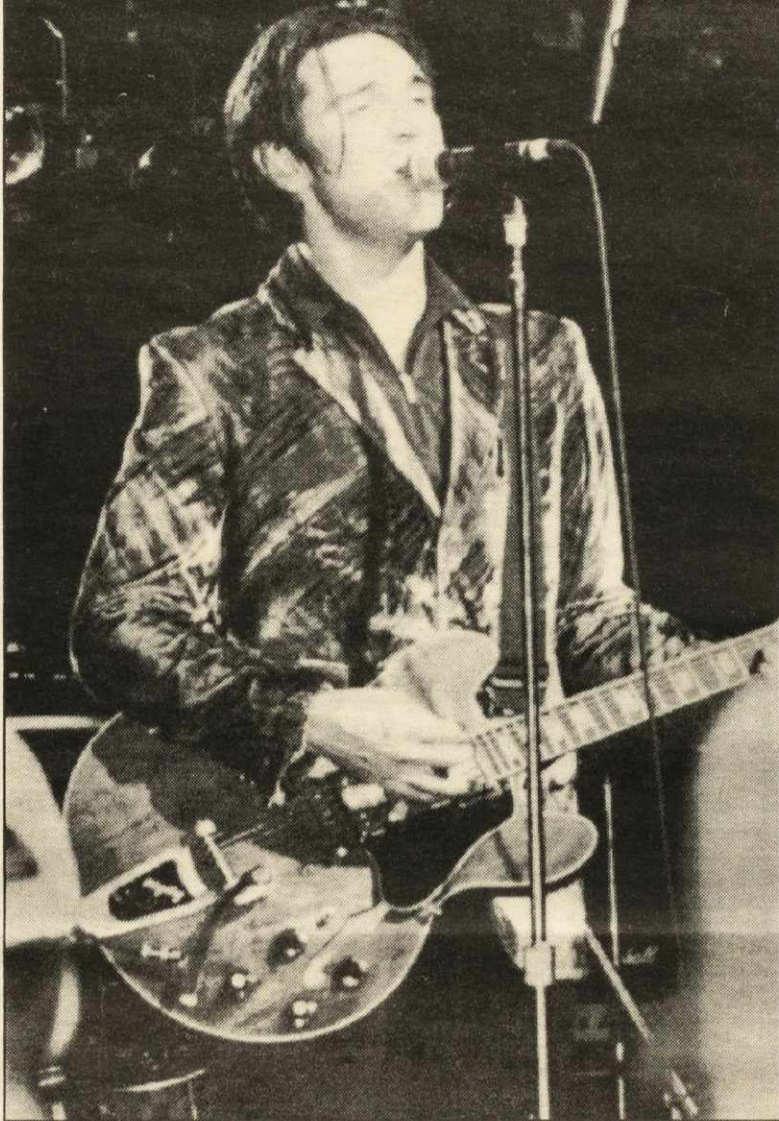


Sugar in your gas tank



Big Sugar tore a strip out of the crowd last Wednesday at the McInnes Room.

BY LYNN DECKER

Skipping the opening acts, I arrived in the McInnes Room just before 11 p.m. for Wednesday's Big Sugar concert. Soon enough, a revving engine started and Big Sugar strutted out on stage, decked out in their Hugo Boss threads. The audience, consisting mostly of frosh, started to cheer.

The first song played was "Tommy Johnson", off their current album *Hemivision*. For the first few songs the audience jumped and crowd surfed, until front-man Gordie Johnson informed the crowd that he loved the way they jumped around and enjoyed the show, but he did not want any crowd surfing. "You paid \$16 to see rock n' roll, motherfucker, not to have someone kick you in the head," said Johnson to a surfer.

His request was met with a great uproar of agreement from the crowd until, during the next song, some fool started to surf again — apparently thinking that \$16 was a fair price for getting kicked in the head.

"Diggin' A Hole", the band's biggest distortion-laden hit, was played early on, causing everyone to rush to the front. The audience reacted pretty much the same way to an extended version of the bluesy "If I Had My Way". The other stand

out of the night was "Wild Ox Moan", from the *500 Pounds* album. Johnson was amazing on vocals during this one, sending shivers down backs with his gritty voice.

The band did little talking to the audience, except when Johnson said it was great to be back in Halifax (ah, don't they all say that?). He also introduced the band, consisting of Kelly Hoppe (sax), Garry Lowe (bass), and Gavin Brown (new on drums).

Big Sugar ended their main set with "Ride Like Hell", appropriate because of Johnson's fascination with cars — even the stage back-

drop is a giant steering wheel. They also returned for two encores, "100 Cigarettes" and "Sugar In My Coffee".

At 1 a.m., after a two hour performance, the band left the stage. You really have to love a band to listen to them for that long, so by that point more than half of the audience had left. In Big Sugar's defence, classes started the next day.

Some bands suck when they play live, and leave you thinking, "Man, this sounds nothing like the cd!" Big Sugar is *not* one of those bands. They are strong live, and you know they are playing hard and well. They often have lengthy musical interludes

with no singing. I am not a fan of those, nor have I ever been. I could have done without the endless spurts of music, because I missed Gordie's sexy voice, but that would be my only complaint. All in all, the show rocked.



Even though our reporter missed them, Cool Blue Halo was there. Photos by Ian McAskill.

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