

# ENTERTAINMENT

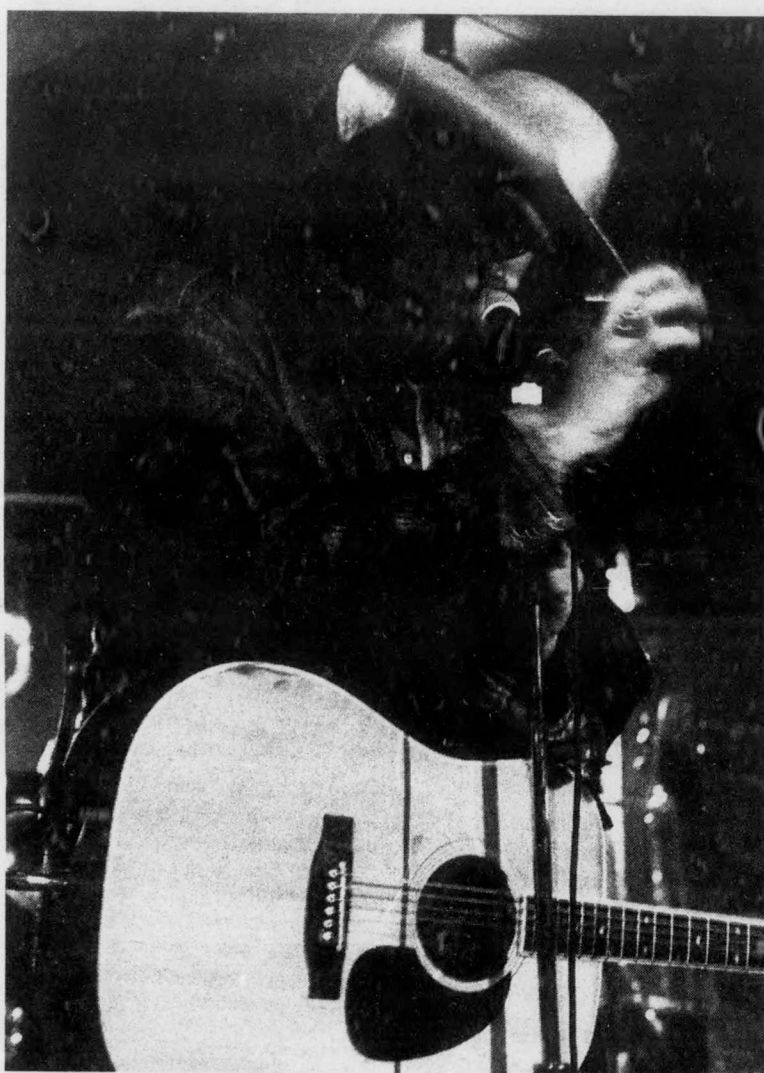
## HALLOWEEN HAVOC HITS

by Peter J. Cullen  
Brunswickan Entertainment

Halloween. Ghosts, goblins and ... rock n' roll? Definitely. If you were one of the many who passed up trick or treating this year to catch the popular Junkhouse down at The Dock, then you obviously made the right choice of music over candy. With an opening by the formidable, and totally ticked off, Barstool Prophets, there was no doubt that the crowd enjoyed this show.

As the painted faces and costumed bodies trickled in before the 10 PM start, Barstool Prophets' frontman, Graham Greer, was seething over the theft of their instruments the night before in Charlottetown, PEI. Despite the disheartening loss to the young band, the four men stepped onto the stage and ripped into 'Birdman,' one of the group's very first songs. Greer spied about the Charlottetown theft and how they had originally planned to scour the island searching for the thief. But although the band experienced such a vile violation, it certainly did not appear to hamper their talents Wednesday evening. They managed to display an electrified performance at times, as Greer hopped wildly on The Dock's small stage. Bassist Glenn Forrester, sans footwear, whirled his head wildly throughout the show. Al Morier, the lead guitarist who finished among the top ten classical guitar players in Canada IN 1993, sounded remarkable on his borrowed instrument, fingers flying through the fast and heavy set list. The Prophets unleashed 'Paranoia,' their upcoming single, and soon dove into 'Mankind Man,' which currently sees notable air time on MuchMusic. But the bad luck continued for the group when the amps started to spit and crackle, cutting 'Mankind Man' short. The band returned shortly to finish the set and thank the crowd who in turn thanked the Barstool Prophets for their professional attitudes and great sound.

But the Halloween horde awaited their blue collar heroes, Junkhouse. Frontman Tom Wilson, clad in sunglasses, workboots, and trademark leather jacket, and electric guitarist Dan Achen, sporting a viking helmet, followed by bassist Russ Wilson and drummer Ray Farrugia, eventually made their appearance. 'Be Someone,' the leadoff single from the new *Birthday Boy* album, had the audience sitting and applauding in appreciation. Despite the feverish intensity Junkhouse throws into their louder tunes, the crowd never picked up the cue that they should reciprocate the energy as the majority of the patrons remained seated the entire night. In an attempt to spark some life during 'Praying for the Rain,' Achen went from his standstill position into a scrambling mad rush over the monitors and into the vacant space in front of the stage. Wildly thrashing about while still playing, he probably scared the crowd instead of inciting them. After he put his boot to the microphones and returned to his position, Junkhouse delved into 'Gimme the Love' from their first CD, *Strays*. With a brief chorus of Grand Master Flash's 'The Message' incorporated into the song, the band had their audience attentive. Wilson's call for dancers only resulted in a



Tom Wilson looks scary - what else is new?

Photo by Kent Rainville

handful of people timidly venturing to the front.

Although the crowd refused to get into the spirit, Junkhouse played a fantastic show. The rolling basslines foreshadowed which song was next approaching and Achen, after only first picking up a guitar at the age of 23, really stood out. Brandishing their new material from *Birthday Boy*, Tom Wilson performed a beautiful rendition of 'Burned Out Car,' possibly the album's best song. Although Sarah McLachlan lends her pipes to 'Burned Out Car' on the CD, Wilson arried the song off very well by himself, proving that he owns a great voice of his own. The band also trumped up the tune 'Big Daddy' and snared the crowd's attention. "Don't let authority fuck you around," yelled Wilson in the song's introduction. "You're Canadian! Drink beer and smoke dope like Big Daddy!"

Bringing out a wicker table with a solitary lamp affixed to it, Junkhouse dimmed the lights and gathered round the front of the stage to enlighten the audience with their slower, semi-blues numbers. 'Jesus Sings the Blues' and 'Down in the Liver' certainly provided another side to the band; unfortunately, the patrons cared not to listen. The conversations in the back of the bar mingled loudly with the tuned down portion of the show. But if Junkhouse cared, it did not show. They were content to play for the listeners who made their way to the front. And Junkhouse has always liked Fredericton. "Our first gig outside of our hometown was in Fredericton up at the university," Wilson commented as he thanked the gathering for the evening. Then the dancing commenced with 'Out of my Head,' one of the band's best known

songs. The four epitomize the essence of effervescence; Wilson drove his pick through a string on his acoustic guitar but scarcely noticed as he kept raking away on his instrument. Achen's fingers soar through the notes while Farrugia keeps the rhythm beating perfectly. As they reached the crashing crescendo, the crowd offered their applause and kept clapping after Junkhouse left the stage. They returned to present the hit 'Big Brown Turtle' and the latest album's title track before they ended for the night.

But those of you expecting something extraordinary for an All Hallows' Eve show would have been disappointed. However, Junkhouse was not to blame. The music was fantastic, and the band laboured to present the best show possible. Nevertheless, Junkhouse seemed out of place on the small stage at The Dock. They require an elevated, larger platform to demonstrate their live talent. Achen gave the impression that he often wanted to kick the pillars down to increase his playing space as demonstrated by his maniacal rush into the crowd at the beginning of the show.

Nevertheless, the Barstool Prophets and Junkhouse refused to disappoint. Despite the theft of instruments, a discordant amp, and a confined playing area, the show proved to be a treat for music lovers. The Prophets should emerge to be a band in demand in the months to come, while Junkhouse has already established themselves as a force to be reckoned with. The continued touring should bode well for each group's popularity, as each is promoting a great new CD, an excellent live show, and definitely an attitude.

## ABSOLUTE ZERO INTEREST



A beacon in the dark - Absolute Zero.

Photo by Mark Bray

by Peter J. Cullen  
Brunswickan Entertainment

The Dock exploded into absolute anarchy as Absolute Zero raged on stage last Friday and Saturday night. But despite the social messages they wanted to convey, no one showed up to hear them.

Heavy metal is the vein they tap, fusing rock and rap into their dark songs that explore the seedier, twisted side of life. Apparently, though, an extremely small market exists in Fredericton for that particular mode of music - the cold, wet Saturday night witnessed only 20-30 stalwart souls enjoying the tunes.

But Absolute Zero are really not a bad band. The lyrics, created by drummer Glenn Novak, relate tales of life, stories of dysfunctional youth and the scourge of drugs. Except when they play live, you are left wondering what the story is, as the lyrics are a tad difficult to comprehend at the speed with which they are delivered. And although the

music is loud, loud, loud - and easy to bash if you dislike that particular sound - it just is not fair to dismiss them that easily. But if you are not a hard core metal fan when you see them live, you probably will not be converted by the end of the evening.

Their stage presence does not erupt into the unbridled frenzy you might expect from looking at them; they seem kind of laid back at times. However, the lack of crowd response may have been the cause.

All in all, the important point is the variety of music that The Dock is promoting. While acts like Junkhouse and The Pursuit of Happiness will please the general population, it still remains vital to promote smaller scale talent like Absolute Zero. And maybe their small following will expand the next time they come to town. You never know that the band you are watching today could be the band everyone is watching a year from now...

### COMPETITION RESULTS!!!

Nothing to give away this week, but the contests will be back next week with an absolutely wonderful prize - no clues! But we had four Junkhouse albums to give away, and they go to the following lucky, lucky people:  
Shelley Coates, Mork Breeze, Petey Cormarant and Mary Regal-Hatstand.  
Congratulations - come and get your prizes on Friday at noon; I'll be there this week. Honest.