

Entertainment

## Regular Guys provoke involvement

The Regular Guys  
Dinwoodie Lounge  
January 17

review by Mac Hislop

If you missed The Regular Guys at Dinwoodie's on Saturday night, too bad! You lost out on an evening of good music by a very entertaining band. You hardly deserve to be written to.

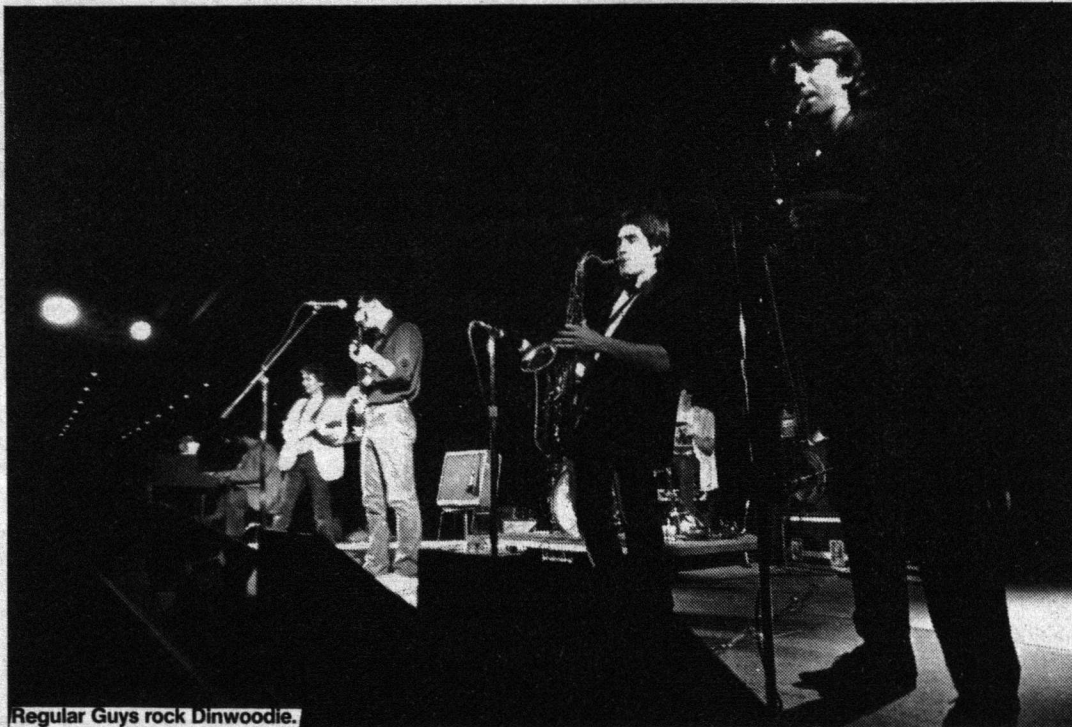
But, since I was given free tix, I had better give you somewhat of an impression of the band's act. The Regular Guys lived up to their reputation (and personal claim) of being "definitely live".

Fun?

Yes, they were fun. Musically tight, obviously not lacking talent and without appearing contrived, put on a very entertaining show. Its members exhibited a spontaneous kind of fun. They reached out to the crowd, provoking crowd involvement.

While the crowd was not exactly a typical R&B lot, it was distinctive for its initial deathly pall and for being composed of terrible dancers. With the demise of the canned music and The Regular Guys energy on stage while carefully avoiding the 'zone of vulnerability' immediately before the stage, the inspired swayed in strict observance of the Goose Loonies trendoidal box-form gyration. Gradually, very gradually, in tune with the general absorption of the ALCA's finest, the assembled eased self-consciously onto the dance floor and began, seemingly unwillingly, to enjoy themselves greatly.

The Regular Guys proved adept at keeping the crowd moving. The band's



Regular Guys rock Dinwoodie.

photo Ron Checora

comfort performing before university types was evident in their easy-going stage manner. Most importantly, the band played the audience.

In the dying moments of the second set, the band called the audience on stage to sing an overdone and terribly dull '70s song which is not worthy of recognition — and sure enough, frat boys, first-year nurses and self-worshipping exhibitionists (wishing to have something to tell their trite friends about) responded to the call, while the band retreated from the stage. (It is

amazing what idiots will do for attention.) The band returned to the stage, knocked off two very lively party tunes — one of them an encore, and left for good.

Musically, beyond being tight, talented and fun, the band was lacking that "something" that discriminates good from very good. As a friend noted over a cafe au lait, it was more the case that the band played good R&B, but without exuding the soul of R&B — its essence. The difference is one of degrees, as that between driving a car down a rural road and riding a bicycle

along the same road. In the former instance you are watching the countryside roll by through the window frame, in the latter, you are an active participant in the total landscape.

Okay, so with that said, what about The Regular Guys? The Regular Guys are a good live act, one of the better acts I have seen in the past year. Most importantly, I enjoyed myself as did most of the crowd, if their smiles were indicative. If the band rolls through town again, and you are into a fun and active evening, check it out.

## Animal Boy a new sound for Ramones

Ramones  
Animal Boy  
Sire  
\*\*\*1/2

review by Nate LaRo

In the beginning, the Ramones were the American punk band of choice. Partly because they got their album out before the Pistols or the Clash and partly because they wrote extremely simplistic, terrifically catchy pop songs rendered highly distinctive by the thrilling combination of Johnny's wildly distorted guitar and Joey's infamously nasal warble.

As terminal adolescents, the Ramones are also a classic case of arrested development. And notwithstanding their efforts to contrary, one Ramones album has sounded very much like another; and for this reason alone it becomes difficult to conceive how anyone could want more than two or three of them (I'm qualified to say that because I have at least half a dozen), preferably chosen from among the first four and 1983's *Subterranean Jungle*.

Change being overdue, 1984's *Tough To Die* was a definite step in the right direction. In many respects, it constituted a genuine departure, incorporating synthesizers, social/political commentary, the primal 1-2-3-4- of hardcore and a variety of bizarre vocal styles, all of which are continued, somewhat more successfully, on 1986's *Animal Boy*.

Now, to be sure, *Animal Boy* — like every other Ramones album of the 80's — does contain the odd tired retread ("Apeman Hop", "Hair of the Dog") as well as Ramones classics in the traditional style ("Animal Boy", "Mental Hell"). And, moreover, the group's efforts to dress down often amount to little more than ripping bigger holes in the blue jeans. "Love Kills" and "Eat that Rat" are marred by Dee Dee's Doberman Pincher snarl and snap, "Freak of Nature" by the stupidity of

its lyrics, redeemed only by Joey's cry of "I'm completely misunderstood", a sentiment that lies at the thematic center of this particular batch of songs.

And while *Animal Boy* is not necessarily up to the level of 1976-1978, the three songwriting collaborations between bassist Dee Dee Ramone and producer Jean Beauvoir, all of which clock in at almost four minutes long, forge a new Ramones sound as never before. "She Belongs to Me", the latest in a long line of Spectoresque pop songs, puts the tuxedo over the leather jacket, the slick synthesizers, acoustic guitars and pretty-boy harmonies obscuring the threats of violence so often present in the group's lyrics. The remarkable 1985 indie-single,

"Bonzo Goes to Bitburg", with its layered backing vocals and its wash of synthesizers, succeeds by personalizing the political ("Bonzo goes to Bitburg/And goes out for a cup of tea/As I watched it on TV/Somehow it really bothered me") while the movingly autobiographical "Something to Believe In" suggests that, just as Elvis Costello has gotten tired of being Elvis Costello, the Ramones have gotten tired of being the Ramones (best line: "If I was stupid or naive/Trying for what they all call contentness" — this from a band that has made a career out of being or pretending to be stupid and naive!).

Best of all, *Animal Boy*, on the technical level, is quite possibly the best sounding Ramones album ever. Plasmatics' Jean

Beauvoir successfully returns the group to the cleaner, slicker production of *End of the Century* and *Pleasant Dreams* (which are not otherwise to be recommended); Johnny and Joey and Dee, as players, have improved more than a little since *Road To Ruin* while Richie's lurching rat-a-tat-tat drumming, given a healthy dose of arena-rock echo, has it all over Tommy's muffled tub-thumping or Marky's broad cymbal splashes.

The Ramones may never again be as exciting as they were back in 1976 but, ten years later, they're still doing a pretty great job.

★★★★ - excellent; ★★★ - very good; ★★ - good; ★ - fair; ☆ - poor

## Three actors in quest for survival

Alone  
Kaasa Theatre  
review by Melinda Vester

*Alone* is a psychological quest for survival.

The play tells the story of a pregnant woman who is left stranded on an island north of Alaska. When left with no human contact, Martha Martin has to struggle with broken bones, cold, and herself. She is alone.

The most interesting aspect of this play is that three actors play the same character, Martha Martin. They are the three parts of her psyche: a man, a woman, and a child; her mind, her emotions, and her childishness. The mind, played by Kent Gallie, is the rational part of Martha that makes the intelligent decisions and tries to dampen her fun. He frequently is in conflict with the other parts of the psyche. The emotions, played by Nola Auguston, over-reacts to crisis or joy, but tempers the rational mind. The child, played by Charlene Rose

Sashuk, is the endless hope that keeps Martha from giving up. The word alone originates from all one and these actors manage to live up to this title.

Convincing is an inadequate word to describe the actors' portrayal of the character; one can actually believe that they are one and that you are seeing what goes on in a human mind. During crisis (ie. being caught in a rockslide), they have close physical contact, speak at the same time, and work as one. When in a state of confusion or conflict, their physical proximity becomes more distant and they speak in turn. They have created a physical world from a mental image.

Kim Erickson's musical score is an integral part of the play's ability to draw on the emotion. It is haunting and lonely. Her flute and her voice both inspire goosebumps from the audience. At times you can not tell which is being played, the instrument or the voice. Without the score, the play would be lacking, but anymore

would be overwhelming; as it is, it's perfect.

The play itself, written by Patricia Ludwick, is highly emotional. The distinctly physical mode of expression is not only challenging to the actors, but to the audience as well. It is unusual, but totally suitable to the psychological content of the story. Unfortunately, at the one hour mark, the audience starts to fidget due to a slight lull in the middle of the play. It is too long and could create the same feelings and impressions in the audience in one hour, rather than ninety minutes. Other than the slight miscalculation in attention span, Patricia Ludwick has created a strong and sensitive piece of work that demands thought from its audience.

Overall, the audience has no real choice but to leave the play feeling lonely and in need of human contact. Not depressed, but empty. Drained. After all, "How do you say good-bye to a mountain?"