

Bare Naked Ladies
College Hill Social Club
October 3, 1991
 Review by Luis Cardoso

Finally! A band with a difference! Something new! Someone we've never seen on campus before! **Bare Naked Ladies!** And the crowd loved it.

The Social Club was unusually packed for a Thursday night, even for a Thursday night with a band. Unfortunately, the Social Club can be one of the most annoying venues for a band, especially when they put the show on inside the club, rather than the ballroom. Unless you're standing in the vicinity immediately surrounding the stage, you're standing among nebbishes oblivious to the fact that a band is in the house. They're intent on fighting their way through the throngs surrounding the bar so they can order yet another Lite beer. Or they're catching up on the latest gossip with their friends whom they haven't seen since Biology at 3:30. **Shut up and enjoy the band, goddammit!** This can be especially annoying because the Social Club claims the distinction of the stupidest placement of a P.A. system in the Western hemisphere (Congrats on that, by the way, Matt!), so if you're not beside the stage underneath P.A. stack no.1, or in front of the stage in that wee space next to the bar where you may be able to hear the band's monitors, you're f---ed. (Fill in the blanks -Ed.) Without spraining an ear, you just won't be able to hear most of the lyrics, nor the witty 'tween song banter on stage. (The gossip on the floor cannot be considered witty banter.)

Nevertheless, this band is the freshest import to appear on campus in many, many moons. They defy easy pegging into any musical classification. Some might call them a musical comedy group, but the members of **Bare Naked Ladies** are all superb musicians, and their songs (lyrically and musically) are not the simple sort characteristic of this type of group. They can sound like early **Elvis Costello** from the "My Aim is True/This Year's Model" period; they can sound like the **Jam**; they can also sound like a kick-ass rockabilly band. They can also, and they did, rap. Slammin'!

The band came on stage at 10:30 and kicked off the show with "Road Runner"; I was hoping, as I scanned their set sheet before the show, that they would be covering the **Modern Lovers'** "Road Runner", but alas, different song. "Night Photos" and "McDonald's Girl" followed. "McDonald's Girl" ("she is an angel in a polyester uniform") the first song in which I could actually hear the lyrics, was my first exposure to the band's quirky message. After a jazzy track called "Hello City", the band played their first cover of the evening: **Prince's** "When Doves Cry". It must be noted that although they perform cover material with tongue in cheek, they manage to present interesting alternative renditions, often more interesting than the original.

"Joseph Brown's Song" ("Joseph Brown had two friends/Their names were Dan and Julian"), "Crazy", and the **Good Brothers'** "Fox on the Run" followed, all interesting albeit short songs. After "Still 'Ill", they performed a very cool original called "Having a Baby" which incorporated the riff from **Lou Reed's** "Walk on the Wild Side"; given that bass player Jim Creegan plays a stand-up bass, this section was especially pleasing to the ears. "You Can Be My Yoko Ono", the track which has gained the status of signature tune, a result of much airplay on CBC radio's **Morningside** (these guys are CBC darlings) followed the set's eleventh song, "Wrap Your Arms Around Me": it was a manic rendition of "Yoko Ono" which did not disappoint.

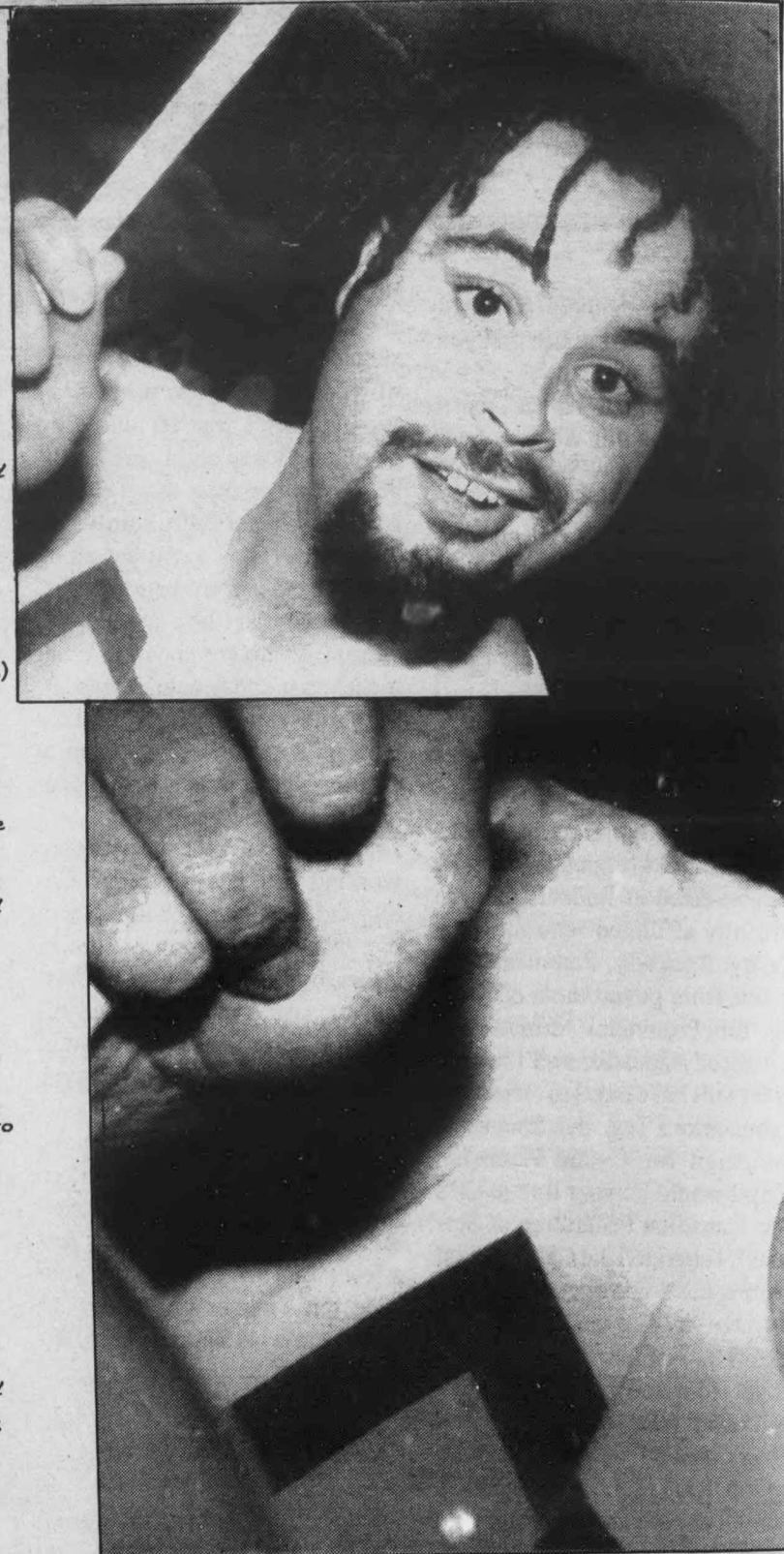
After a short break the **Ladies** returned and burst into a song called "Me in Grade 9"; picture the **Jam** with a stand-up bass and acoustic guitar. In fact, the second set picked up the show's pace; it was in this set that the band often sounded like **Elvis Costello**, often like the **Jam**, often played rockabilly and jazz, but were never predictable or derivative.

Songs named "Enid", "Skinhead", "Careless", and "Blame it on Me" followed, the last of these a nice jazzy MOR groove with a sidestick that cut across the melody like a hotknife. My jazz cat friend Geordie was most impressed with drummer Tyler Stewart's jazz chops. I probably would have been too if I had any clue what a drummer's jazz chops sound like.

Following the next two pieces, "New Kid", and "The Flag", the **Ladies** launched into their rendition of **Public Enemy's** "Fight the Power", and a very cool rendition it was. Many of the original's samples were reproduced manually with only their mouths and a microphone. The **Spoon's** "Trouble with Tracy" followed, and if there was any parody intended I missed it; just a good rendition of a good song. Next up, a slow C&W number called "Lilac Girl", with a chord progression reminiscent of **Dylan's** "Knockin' on Heaven's Door". "What a Good Boy" was followed by "I Love You", a jazz-infused number that licked into double time for the chorus.

The last two pieces of the band's performance ranked among the evening's best: "If I had A Million Dollars", which rivals "Be my Yoko Ono" for status as the band's signature piece, was followed by **Madonna's** "Material Girl". The band's version of "Material Girl" was swinging. It blew **Madonna's** own out of the water like Saddam Hussein shooting sardines with leftover **SCUD** missiles in the oil drenched waters of the Persian Gulf. Get the picture? The band was introduced in the long jazzy prelude to this track: singer Steve Page christened sweaty band members with names like Ralph Ben Mergui (Creegan), and Reggie Jackson (Stewart).

Kudos to the Social Club for importing this most entertaining group. Hopefully they'll be back next year.



BARE NAKED LADIES THRILL TROOPS