



Johnny Dee Fury at Middle Deck

by Gary P. LeBanc

It's been a long time since rock'n'-roll was an outrage; a decadent new music that eventually created the "generation gap." Rockabilly began with white boys playing black music, which soon became a style of its own. This cocky fusion of rhythm and blues, blues, and country and western integrated elements of seediness and cool that were a part of the '50's, best reflected in Hollywood by James Dean.

There was a prominent revival of rockabilly in the UK in the '70's highlighted by *Matchbox*, *Crazy Cavan* and the *Rhythm Rockers*, *Pole Cats* and many others. The *Stray Cats* certainly gained the most commercial success, but also strayed the most from authentic nostalgia. Some of that revival happened on this continent as well.

Johnny Dee Fury lived in Los Angeles for 12 years where he developed his talents and worked and toured with former *Elvis* sidemen James Burton and Ron Tutt, the *Doobie Bros.*, *Grateful Dead* and *Van Morrison*. He returned home to Toronto last year to find that the area was already warm to the ethics of "cool" with such bands as the *Bop Cats* and the *Sidewinders*.

Dee Fury's roots are definitely with *Eddie Cochran*, *Carl Perkins*, and *Gene Vincent*. His own music is sensationally authentic, from his prose down to his stylish phrasing

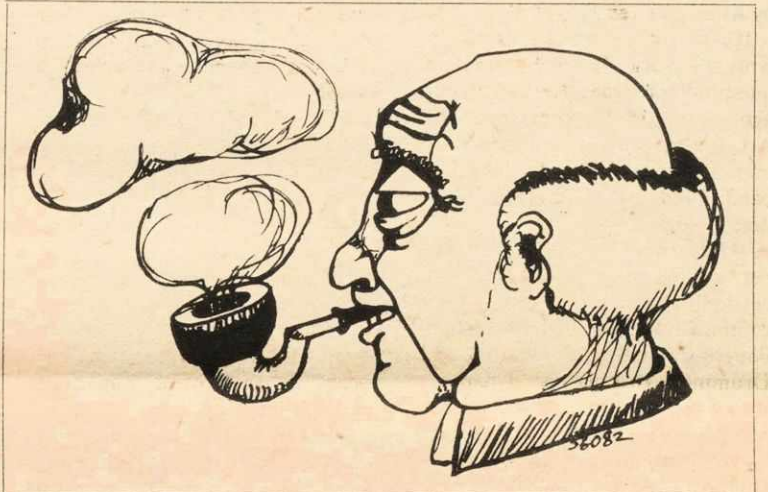
on the guitar. He ended his stint at the Middle Deck last Saturday night on quite a positive note, doing two encores. *Dee Fury* aptly recaptures the cat-like independence and boyish optimism that give rockabilly its definitive personality.

On stage *Johnny Dee* is fluid and energetic. He's got a polished, flamboyant rhythm section (drums and bass) called the *Rockabilly Roosters*. As well as being proficient on the guitar, his vocals are great with a bit of twang. He also plays a mean electric piano. Cover tunes are kept to one or two per set and aren't really necessary as original songs stand up for themselves. There's a sense of fun and timelessness in them.

Unfortunately, the subtleties and general high quality went over the heads of many of the Middle Deck patrons. This cat deserves more credit than he was given, except for the encores, of course.

His first album, *Born to Bop*, is a self-proclamation. Rockabilly seems inherent within him. He produced the album himself, which shows his strength as an artist.

Dee Fury's album is selling well around town. He is very optimistic about coming to Halifax again and maybe playing a variety of places rather than just one club. The way this cat struts his stuff the future ought to be bright for *Johnny Dee Fury*.



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