

Stephen Barry-A Band with a Bullet

by Sandy MacDonald

Everyone knows that the blues is the music of the Southern Black man, originating in the fertile Mississippi Delta region. It is the music of the down and out, those hunted by the Hounds of Hell, down to their last dime, cheated by their woman, fired by their working boss and to make things worse, can't even find a drink to ease their troubled mind. When you've paid your dues, you can sing the blues. Right. Well, not necessarily. The Stephen Barry Band are four white middle class French Canadians, who must each have a soul as black as Robert Johnson's.

The band, on its debut live album on "Fix in the Mix Records", draws on a number of roots that all have influenced and conversely been influenced by the blues, including the Classic blues period, the country blues, and even modern Latin rock. A musically tight foursome, the group consists of Stephen Barry on bass and vocals, Jorn Reissner and Andrew Cowan on guitars and vocals, Paul Paquette on drums and for the recording of the album, keyboardist Ken Pearson.

Opening with an Elmore James instrumental, 'Picking the Blues', the band shows off its musical dexterity with the guitarists trading licks to the rock solid rhythm of the bass and drums. The instrumental excellence is consistent throughout the album, and some interesting innovations in



rhythmic and melodic timing keep it from being just another rehash of the blues.

To record an eleven cut album around six classic blues standards is

at best a big gamble, because the pieces are so recognizable that they are bound to be compared to the originals, and seldom are judged on their own merit. To the credit of the

Stephen Barry Band, the album succeeds musically because it is able, through its simplicity and flattering under-production, to recall the spirit of the music without simply regurgi-

tating the original arrangements lick for lick.

Listening to this album is like a trip through the gallery of guitar greats. Reissner and Cowan take on the guise of Muddy Waters, Albert King, Link Wray, and even Jerry Reed/Chet Atkins. All these musical guitar styles incorporated into one album works only because of the variety and natural flow of the material, recorded live at the Hotel Iroquois.

Notable cuts include the Elmore James classic 'Dust My Broom', Howlin' Wolf's 'Who's Been Talkin'', and Muddy Waters 'Got My Mojo Working'.

The band's musical direction obviously comes from many sources and the groups exposure to many of the blues masters aids greatly in the development of a unique band "sound", so important for the continued success of any commercial group.

The Stephen Barry Band are young but have deep roots in the blues. Given time and production freedom, which one would expect from their small label, the band will gel into one of the most solid blues bands in the country.

The group was recently in town, playing at the Misty Moon, the cover of some of the finest bluesmen playing the Eastern Canadian circuit. I recommend you give the group a listen, definitely a band with a bullet.

POETRY CONTEST



The Dalhousie Gazette is pleased to announce the first annual Gazette Poetry Contest. All Dalhousie students, whether full-time or part-time, graduate or undergraduate, are invited to enter.

The contest, which will begin this issue and end November 29, will feature a \$50 first prize, \$25 second prize and a \$10 third prize. Publication of the winners poetry will take place in the December 6th issue, the final issue of the first term.

The rules are simple. The contest is opened to all Dal students. No more than two poems of any length can be submitted. All material submitted must be typewritten on white paper. All poetry must be submitted by Midnight, November 29. No poetry will be accepted after this deadline. All poetry submitted becomes the property of the Dalhousie Gazette. When submitting poetry, a student shall include his name, address, telephone number and student number. A nom de plume may be included if the writer wishes.

The judges panel will meet the week between the closing deadline and publication and determine the winners. Judges for the contest are Dr. Andy Wainwright, department of English; Mike Wile, station manager of CKDU, and Paul Clark, news editor of the Dalhousie Gazette. The judges decision will be final.

Time is running out quickly so submit your poetry as soon as possible. Or if you have a talented friend, remind him or her to pass their work into the Gazette. Remember, an eager public awaits!

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