

# Guitar Warz

I watched Hail Hail Rock n' Roll again the other night - you know, the Chuck Berry story. I will offend many by being brutally honest. The guy was a lousy guitar player. Sloppy, disjointed - by today's standards, awful. What he did do, however, was innovate. Just because the average guitar player today can reproduce the lick from *Johnny B. Goode* with more flare and expertise than Chuck could hope to be capable of is irrelevant - he invented it.

For this reason I admit to having the guitar solo from *Rock Around the Clock* running through my head as I stood in Trina's on Friday night, one of the multitude that turned out to witness the local finals of the Third Annual Guitar Warz competition. Today's average guitar hero is one who reproduces cliché's like those invented by Chuck Berry with speed, agility, and at least some sense of musicality (there are, of course, players out there that are truly individual, but these days technical talent is a large part of it all.). Nine players were on hand, each supplying their own equipment (sometimes, in our age, it's not how good you are, but how much shit you can afford to buy and plug your axe into). High entertainment value. Some were awful, some were okay, some were irritating, and some were talented; what counts is that the people who most deserved to win did just that.

Although audience response seemed more geared to volume, grimacing, and windmill power chords (KERRANNNGGG!!! - Yeah!! Right on, dude!), the sheer numbers were encouraging and definitely helpful to even the cheesiest of competitors. After a distorted wall of *Purple Haze*'s and American national anthems (and some interesting stuff) the smoke cleared, leaving three heroes standing: Rob McPhee, Carson Downey, and Bryce McLelland, who were given an opportunity to come back up for a night-ending brawl of the behemoths.

Bryce came up first, and delivered a much more inspired performance than what he had done during the general competition - nerves may have had something to do with this. Much looser and more animated, McLelland showed a variety of styles in his selections, and displayed more talent than I had originally given him credit for. Carson Downey seemed to have suffered the same nerve problem as McLelland, as his second performance was much better. Less concerned with his ability to blur out at tremendous speed, Carson funk'd up a bit and showed the crowd some tasteful blues licks, and some of the neat tricks one expects from a guitar hero - hanging the guitar by its whammy bar, playing with his teeth and behind his back, and using the railing as a slide - massive cool.

I had picked these two as finalists, but assumed they would come in second to the phenomenal talent of the last finalist, Rob McPhee. Both McLelland and Downey had displayed (as well as good, solid talent) a dizzying array of technology. Midi pedal boards, rack-mounted effects units, huge amps and stuff galore. McPhee stood up to play, plugged into what appeared to be a fifty-watt MusicMan amp, and his

guitar which looks like it is made from about sixty different guitars. I think he had a couple of pedals, too. No tricks, and anything that looked like a trick was for musical and not visual effect. A clean, easy, all-the-time-in-the-world approach. Rob got no screaming ovations from the power-chord mongers.

In the end, Rob and Carson tied - which is good. McPhee's talent was as unmatched Friday night as Downey's showmanship and flair. I look forward to tonight's regional finals, and urge anyone who wants to have a good time to check it out.

Guitar players are a weird breed, and when they're talented, they're amazing - even when they're not though, they can be highly amusing.

## CBC Atlantic Song Contest

Deadline for submissions: Feb. 14, 1992  
Have your song recorded for airplay!

Pick up application forms at the Bruns office

# Happenings

**Gallery connexion** is currently displaying installations by two women: *PRO-Creation* by **Kimberly Snider** of Sackville and *Femme en emergence* by **Elaine Amyot** of Moncton. The exhibition runs until the 26th of this month. Gallery Connexion, is located downtown at the back of the Justice Building (Queen Street), and is open Tues-Fri 12-4pm and Sun 2-4pm. Please call 454-1433 for more information.

January 20 sees the opening of the first exhibition by **Twyla Rae Anderson** at the Faculty Lounge in Edmund Casey Hall, STU. Entitled *"First Impressions"* the presentation includes works in acrylic, pastel, and black ink. The Faculty Lounge is open from 4-9pm Mon-Fri.

The **UNB Art Centre** presents two exhibitions opening January 19 in Memorial Hall. **Craig Schneider**; *Re-emergence* - the artist's first solo exhibition. Sixteen clay sculptural pieces incorporating found objects make up this presentation. Craig is best known for his brick carvings such as "Executives Ascending" in Barker House on Queen Street. **R.M. Vaughan**; *Decorative Flair* - also the first solo exhibition by this artist, incorporates elements, textures, and effects gleaned from his observations of interior design and ornamentation.

### The 9th Annual Arts Cabaret:

Friday, January 24 and Saturday, January 25  
Held in **Memorial Hall**, the **Arts Undergraduate Society** organizes an 'all Arts' talent show. The atmosphere generated by the surroundings feels like a 1930's French cabaret, using minor lighting and candles placed in wine bottles. The Arts Cabaret has shown itself to be a consistent crowd pleaser selling out all Cabaret shows for the past seven years. Tickets available in the Dean of Arts office or in the lobby of the Student Union Building.

### Sheldon Sheep Says:

"Don't stick anything smaller than your finger in your ear!"

