. One minute you could swear it was Janice herself belting out "Somebody to Love"; the next minute it could just as easily be John Lennon as "The Walrus."

Voice have very strong roots in Edmonton, and have developed a faithful following. Their definition of success is to cut an EP and get some air time on CJSR.

With their four-song EP coming out early in the new year, it wouldn't be surprising if they got their wish . . . and a whole lot more.



Rod and Bill yak it up before the show

Photo Bill St. John



Have you ever heard a "In a Gada da Vida" with a sax solo?

Photo Bill St. John

Geritol rockers

Eddy Grant
Boys in the Street
Portrait/CBS

The Guess Who
Together Again
Ready/WEA

reviews by Jens Anderson

Eddy Grant's "Romancing the Stone" is a fair song, but too commercial. It was obviously written with the Top 40 and Hollywood pabulum-pushers in mind. "Boys in the Street," which seems to be the follow-up to it, is much better: funky rhythmic, intense, and reminiscent of his excellent "Electric Avenue" of last year.

However, the rationale for this 12" single, with three versions of the song, is hard to discern. Side one is merely the album cut, minus a few seconds of the intro, and plus a minute or so of pointless, repetitive, percussive noodling at the end. The "Bad Boy" and "Straight Boy" variations on side two are downright awful. The beautiful guitar and trumpet lines on the original are almost completely excised here, and the synth-percussion and bad-rapping that take their place are a poor substitute.

Save your money and wait for the 45 instead, or buy the album *Going for Broke*. The album has some weak tracks, but is still worth it. In fact, I'm hoping that the third single from it is "Political Bassa Bassa" and that it hits the charts around the end of next January. It would make a great theme song for the CFS referendum.

Well, so much for my theory about old farts and rock music. The Guess Who's *Together Again* is a goodie.

The album is a live recording of the Guess Who reunion concert in Toronto last year. It

begins with a determined performance of "What's Gonna Happen to the Kids," unfortunately a lacklustre song (and the album's only flop). Next comes a pleasant, bouncy "Let's Watch the Sun Go Down" with a beautifully concise guitar break by Randy Bachman. By the song's end the band has hit its groove, and launches into "No Time" with Burton Cummings gleefully asking the audience, "Remember this one?"

This song, and "These Eyes" which follows, are quite close to the originals, but have a bit of the extra "live" edge to distinguish them. "Creepin' Peepin' Baby Blues," a new Cummings number which ends side one, is one of the album's highlights. Anyone who listens to this song without feeling to urge to dance crazily around the room is surely dead.

"C'mon and Dance" which opens side two is a mid-tempo jungle-rhythm number with Cummings jumbo-mumbling "Watusi," "burrito," "ya-ya-ya," "oobio-wah-wah" and miscellaneous nonsense. Wonderful stuff.

"Undun," again is close to the hit version but much more loose and easy. "Love Grows" is an ordinary composition, but is redeemed by superb synthesizer and guitar work. The medley of "No Sugar Tonight/New Mother Nature" and "American Woman" are also lively and close to the original.

But enough descriptive crap. The important things is that the Guess Who are not just having fun doing all this stuff, they're having a flying gas. The young snots, of course, will deride it as mindless pop, full of dead concepts like professionalism, melody and staying in tune.

Ah, but it only the new-wave crowd had one-half their exuberance! And one-tenth their talent.

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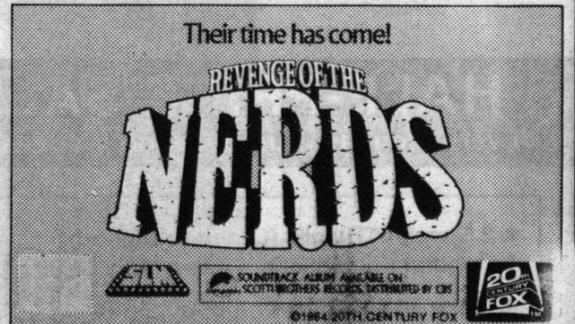
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