

Comment

Pretension reigns but never bores

by Martin Sullivan

I just can't take it anymore. I finally decided it was time to enlighten Dalhousie as best I can. "About what?" you may ask. "About music" I reply. The abuse and neglect it suffers in Halifax is appalling. "Appalling? Who the hell are you to say anyway?" I don't pretend to know a great deal about music, but our present situation is appalling. Read on and hear me out.

First, the music critics for the *Gazette* as I see them are pathetic, pretentious, and basically obnoxious—not all, mind you, but nevertheless these types do exist. These reviewers feel it is mandatory

for record reviews to include no less than fifty high and mighty sounding words that will send the average Dal student scrambling for his Webster's dictionary (King's students will likewise reach for their Oxford's dictionary, or better yet, a Roget's Thesaurus). Why do reviewers like using these "sophisticated" words? Because they think that possibly the average student will be so impressed by the use of words like "verisimilitude" and "metastasis" that he won't realize that the critique or review says absolutely nothing, or worse yet, that the writer is a fool and doesn't even know what

he's talking about. I don't wish to dredge up specific examples, because this may start to sound like a "Letter To The Editor".

Reviewers need to be more objective; too many applaud albums without including any criticisms, which does not do the consumer any favors when he goes to buy the album and finds it less than excellent. It also shows a rather crude and unimaginative attempt on the part of the reviewer to inflict his favorite group's latest album on the masses, with the only criterion being that if the reviewer likes it, it **must** be good.

I don't want to put you off

by immediately launching into some spiel about New Wave or Punk music, but it certainly does have its merits, especially insofar as it is putting some life back into rock 'n' roll, which has come to be dominated by groups whose only claim to fame is that their light show is really great, and you can pick up a lot of dope at their concerts. The best new wave groups are virtually unheard of in Halifax, and the situation will remain this way until CJCH and the like realize that life is not all piña colada and Stayin' Alive. Some of the music of 1980 is really outstanding, with artists like Elvis Costello, who deserves a

following like Beatlemania, but who remains known only to a few cultists. Because the choice of commercial radio stations largely determine the kind of music that people think they like, Dal students will opt for groin-grinding disco, Minglewood, or even (yecch) Rush before they will pick up an Elvis Costello album of greatly superior content and quality.

Perhaps people who live for new wave are glad few others know about it. . .the masses provide them with a group to feel superior to. I really like new wave, but after having played it to death at CKDU to an audience of empty rooms and broken transmitters, I am getting weary of seeing no visible results. I don't expect a "Reincarnate Sid Vicious" rally of 10,000 tomorrow, or even a "Nuke and Knack and Play New Wave" club to form, but the lack of response and noticeable absence of Ian Dury buttons on campus has made me stop and think. Then I reassure myself with the thought that there must be an underground movement for new wave meeting regularly in the sewers or underneath one of those concrete grates on University Avenue.

What Halifax needs and has needed for 10 or more years is a good, diverse, intelligent and informative FM station, which will provide everything which the CBC cannot through its need for appeal to an extremely large audience. There is a desire by a great number of people to hear a station which would play jazz, progressive rock, new wave, folk music, and especially blues, which will die if no effort is made to revive it.

If you're like the average *Gazette* reader, you've probably skimmed the surface of this musical polemic without gleaning anything from it. All I really wanted you to get from it was this: try to diversify your tastes and not blindly go to Kelly's and buy some album because everyone else in residence has it. New wave music is not all "fag" music and weird stuff for disco queens to turn up their noses at, played only by arts students. I'm even in Computer Science, what could be farther removed from the art world than that? Also, don't be afraid to pick something at the record racks which you have never heard before, a lot of good music is discovered that way.

Once I have you convinced of all that, I want you to give all your money to CKDU so that I can have a well-paying full-time job and we can establish a full-fledged fascist regime on the fourth floor of the S.U.B. Yes, that's tongue in cheek! Now have you learned anything? Have I insulted you? I dare you to write a letter to the editor about this article. You'll be hearing from me again if you do.

P.S. I hope this doesn't sound holier-than-thou, Larry.

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