

Available Space: sexy and talented

by JOEY KILFOIL

The voice is throaty, sexy; it soars to shattering highs and almost obscene lows; each phrase, each word, each breath is passionately pushed from between the singer's lips; every syllable is clear, sometimes having even more life breathed into it as a perfect natural tremolo is added to color the image produced. Yet despite the almost sacrificial energy put into each song, the singer always has more for the next number, giving each tune a unique identity.

With all this going on, the performance is never contrived or phoney; the sensual gestures made by the singer are not so much subtle bumps and grinds as they are silent extensions of an incredible voice that can't be named.

The singer however, can be named. She is Cherie Camp, and the band is Available Space. If you didn't catch them at the Chestnut Inn last week and you think the above description is a trifle ridiculous, I suggest you reserve judgement until such time as you are lucky enough to actually hear Ms. Camp sing.

Dressed in blue jeans, a too-big wine-colored sweater with the sleeves bunched up at the elbows, and a white top with a loosely-hung necktie attached by a treble clef tie clip, Cherie's eyes reflect joy, celebration, despair, remorse, dry humour, or even tasteful naughtiness, depending on what the song requires.

But don't let the vivid description above fool you into thinking this article nothing more than an account of the unrequited love affair between reviewer and artist. Available Space is an extremely talented, very professional band. Consisting of Cherie on lead vocals, John Welsman on acoustic lead guitar, and Jeff Kahnert on acoustic rhythm, the trio was backed up on their eastern tour by bassist John Czechowski, a studio musician from Toronto who managed to show off his chops -- without ever overpowering the band -- while at the same time playing with a great deal of restraint. Many people found the tightness of the four's playing amazing, considering that the Fredericton gig was the first time Czechowski had ever played with the group.

Bandleader Welsman, who

teaches music on the side, plays an innovative style of acoustic lead that reflects many influences. Sometimes the lead is built around the melody of the song, at times it consists of a syncopated series of broken chords. Welsman flavors the lead with country, jazz, blues -- whatever the song requires. He is also capable of blinding speed, as evidenced when he plays The Sailor's Hornpipe. (An instrumental, it is better known as Popeye's theme song.) Welsman is a good lead singer, as can be heard, for example, when he sings one of his own compositions, Picture on the Wall.

Kahnert is the proverbial underrated rhythm guitar player. In a small band like Available Space, a steady backing is essential. Kahnert compliments Welsman's sometimes erratic leads with even, restrained rhythm strokes.

Kahnert also writes and sings. The fact that each member of the group is a good singer by themselves explains why the harmonies and backing vocals are as excellent as they are. (A situation not unlike Crosby, Stills, and Nash.)

Kahnert is also the funnyman of the band, his facial expressions and occasional slapstick moves on stage are used with enough discretion to add a touch of humour to the act without detracting from the seriousness of the musical performance.

Up to now I've been avoiding one specific question, mainly



Available Space, left to right: John Welsman, Cherie Camp, and Jeff Kahnert

because it is a very difficult question to answer, and that is, what kind of music do they play?

A release issued by the band describes their repertoire as "...comprised of a blend of superb

original compositions, along with contemporary vocal stylings of some terrific country tunes, swing numbers, vintage jazz standards, and a selection of the blues." Besides all this -- and believe me, don't knock it until you've listened to it at least once -- the good 'ol rock 'n roll influence is present in much of their material.

The group was in this region not only for their Fredericton appearance but to tape a second episode of Country Roads, a CBC Halifax-based radio show, other appearances include Cafe Hibou, a coffeehouse-style program broadcast from CBC-TV Ottawa, and Touch the Earth, a CBC radio program from Toronto.

Get fewer colds

What's the best way to avoid catching a cold this winter? Well, having an outgoing personality may help, according to a study conducted at Harvard Hospital in England.

Researchers there found that introverts -- shy or withdrawn people -- tended to get more colds and worse colds than extroverts. Other factors that triggered colds were stress and a change in routine.

But why are introverts more prone to catching colds? Well, according to a psychologist at the Department of Medicine at the University of California in Los Angeles "Introverts don't cope

well with stress. Instead of dealing with it, they get sick." (NEWS-CRIP)

Cable television viewers in Prince George, B.C. got an unexpected treat recently -- eight x-rated minutes from the film "Deep Throat."

The unscheduled special was shown just before noon, when a volunteer video tape operator accidentally grabbed the wrong cassette. What were the boys down at the station doing with a tape of Deep Throat? Well, we'll let you figure that one out. (NEWS-CRIP)

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