

ENTERTAINMENT

One-Eyed Wendy On The Groove Aspect

story and interview by Ron Kuipers

Groove. It's a vague word. Yet it's a word that is an integral part of rock and roll vocabulary. It's as if the rhythm of the music forces one to use such connotative language to describe it. And still, nothing you will ever read can describe what you're feeling when you say, "Man, does this song groove!" And it's as hard to describe that feeling as it is for musicians to capture it. After all, not all bands groove. It's like tapping into this universal reservoir that only certain musicians know how to tap into. Or maybe they don't tap into the groove so much as the groove taps into them. Whatever.

One Eyed Wendy are a newly-formed local group who concentrate heavily on this groove aspect. They've only been together for about half a year, but already their sound is tight, and they have a solid body of original material to back it up. A heavy blues influence enters the band via guitarist Mike Tottrup, formerly of Painted Pony. They combine this with a raunchy, distorted, hard-edged approach. But it's still that intangible groove aspect that overrides. It seems to be a goal of singer/guitarist Jeff Wasserman, who does most of the writing for the band.

"We all have pretty diversified tastes," claims drummer Fred Patterson. Diversity does seem to be one clue to their sound. Running the gamut from blues to metal, Patterson describes their influences as "quite a hodge-podge all around." This diversity has resulted in a plethora of comparisons being thrust upon the band. "We've been compared to everything from T. Rex to The Cult. Stoooges to Stevie Ray Vaughn," Wasserman

says. Though they like to think they've found a groove of their own, they do admit to some accuracy in The Cult comparison. "We do have that heavy, bluesy-type, funky thing that's going on — as well as the power of rock."

The guys spoke positively of the Edmonton scene, their only complaint being a lack of venues for their (and other local independent's) type of music. "It's a real roller coaster here, boy," explains Patterson, "Every two years it peaks out, and goes down again. I don't know... we're sort of getting a good wave happening right now. Jr. Gone Wild... Killing Time... hopefully we'll be in on that as well."

Ironically, it's the same lack of venues that has inspired a stronger work ethic for musicians here. "You've gotta fuckin' work if you want to get anything," says Patterson, "You've gotta rehearse and be tight and be solid. Because there's only a couple of venues to play at, and unless you're riding the peak of that wave, you ain't gonna get the shows, and thus you ain't gonna get the money, and you're not gonna be able to record. You gotta work."

Unfortunately, if you need more elaboration on One Eyed Wendy's "groove aspect," you're going to have to tune into them live. They're a band who appears to have bigger plans. They hope to record something soon, as well as continue gigging around town. Their success will depend on how many people dig their groove.

(One Eyed Wendy will appear at the Metro Sept. 19)

Fringe Follies

by Rachel Sanders and Dragos Ruiu

So there we were, armed with our cash box and our trusty walkie talkie, faced with a mob of impatient Fringers all frantic to buy their tickets. As much as we might have liked to, we couldn't sell any tickets before we'd cashed out the show before. And horror of horrors... we were six dollars short. It was the curse of the Fringe Front of House Volunteers. I felt hysterical. I felt sick. We talked once more and still came up short. I was just about to dig through my pockets for the missing money when I discovered I'd marked a complimentary ticket down under the wrong column. I sighed with relief, my partner smiled sweetly and proceeded to throttle me.

Our adventures had begun in early August when we decided that volunteering at the Fringe would be a good way to get more involved in the city's biggest festival. After a call to the Chinook Theatre, we received our volunteer information and sign up sheets. Since the idea of serving beer to drunk Fringers in the extended lobbies didn't attract us, we decided to try some nice, safe Front of House work and we signed up for three or four shifts. Although we missed our orientation meetings due to the mysterious disappearance of our newsletters, we did manage to make it to the volunteer barbeque (lots of free food 'n beer), which in itself is a reason to volunteer at the Fringe. We picked up our schedules at the Bus Barns and before



Ron Kuipers

Jeff Wasserman and Fred Patterson of One-Eyed Wendy



the first of our three shifts we received our nifty volunteer t-shirts and buttons. Best of all, we got our Fringe bucks, one for each hour volunteered, four of which got us into the play of our choice. We discovered right away that the volunteer coordinators were ever helpful and willing to go to great lengths to keep their hard working volunteers happy.

Things always became exciting when we were faced with the terrifying job of stopping latecomers from getting into the theatres. Having to tell people that they couldn't go in even though they had already bought tickets was particularly unpleasant, since the irate ticket-holders would either abuse us with fervour or fall sobbing at our feet begging us to let them in.

In spite of everything, our mighty Fringe adventure came to an end, and we were left with four blissful days during which we experienced life on the other side of the ticket desk. Fringe volunteering is definitely something that we'll do again, because by becoming part of it, we became aware of the amount of work that goes into the Fringe and as a result, we enjoyed the festival that much more.

Here are our top 3 picks, in no particular order:

Dr. Faustus

Wow! This shortened and tightened version of the classic is put on by the English Suitcase Theatre company, and features among its innovative ideas, a girl playing the part of the arch-demon Mephistophilis. It's a splendid performance. Three actors and some candles that make up the set manage to mesmerize watchers despite the spartan setup.

This play relies on the outstanding acting talents of its cast. Kevin Williamson, playing

the part of John Faustus, delivers a riveting, phantasmagorical hour of drama. It's easily one of the best plays of this year's Fringe, and it is not very surprising that it's one of the holdover plays being shown at Son of Fringe.

American Beaver

This gets the best comedy of the Fringe award. A team of two of the most popular Fringe comedy troupes — Sak Theatre and Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie — was bound to be a sure fire hit.

As soon as you walk in, you are divided into the American half of the audience and a Canadian half. On your seat is a red piece of construction paper. You are informed that this is a paper grenade, and you should be very careful with it — it can give you a paper cut.

The premise of the play is that the U.S. and Canada have gone to war over football rules. Throughout the play, audience members are conscripted to...err...volunteer to play parts in the play. And some of the...err...willing volunteers even have the privilege of being judged on a piano concerto of their own composition. It doesn't seem to matter much that none of them know how to play a piano. In the middle of the play there is a huge paper-fight among the audience. I don't think I've ever laughed this hard.

Filler Up

A delightful one woman show. Yet another show consisting of short skits — this time each skit is a short character sketch. Deborah Filler enlightens us with characters from her family reunion — a laureate poet from Australia's outback, eh, and a rib splitting story of a woman who takes her food VERY seriously. It's all good fun, especially because the star is a marvelous actress who can drop into a new character instantly.