by Uldis Kundrats

It's only been a couple of years since the Sparrow migrated from Toronto to the more lucrative haunts of New York and points west. Rechristened Steppenwolf the group emerged from California last summer to become one of the top groups in the United States. Listening to their latest album Steppenwolf the Second, it isn't hard to tell why.

Combining the best elements of blues and rock, Steppenwolf's heavily electrified music is excitingly quick, performed with a kind of break-neck intricacy that never seems to falter. At the head of the group is John Kay, who besides playing guitar and harp, writes most of Steppenwolf's material. Drummer Jerry Edmonton and organist pianist Goldy McJohn

complement Kay's playing masterfully, and provide the rhythmic drive that propels the group's music.

Steppenwolf's songs are more to be felt than talked about. They are all tight, often coarse by seldom boring. On Steppenwolf the Second, it isn't hard to tell why.

Speed of Life, are the best cuts, though the rest are almost as good. Kay experiments with strings on Spiritual Fantasy and some sound effects on Don't Step on the Grass, Sam, but the additions don't get in the way of the music or lyrics, as on many records these days.

Steppenwolf has arrived and made it, and if Second is any indication, there's much more coming, and it should be just as good.



out to see Buddy Guy at the Rockpile on Sunday. It was a shame, but not only did Guy put on a fantastic show, but also it indicated how hung up Toronto audiences are on the "stars". It seems that this city's music cognoscenti would rather witness an indifferent Eric Clapton or Jimi Hendrix go through the motions for 45 minutes, than see an emotionally involved Buddy Guy for

Backstage someone asked Guy what he thought of Clapton and the Chicago guitarist answered, tongue in cheek, "He must be good, he makes more in one night than I do in a year." Guy added facetiously that James Brown and Wilson Pickett also were good since they were so popular.

Guy's guitar screamed blues numbers like Good Morning, Little Schoolgirl, The First Time I Met the Blues, and You Don't

Only about 300 people turned Love Me. It was apparent Sunday night how much Guy's guitar style had developed from before when he owed so much to B.B. King. As a tribute to his teacher, he did Sweet Sixteen and urged everyone to see B.B. when he comes to Toronto in February. Guy's sound was fairly clean, and his only concession to electronics was the infrequent use of a wah-wah pedal which he bought only the week before.

Owing to a sore throat, Guy avoided the songs in the upper ranges, and played more than he sang. In addition, his saxophonist, A.C. Reed contributed to the vocals using a nasal style similar to Jimmy Reed. (Not too surprising, since they are brothers.)

Unlike his performance at the CNE's Time Being, Buddy Guy refrained from soul music, with the exception of a funky Knock on Wood, which really owed more to the R and B style of Bobby Bland than Sam and Dave.

As he explained later, when he

heard shouts for My Time After a While and A Man and the Blues, he realized that he was playing to a blues audience. At one point, he said he wanted to do a soul number so all his musicians could cut loose, but the bluesheads in the audience shouted, "No - jam!"

The high point of the evening came with the number Mary Had a Little Lamb, which developed into a half hour instrumental spectacular, with Guy jumping off the stage and playing from all over the floor. After an intermission Guy came back for a second set and jammed with the Main-

If you missed Guy, you will have a chance to catch him at the Riverboat in January.

And if you pass up that in order to see The Who or Jim Morrison's leather pants, then you'll get just what you deserve: flashbulbs, glare, teenage yelps, and a muffled noise as a substitute for

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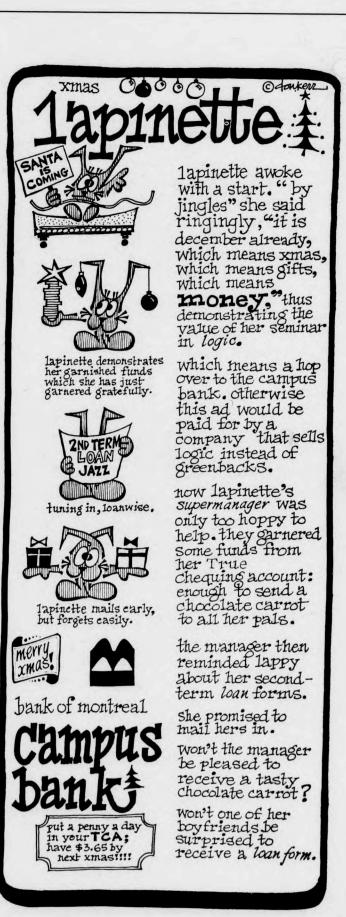
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