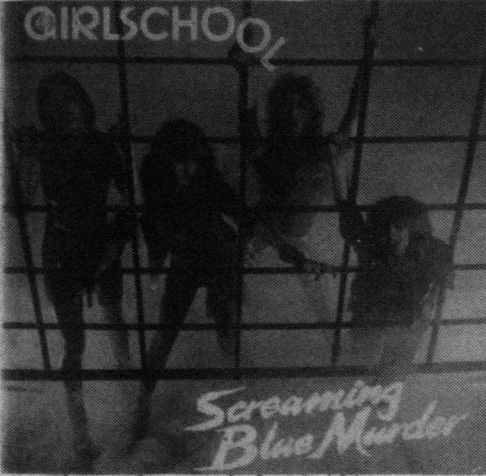


ROUNDOABOUT

by Nate LaRoi



ABC - the Lexicon of Love
Vertigo VOG-1-3316

You know the saying "If you've got looks you can get away with anything?" In the case of ABC we might change that to "If you've got a good sound you can get away with anything". For their first album, these four Englishmen have three strikes against them right off.

Strike one - *The Lexicon of Love* is all one big soap opera - fairy-tale love affairs, broken hearts, valentine's day - good lord - this album has more ups and downs than a typical episode of *Dallas*! Strike two - ABC share their basic assumptions about rhythm with Chic, Thom Bell and the Spinners - now generally found in the cut-outs bin. Strike three - ABC makes us of (occasional) falsetto vocals, disco handclaps and danceclub atmosphere - none of which are exactly in vogue.

So how can you get on base with three strikes against you? That's a tough one but ABC has beaten the odds and come up with a double or maybe even a triple. Part of the credit for their success must go to late - Yes producer Trevor Horn who has done a very skillful and tasteful job of mixing Mark White's piano, Stephen Singleton's saxophone and guest star Anne Dudley's orchestration. A number of obvious comparisons can be made to the resulting brew. The full sound and heavy use of strings brings to mind Phil Spector's "wall of sound"; Martin Fry's vocals bring to mind David Bowie circa *Young Americans*. And ABC's songs are in the best traditions of Philadelphia soul.

All in all, *The Lexicon of Love* is an impressive debut. ABC have a number of bright ideas and with a sound like this we're likely to soon see a whole host of imitators. DEF, GHI, XYZ.....

Office keeps 'em jumping

by Tom Wilson

(Read with Transylvanian accent)
Ho boy, that was really scary, eh kids? Did you see the way those people were just...dancing all over the place?Alright, so it wasn't so scary, but just wait until next year, the dance at the Faculte Saint Jean will be so scary it'll scare the pants right off you.

So, fere Antoine didn't show up this year, big deal, the human beings that did show up for the Faculte Saint Jean Annual Hallowe'en party had a good time without him. It was good to see a fairly large population of students from main campus at the dance. I would like to think it was the spooky article published in the *Gateway* last week that attracted everybody, but there's another reason. This year L'Association des Etudiants hired three groups to play at the dance.

When it was announced last week that there would be live bands playing instead of recorded music, a lot of people at the Faculte were slightly pessimistic. However, it is now safe to say that the dance was a success.

The first band was *Psyche*. Their music consisted mainly of drums and synthesizers.

Psyche had a hard time getting people to dance, being the first band. Another reason was simply there were not many people there who enjoyed that genre of music.

The second band was *Backstreet*. These guys really got the dance going. Their music was based more on guitars and their selection of songs was first rate. The dance floor was packed by the end of their set.

The third and final band was *Office*. They picked up where *Backstreet* left off and the floor never stopped jumping. *Office*'s music is a good mix of new wave and rock n roll. Singer/saxophonist, Malcolm, was especially well received by the crowd for introducing all songs in french. They finished their show with Plastic Bertrand's version of Elton Motello's "Jet Boy Jet Girl", much to the delight of the costumed crowd. The crowd was so delighted in fact, that they brought *Office* back for an encore.

So, even though it wasn't a really scary dance, it was a lot of fun. But, like I said, wait until next year; along with frere Antoine, the Great Pumpkin is supposed to make an appearance.....

West Watch kicks out the jams, alternative music rules

West Watch I
Oct. 24
Krieg (10147 104 St.)

by Mark Roppel

Loyal *Gateway* readers will already know about West Watch, but for the benefit of any heathenistic swine who have not been reading their *Gateway* I had better explain. Three West Watch concerts over the next month will showcase twelve Edmonton underground bands. The proceeds from the concerts are intended to finance a compilation album of local "alternative" music featuring these same twelve bands. If all goes well, the album should be released sometime around the New Year.

The first concert in the series—with Troc 59, The Dragnetts, Backstreet and the Malibu Kens—was held on Sunday at Krieg After Hours Nightspot, 10147 104 St.

Clearly the main attraction, Troc 59 took the stage around 9pm, and as always, they were simply brilliant—despite rumours of their impending break-up.

As was amply demonstrated in their cover version of "Cold Turkey" Troc 59 leader Moe

Berg is no John Lennon, but what Berg lacks as a singer he more than compensates for as a guitarist and as a composer. Troc 59 is tight; bassist Bob Drysdale establishes the basic rhythm while Berg adds searing lead riffs and punches in chords just at the right moment. The net effect is that feet take on a life of their own; by the third song of the set the dance floor was packed.

I am firmly convinced that Troc 59 is (was?) one of the most original and exciting bands in the city, but there is no denying that they have been together for a long time. The newer material doesn't have quite the same punch as "Bungalow Rock," "When I Woke Up This Morning" or their cover of The Clash's cover of "I Fought the Law." If, as seems virtually certain, Troc 59 does disband (what a pun!) one can only hope that Moe Berg goes on to bigger and better things.

Troc 59 were followed by The Dragnetts—a rockabilly band which patrons of the university music scene have probably already heard. Combining golden oldies by the likes of Ray Charles with original material such as "Boyle Street Bob," The Dragnetts are capable of producing some of the best most

energetic and danceable music anywhere, but on Sunday night something went wrong. The drums were too loud, the background vocals were flat and the guitar was lost somewhere in the mix. The Dragnetts did have their moments, but they never managed to coax more than three or four people out on to the dance floor at any one time.

The third band of the evening was Backstreet and they were about as alternative as your best friend's mother-in-law. (What can I say about a band that blow-dries its hair?) Backstreet is not a top-forty band, but their music is hardly innovative: their crash, bang, smash it out style is reminiscent of any one of a hundred cabaret bands in this city. The music was forced, it had no real rhythm, and I kept expecting the melody to go just a little further.

Listening to Backstreet was a frustrating experience—somewhat akin to trying to push your finger through Saran Wrap just after having cut your fingernails. In all fairness, Backstreet was considerably more successful in inducing people to dance than were The Dragnetts. Backstreet will probably go on to become the next Loverboy or something.

Backstreet played until about midnight.

This left the rather unenviable task of closing the show after everyone had already left to The Malibu Kens. When I heard about The Malibu Kens' hunger strike last year—they were only going to eat Big Macs until K-97 agreed to play some of their songs—I thought they sounded interesting - they are. Singer Mike Sinatra ("the seventeenth hardest working man in show business") and bass player Al Gee were full of wit and wisdom. Now if they could just do something about their music! Seriously though, I was impressed with the band's enthusiasm; given time, The Malibu Kens might develop into something.

My review would not be complete without some mention of Krieg itself. Krieg After Hours Nightspot Ltd. is a fancy name for a dingy basement with a few benches, a few tables, and lots of weird people. Could this be Edmonton's answer to the Marguee Club? (Sure The Edmonton Inn Garden Lounge is a nice place but it is unlikely that it will ever produce any great music.)

The second West Watch concert will be held on November 7. Dammerung, The Thieves, Society N.F.U. and Bastille will be playing.

NOV. 20



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