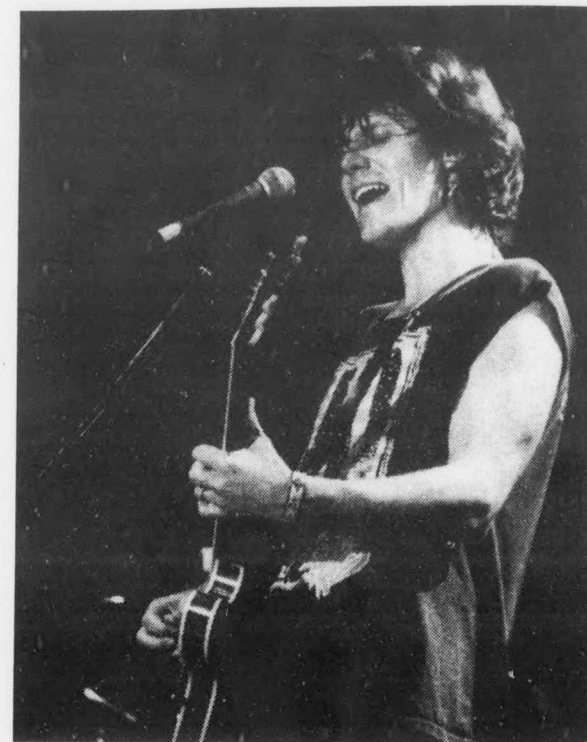
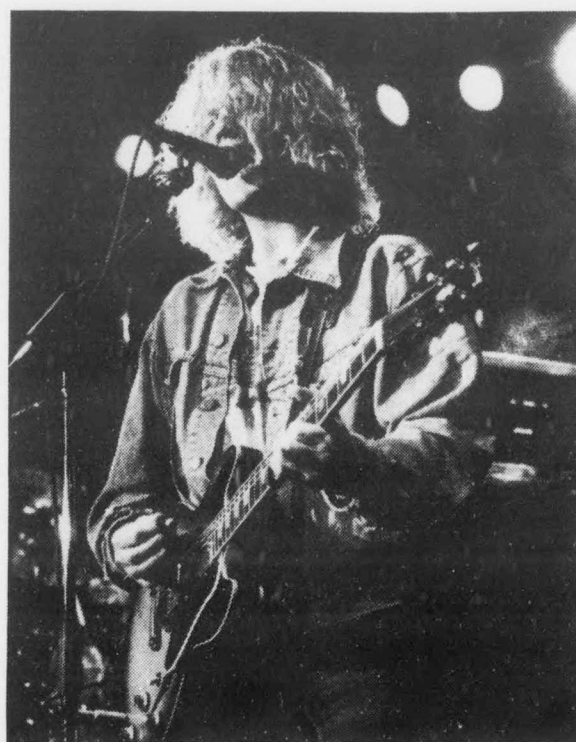
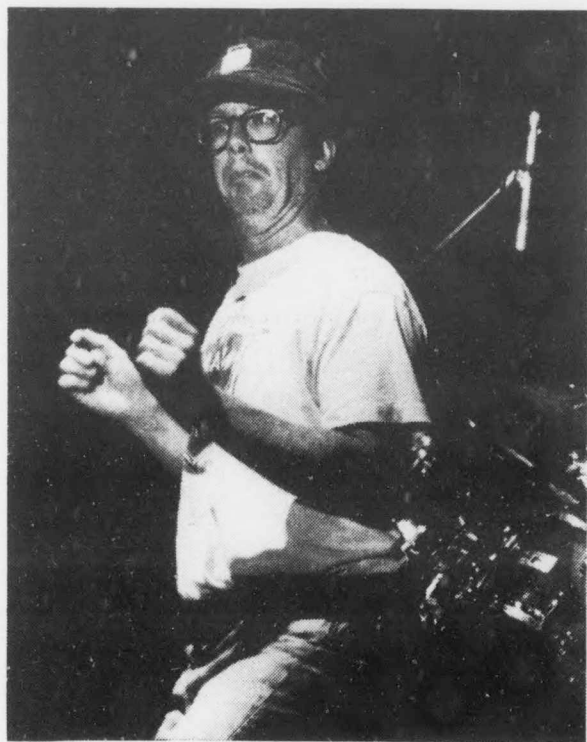


## Location Sucked but, Skydiggers/Blue Rodeo worth every penny.



(Photo by Kevin Porter)

The Canadian music industry is running strong, and if it continues to be carried by great bands like the Skydiggers and Blue Rodeo it will continue to do so.

I arrived at the concert with no expectations for the Skydiggers; good or bad. In return I was surprised to hear such a conscious refined sound. The Skydiggers played a very tight set, and saying the band did they're job to shake up the arriving crowd for Blue Rodeo is an understatement. I had a chance to speak with the band, and after a series of redundant questions I got this general overview of the Skydiggers.

They are enjoying the tour with Blue Rodeo, though only on the third day of the voyage. They had just come from a gig in Halifax and are now on their way to play Sackville. The bands original sound has come from an extremely varied background, but all agreed that like their own music, their influences are all energetic, honest sounds not easily labeled. On Canadian music, they felt that the industry (radio) was to commonly concerned with playing older, proven classic rock, opposed to breaking ground with new, fresh sounds. The guys picks for these "new fresh sounds" were the Regina based Waltons and the Toronto based Junkhouse. In five years, the Skydiggers would like to claim they have gotten better in both experience and music proficiency, just as you and I would like to get better at our own chosen profession.

The Skydiggers sound was original, with a strong beat and an excellent blend of acoustic and electric guitar. The crowd enjoyed it and the enthusiasm is carried well with the band. They have played the campus before and plan to be back.

After the usual wait between sets, the main event began. The band played with everything they could give. The difference in sound refinement, or whatever you want to call it was amazing. The band is: Greg Keelor and Jim Cuddy on vocals and guitar, Bazil Donovan on bass, Kim Deschamps playing pedal steel guitar, and Glenn Milchem on drums.

Kim Deschamps is a former member of the Cowboy Junkies. Before the show I wondered how the transition from the slow, serene sound of Margo Timmins to the rocking sound of Blue Rodeo would turn out for Kim. For the most part he added an excellent new dimension to the music. Only for brief moments during the show did it seem like he was struggling to keep with the right key or tempo of the musicians around him.

Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor were the main attraction of Blue Rodeo. The vocals seemed very true to the recordings, unlike what I usually expect from live performances. More to the point, they are very definitely the center of the group's sound, with the raw aggressive power of the band being heavily weighted with acoustic and electric guitar.

If there are any downsides to the concert, it wasn't so much the performance, it was the location. The bands, as good as they may be, are not of arena status. Especially for Fredericton, which of late has not been able to produce the crowd turnout for concerts. With only a third of the potential crowd attending, there was a definite lack of atmosphere. Many of the third in

attendance voiced their disapproval about the lack of a licensed canteen, and this may have something to do with the flood of people arriving late and leaving earlier. Worst of all were the acoustics. The Aitken Center may be the finest ice rink in the city, but the Grand Canyon

probably has less echo.

With four albums to their credit, the latest being "Lost Together", the band has become a big success, winning several Junos and selling oodles of records nation wide. I feel that

saying "the band played really well" would be like saying the Blue Jays played an alright season. If you weren't there you missed out. For the hard earned dollar it was worth every penny.

by *Len*

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