

Drama means good entertainment

by Scott Neily

The end of September saw the appearance of the music group Drama at the Dal SUB's McInnes Room. The five-member band put on energetic show that, despite minor technical problems, fit quite well into the category of good entertainment.

The band was formed over two years ago in Halifax as a standard nightclub/dance band. However, the combination of an energetic attitude and a lot of hard work have helped to mark Drama as a band that has the potential to become one of the best in Canada. Their performance at the Battle of the Bands in Saint John gave them the concrete results of their efforts in the form of a \$10,000 cheque and an opportunity to tour with a major recording act of their choice.

Just before their show at the SUB, I spent a few minutes talking to lead singer Peter Ettinger and keyboardist Steve Hennessey. Drama is planning to release an independent album in the near future titled *Trapped In Your World*, and I asked them what kind of music the waiting public should expect. "The sound on the album is pop music, light rock. We didn't want to go out and try to break any barriers down with our first record. It was the first time for all of us into the studio, so we left a lot up to our producer, Rolf Henneman. He's worked with people like Heart, the Eagles, the Headpins, Loverboy, and Bryan Adams. He knows a lot about production so he took our freshness and put it along with his experience, and it came out quite well. We're really happy

with it." The band recorded the album at Solar Audio in Halifax and mixed it down in Vancouver's famed Mushroom Studios.

As a band, the members of Drama take a very professional attitude towards the music business, which may be one of the factors in helping them to achieve major success. This attitude goes from financial matters to studio work, right up to the live shows. Ettinger commented on their stage performances. "The band live is really aggressive and the material on the album is something we can easily produce live. The show is something we pride ourselves on. I find that today, to just be a good band doesn't cut it. People have MuchMusic to watch the rock stars and they've seen they best they can show off in the videos. When they go see a band

live now, they know what to look for. Something which bothers me is when I hear a band on record and I'm really impressed, and then I see them live and they don't cut it. That's something we've really worked for, to have a good show that's entertaining in more than just music."

If the gods of the music industry have an ear for catchiness, Drama's first single, "Promises", will be climbing the charts in no time, and with it, their prospects

for success. "We're taking our time to make sure we do it right.

We've been lucky to see a band like Haywire come out of here.

We've been able to watch what they do, the things they do right, the mistakes they make and so on. It's making it much easier for us," said Ettinger. If the band is cashing in on Haywire's success, it is quite possible that other local bands will get their shot at the big time through Drama.



Sarah Slipper, David Peregrine

Hart ballet's jewel

by Andrew M. Duke

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Canada's oldest professional ballet company, formed in 1939, held its third and final Halifax performance Thursday, November 5 at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.

The performance began with *Adagio Hammerklavier*, choreographed by Dutchman Hans van Manen. Three couples danced in a swirling sea of blue and white to movement variations on the slow adagio tempo set to Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata op. 106. The movements, played by pianist Earl Stafford, had grating major keys juxtaposed with lilting minor ones.

Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux, by America's prolific and influential choreographer George Balanchine, featured Henny Juriens (born in the Netherlands) and Veronica Tennant, principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada and guest artist through the Maritime Tour. A

faster-moving piece compared to *Adagio*, it combined the acrobatics of Juriens, ballet tap dancing, and a variety of tempi set to violins, a wind section, and slight percussion, most notably a triangle and xylophone.

Moncayo I brightened up the stage with brilliant orange, yellow, white, and black costumes. The four dancers used shadows to great effect as they performed well-choreographed, quick, deft movements.

The highlight of the evening was the performance of *Nuages*. Tennant and Svea Eklof had been performing in place of principal dancer Evelyn Hart, who could not perform due to a foot injury. Thursday night, however, Hart took her usual role and performed in *Nuages*, her only appearance on the Maritime Tour. This beautiful duet married conventional ballet movements with fluid variations so that the bodies of dancers Hart and

André Lewis seemed to liquefy and flow. The performance received a standing ovation from many patrons who filled the auditorium.

The final ballet of the evening, *Rodeo*, tells the story of an awkward, tomboyish cowgirl hopelessly in love with the head wrangler at Burnt Ranch. First performed in 1942, the scene was played out against a huge fenced-in backdrop by gaudily dressed dancers. *Rodeo* had men trying to impress the ladies with their skills, a hoedown, and a twisted love triangle that ended happily. Leslie Fields put in a fine performance as the Cowgirl, as did Head Wrangler Brian Bender. There was some great tap dancing and ingenious choreography, marred only by the fact that often too many things were happening at once. *Rodeo*, a very modern piece, was a sharp and welcome contrast to the other ballets.

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Since 1981, this duo of guitarist Gerard Van Herk and drummer Tony Dewald have created nationwide interest through relentless touring, (60,000 cross-country miles in a 1959 Edsel), and the release of albums on their own label, OG Records, one of Canada's finest independents. Labelling their music Sludge-a-billy, a combination of blues, country-rockabilly and 60's punk ground into a pulp, and infusing it with their own unique brand of humour, they have captured the hearts and souls of people throughout North America.

Also from Montreal, the Doughboys feature John Kastner, former lead singer of the Asexuals. The band's style is fast and heavy, and their previous appearance in at the Club Flamingo last May left the audience screaming for more.

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