

Pizza, Mocktails & Sue Medley

I can see you in the glow from the Sizzler



Photo by Kevin G. Porter

These lips will never kiss Cod

by Lilith

I think somebody slipped me a cranky pill on Tuesday evening before the Sue Medley concert, because I was way too tired and irritable to be unbiased, let alone charitable throughout the early part of the evening. I snarled at the poor peer-educator from SMART-PACC who offered me a taste test of non-alcoholic beer. By way of reviewing the SMART-PACC offerings, the Strawberry Daiquiri mocktail was WAY too sweet (a little shot of tequila would cut that, no problem).

In light of my evil mood, I think that any opening band would have had a hard time winning me over. However, to be fair I'll try to be nice for a minute (I felt a brief moment of empathy with one of the guys, who pleaded a bad hair day—I've been having a bad hair term). I.C. Red, a young duo from Montreal who are on the verge of releasing an album, were competent enough musicians and had some good original songs. HOWEVER, these boys don't realize that it is a cardinal sin to butcher "Van the Man". What kind of knob-itude does it take to alter the words to "Brown Eyed Girl" to produce "I saw you just the other day...and you got fat."? UNFORGIVABLE. Furthermore, I was not in the frame of mind to listen to a testosterone-induced tirade about an ex-girlfriend. If they wanted to be bitter and pus-filled they could have gone and done it somewhere else (I wasn't looking for competition in that area). I found the song "When bullets fly" (...I'll finally be rid of you...I'll put your body out back in a garbage can...)

downright offensive. They almost managed to redeem themselves at the end of their set with a nifty original composition (albeit, again inspired by old-girlfriend disease) "Love Sucks", and an intriguing conga-laden version of "Eleanor Rigby".

Sue Medley, however, was not a disappointment. I think that an acoustic show, without all the trappings and noise, has got to be the greatest test of an artist. The pared-down act allowed Medley to showcase her vocal strength. Can you imagine Madonna doing a show with just her guitar and her voice, with a backup singer-guitarist? Medley and her guitarist Billy Crane (who had a real funky purple suede fringe guitar strap) gave a solid performance of a mixture of tunes from her two albums and gave a couple of new compositions a test drive.

When I talked to Sue last week, she said that the acoustic format was ideal for her, in that it allowed her voice to be heard. The lack of competition from a drum kit, heavy bass and keyboards allowed the appreciation of the range and versatility of her voice. As it was, on some of the songs where Crane played a slide electric, it was over-amped to the point of heavy distortion (for example on "My Baby") and with a full band, Medley would be straining to be heard. The lighter load of equipment also meant a reasonable start time, without roadies delaying things with endless farting around. I.C. Red started their set at 8:45, played until about 9:30 and Sue Medley started after a short break.

Unlike many of the bands that have been through Fredericton this year, Medley was fresh and energetic, rather than hitting town at the end of a

long tour. This was also only the second time Medley has been to the Maritimes in her life, having "experienced Maritime hospitality" while on tour with Tom Cochrane last summer (she was "screamed in" but pronounced the kissing cod ceremony as "unhygienic"). It was refreshing to have somebody different in town, because Blue Rodeo, The Tragically Hip and the Skydiggers have been here so many times they might as well go in on a time-sharing condo in the area.

The venue of the SUB caf was weird too, for the type of concert. Unlike past concerts in the cafeteria, this was not a "drink your face off and jump up and down and scream 'til you puke" kind of concert. The tables were left in place and Bar Services attempted taking orders from the seats for awhile. The SUB cafe has a total lack of ambience, however, and Medley commented to the crowd that they seemed so far away, but "I know you're out there, I can see your outlines from the glow of The Sizzler." For the most part, it was a really mellow evening, and the event really needed a venue like The Playhouse. The university community clearly needs control of a mid-sized venue for concerts and theatre, because the current facilities are inadequate.

Medley also seemed to be taken aback by the crowd reaction to her performance (or rather lack thereof, for the greater part of the show); commenting that this was the most polite audience she'd had in a long time and that it made her nervous. In this case, it seemed to be a result of her set list including less familiar songs from her new album early in the show, with her hits like "Inside Out," "Dangerous Times," "That's Life" and "Maybe the Next Time" left until the last half, the down-pacing of the tempo of many of the songs ("I Can't Imagine" was performed at about half the speed of the album version), and the sit-down audience. Audience enthusiasm seemed to pick up in the latter half of the show (whether that was Sue shaming them out of their apathy...) with "That's Life" and the encore number "Dangerous Times" turning into sing-alongs.

I have few complaints about the show, but it was really short at an hour and fifteen minutes with lots of chatter from Sue. She didn't exhaust her catalogue of songs from her albums, and when I interviewed her she told me she had a lot of new songs ready for the new album, but she tried out only two on the audience. It also would have been interesting to see what she would have chosen to do as covers (maybe some Dylan or Neil Young), but she stuck to her own material. The encore seemed to be a matter of obligation to her, as she was clearly unsure of how to gauge the evening's audience she offered a simple thanks and performed only one song as an encore. However the show's length didn't detract from the fact that it was a good show by someone who clearly enjoys live performance. I'd rather see a short show done with enthusiasm, energy and some creative improvising than a shitty longer show done in a "let's get this over with" attitude.

The Other Side of the Picture

by Jethelo E. Cabilete

ANARCHY NOW!! Okay, now that I've got that off my chest, welcome to another issue of The Other Side of the Picture. This week, we go to the Ted Daigle Theatre for Ludlow Fair and Can't Stand Up For Falling Down.

The evening of the 9th of February was wet and chilly, so I was hoping for an entertaining time at the theatre. By the time I arrived, a very good-sized crowd was already seated. This evening promised to be good! Ludlow Fair began the night with a simple setting composed of two beds a night stand and appropriate props. This one-act play is a dramatic scene of a night in the lives of two roommates; Rachel (Christine Wolstenholme) and Agnes (Kelly Ingalls). Central to the play's theme is Rachel's dilemma of turning in a former boyfriend who stole money from her. Christine Wolstenholme provides a comical, but dramatic portrayal of a woman in need (what Rachel tells us) of a psychoanalyst. Kelly Ingalls provides the perfect foil for Christine Wolstenholme's disturbed character, by being humorous, blunt and to the point (despite Agnes' exaggerated cold). Rachel, according to Agnes, has a habit of falling in love with the wrong sort of men, and it is this that is the root of Rachel's troubles. She of course denies this and the two argue for awhile until Rachel falls asleep and Agnes remains awake. The play takes its name from a poem that Agnes recites at the end as Rachel drifts off to la-la land. Very dramatic acting by the two actresses, and interesting position of the nightstand, so that the women faced the audience while looking in the "mirror."

After a brief intermission of setting up for the next one-act play, the entertainment continued. Can't stand up for falling down is a stunning drama that requires a lot of feeling. The play revolves around the lives of three women as they are growing up in a small town. The three women; Lynette (Jennifer House), Ruby (Emily Johnson) and Jodie (Genevieve Bosse) are inextricably linked by the depredations of a total jerk named Royce, whose presence was made known only through offstage whistling. At the start Lynette (who is 14), is a bright, hopeful girl filled with dreams and aspirations. Ruby is a young woman (about 18) who is pregnant with Royce's child and wary of what the consequences would be. Jodie is a happy-go-lucky 10 year old who has made a friend in an older boy called Al

Janey. The machinations of Royce and two of his friends results in Al's death at a rock quarry. This triggers a change in Jodie and firms Ruby's resolve to go on. The scene then changes to several years later, when the three women are older. Ruby has a son now and is wiser in the realities of her world. Jodie was traumatized for a while after Al's death, but has become stronger in will and resolve. Perhaps the biggest change is in Lynette, who ends up marrying Royce. Royce's abusive relationship with Lynette dampens some of her spirit but also gives her an unexpected strength to go on. At this time, the three actresses also play minor parts, such as Carl (Ruby's son) or Bearnice (a fellow co-worker at a hair dressers). The climax occurs when Lynette can't take much more of Royce's abuses and pushes him down the stairs. Ruby and Jodie arrive at the place where Lynette lives and works only to find the object of their misery dead. The three women conspire to dump Royce's body at the quarry (poetic justice) and go on with life. Powerful performances by the three women in their respective parts. Jennifer House gave a stunning portrayal of an abused woman, right down to the point that I was expecting her to actually cry. Genevieve Bosse gave a believable performance of a young girl forced to face the traumas in life and not letting them overwhelm her. Her waif-like expressions and strong voice were truly suited to the role. Emily Johnson provides the perfect adult complement to the other two women. Her demure posture and the acceptance and recognition of life's harsher experiences evident in her voice makes you realize the wisdom that Ruby gleaned from her experience. To all of the actresses that night, congratulations. You all deserve the applause given through the 5 performance nights.

Sooo, as a final touch, the UNB Art Centre presents two exhibitions running from February 14 to March 15. Artwhys: New Works is an exhibition of new compositions by prominent New Brunswick artists. Sight Unseen is an exhibition of 16 etchings and mezzotints by renowned Maritime printmaker, Dan Steeves. Tune in next week for a review of these shows. Also, for UNB and STU students, the new talent competition, UNB/STU talent '93 starts March 19. People interested should pick up entry forms at the Art Centre (in Memorial Hall) and submit them by March 8, 1993. Until next week, be cool (AAAA...a pun!) and have fun. Ciao.

THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR WHARF RATS