

The Northern Pikes: A band with its own rules

by Michele Thibeau

Last year I heard an interview with the Northern Pikes live on CKDU. The other day I got a chance to chat with Brian Potvin and Jay Semko, two members of the band, myself. We talked about their new album, some of the songs it contains, their musical influences and tastes, when they will once again hit the studio, and how they write their music.

"'Wait For Me', the first single

off of *Secrets of the Alibi*, started off as a folk song. In fact, most of our songs start off that way. We use acoustic guitars and adapt it to the group. I think that is the mark of a good song — you make it work for yourself," said Jay.

Jay went on to talk about the great spread of writers on the album. The record has one song by three members of the group and another song co-written by all four. According to Brian, there will probably be more material by him as time goes by. The album itself was produced in a studio with all the band playing together instead of the modern way of track-recording one instrument at a time. The Northern Pikes chose this more difficult way of production because they had just finished a six-week tour and their material was tight enough to play for an album.

Their thoughts for their next album, for which they are currently looking for a producer, are innovative as well. "We are looking at the possibility of it not being a 'coherent package' with each song fitting the stereotype," said Jay. Instead, they would like to focus on each separate song as a unit and work on each song's full potential.

"We're on chapter two," says Brian, talking about the group's own rules. He commented on the fact that you can't follow what

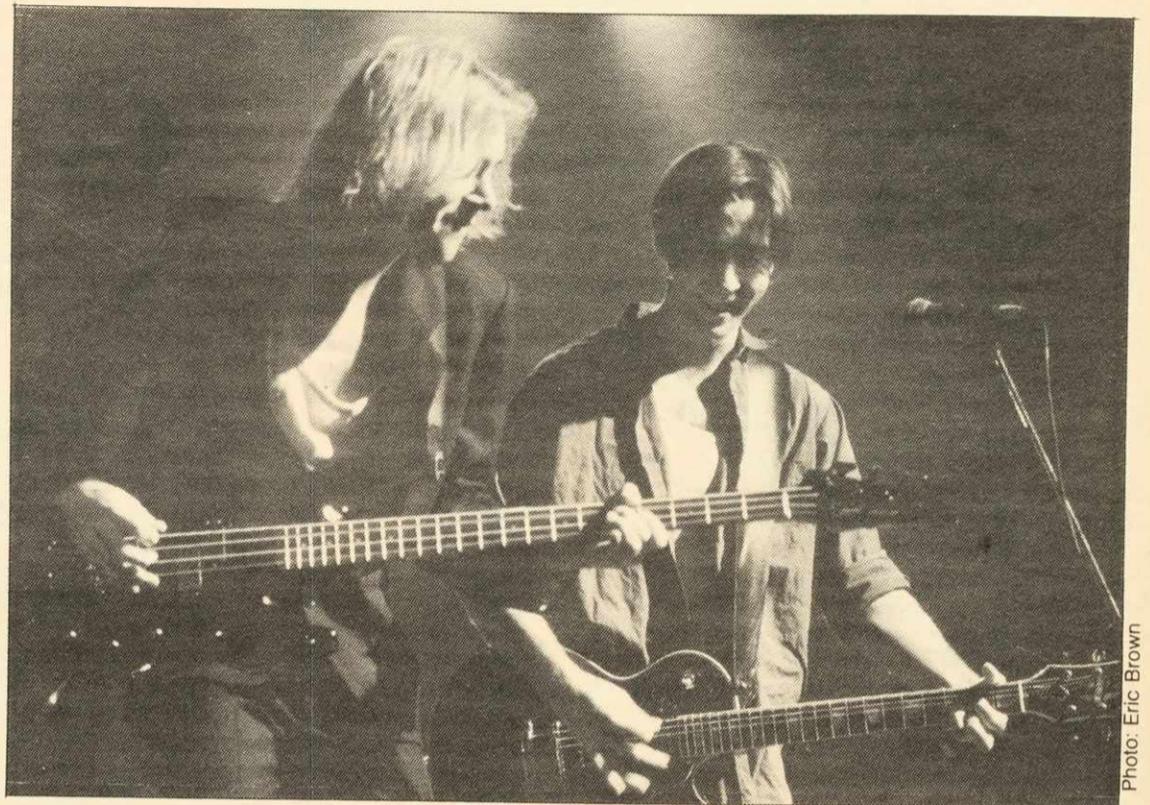


Photo: Eric Brown

others are doing, because then you don't have something that is your own. "Your writing and your band end up being the best, or a combination of the best

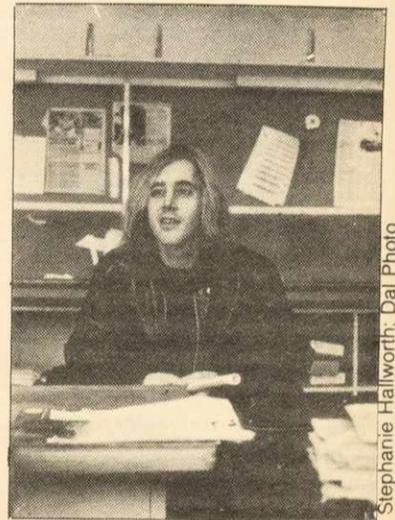
aspects of all your favourite artists."

Some of their influences include The Beatles, XTC, The Police, The Stones, Big Country, U2, Arrowsmith, and the infamous Elvis Costello. One band member is even a big fan of country music, and they all like a bit of folk.

"Wait For Me" is a song about old girlfriends and going home, a place the band likes to return to once in a while. "Blood She Wants" deals with loving someone who drives you up the wall, possibly because you spend too much time together. It is a tongue-in-cheek story about the exasperation of trying to please someone — "Is it blood she wants?" "Let's Pretend" deals with thinking about an ideal world — "Let's pretend the Catholics and Protestants are friends. Let's pretend that everyone is free in East Berlin."



Stephanie Hallworth: Dal Photo



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The Northern Pikes try to avoid something the Smiths write about in their song "Panic": some music's lack of relevance to real life. "The music that the DJs play says nothing to me about my life."

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Dear Brutus . . .

by Amber-Leigh Golding

J.M. Barrie's *Dear Brutus* is an excellent choice for Dalhousie to open its theatre season with, as it is well written and provides an opportunity for several actors to "show their stuff" in uniformly meaty roles.

The play begins on Midsummer's Eve and the eccentric, aged, and seemingly innocent Lob has assembled a small party in his home. That evening an enchanted wood temporarily emerges outside the host's garden window, which Lob gamely encourages his guests to visit.

While in the wood the characters metamorphose. *Dear Brutus*,

each reinvents his or her life: the philandering Purdie finds himself married to his mistress, Joanna, while engaging in an affair with his wife, Mabel. Prententious Catherine is now married to the thieving butler Matey. The childless couple, Will and Alice Dearth become separated; Will becomes the father of the vivacious Margaret, and Alice a beggar woman jilted by a high-born husband. Though Mrs. Coade, like Lob, does not enter the wood, her husband, a failed writer, chooses to do so. While there he remains an idler, devoid of focus or direction.

Eventually the characters make
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