

RED & BLACK REVIEWED

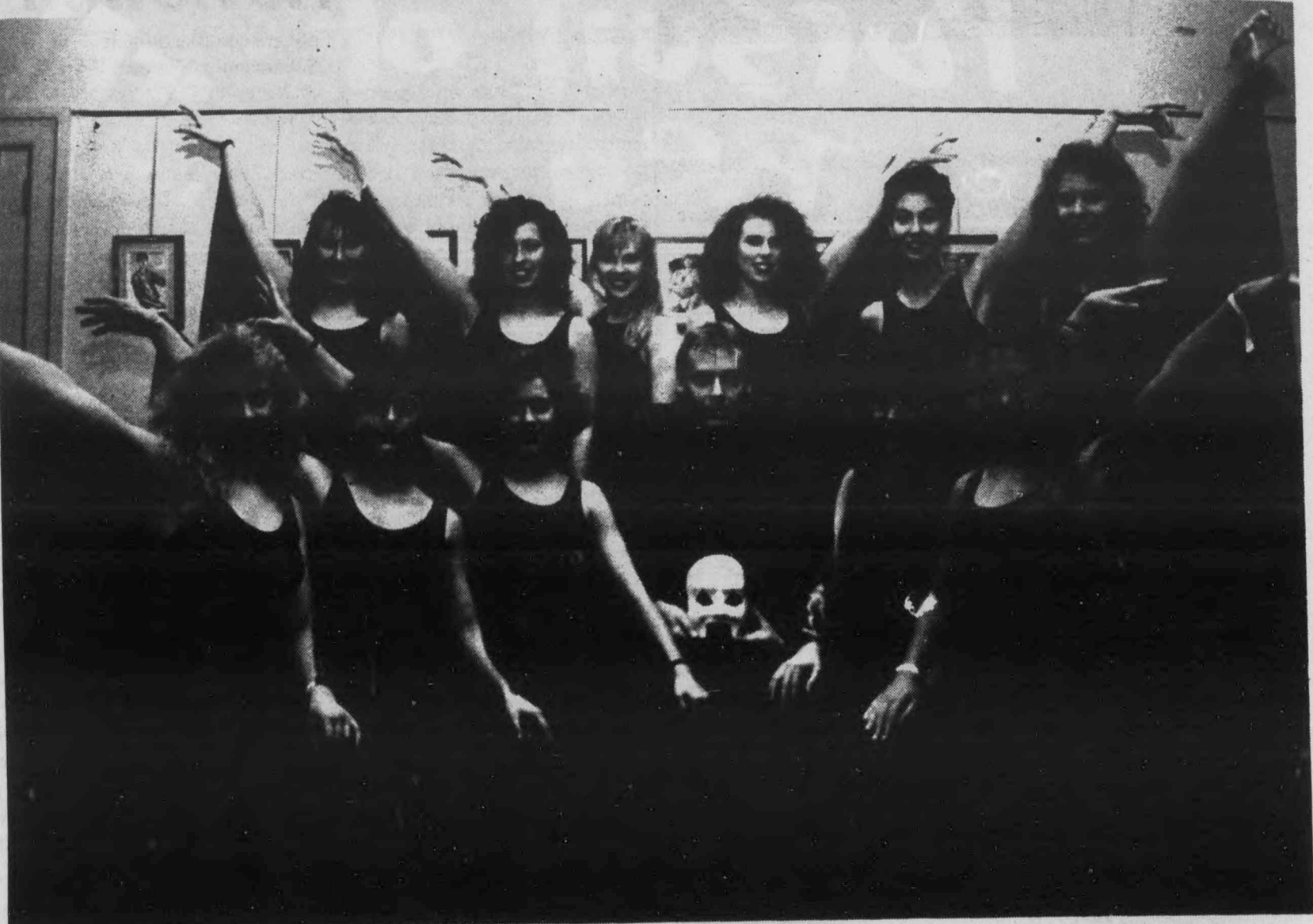
The 44th Annual Red n Black Revue

The curtain rose to reveal "Alive n Kicking", a sort of jazzy brass band of eight males, backed by a girl at the grand piano. Slightly out-of-time at the beginning of their act, "Alive n Kicking" played upbeat, fun music and pulled together at the end of their 2 songs a resounding if unexpected finish (for a minute I thought they were going to go on to another song). Great trumpet player, and I thought the white and black ensembles looked good against the psychedelic back-drop (what were the lighting crew trying to achieve?!?). The audience was generous with their applause - a fine start to the show.

On came the "Mistress" and Master of ceremonies, with a line on being nervous about their jobs (smart plan - make the audience sympathetic to your cause, and it probably won't boo you off the stage). Lots of the old sexual innuendo jokes - they're always good to draw a laugh - and then the show moved on.

The second act "Phantom of the Opera" was a modern dance production to the theme song of the Broadway hit of the same name I must admit, I was impressed, not by the dancers technique itself, but by the effectiveness of the entire production - the dark, restrained setting against which the dancers' black leotards with brilliant pink billowing arm attachments worked very well to create a smooth and flowing quality in the dance itself. I was really quite enjoying the performance until the arrival of the Phantom. To be quite frank, he was pathetic - stiff and simply not credible in his role. He ruined it for me - but the rest of the dancers did a commendable job. Thumbs up to them - and to Carolyn McNeil who choreographed the dance.

Next on the programme was a little skit called the "Retentive Environmentalists" (a spoof on Saturday Night Live's "The Anal Retentive Chef"?). The act was forced and not very funny - although I did get a kick out of the Grandmother at the end of the act, who leapt of her rocking chair and grabbed for the aerosol hair-spray which was supposedly banned in the Retentive Environmentalist's futuristic society. The idea for the



skit had possibilities, but they just weren't explored too well (a "Recycling Technician"? Please, spare me) and the final result was only vaguely amusing.

"Veinotte and MacGraw"...oops, I can't make out my notes, and I can't say that I truthfully remember anything striking about their performance. Yeah, well... Then, the audience was treated to soloist "Sarah Haley". Backed by the grand piano, she sang two songs, one of which was drawn from the Broadway show "A Chorus Line". Clear, and on-key (always a bonus), she seemed relaxed enough on stage to inject a bit of spirit into her performance. "In Vogue", a spoof of a fashion show, was rather amusing. Models included: "So Damn Insane" (no prizes for guessing who this refers to); "Skinhead O'Connor" (hey, I like Sinead's hair); and "Brad Woodhead" (my personal favourite) in his ribbon-cutting wear. "Alan Legere" ended the ensemble with a little act that got in a good below-the-belt hit to the RCMP.

Another dance production - black American rappers' moves are alive

even in Fredericton! "Hip Hop" was full of energy, and all the dancers did a great job. Very different from the preceding dance and the audience really appreciated the contrast.

The First Act ended with an acid-rock band called "Section 8". Well, maybe it wasn't an acid rock band, but that's what they sounded like they were on. They did have sound problems with the amps, but the music was screechingly loud, discordant, and accompanied by lots of hair-tossing by the buddy on the bass. What's more I had to sit through a terrible rendition of Jimmi Hendrix's "Purple Haze"... AAGH!!

Moving alone into Act II... This opened with two guys called "Mess O Blues". They were definitely my favourite act of the night. One played a blues harp, the other a guitar. Dressed in 30's-style loose suits and fedora hats. The proceeded to play the blues, while playing around on stage, and thoroughly loving it. The blues harp was excellent and the performance skillfully put together. Thumbs up, no reservations.

Next in live was "The Inside

Scoop", a news panel including news anchors "Dan Rather-Boring", "Barbara from Outer Space" and "Peter Personbridge". Another idea that seemed to have been borrowed from "Saturday Night Live." But, the "Inside Scoop" had its funny moments, in attacking such notables in our life as Brian Mulroney, James Downey, Mary-Lou Stirling and Richard Hatfield (good one - to counter recession, he apparently proposed to deal with Columbian coke-kings. Hmmm, I wonder why...). Of course, the Student Union/College Hill Social Club affair was mentioned, as was our dichotomous Student Union President, "Mark, oops, I mean Kevin".

The "Bicentennial Choir" performed two songs. I didn't enjoy their first song "Under the Boardwalk" which seemed rather flat. But I thought they did an impressive job with their second song - obviously music a choir's more suited for. "Davis, Lindsay and Dinsmore", three guys on guitars played next. Another "yeah well"...

Just before the finale, the

Engineering "Jug Band" performed. Their rendition of "3 Blind Mice" on bottles of varying levels of liquid was hilarious - as was their attire: straw hats, ripped denim overalls stuffed with hay. Real farm boys, right down to the stomping square-dancing. And the Engineers finally got in a shot at the *Brunswickan* in their chanting satirical song... Quite a good show. The finale, the fabled "Kickline" was disappointing. Oh, the girls were all in time, and looked the part, but the performance lacked life, energy, that "ummph" that is needed for a kickline. Not to mention the fact that the music was muted... "yeah well"...

In closing I must commend the "Mistress" and Master of Ceremonies, Michael Beoner, and especially, Heidi Hawkins for their admirable performances. The audience (which, by the way, filled the house) was enthusiastic, as always, and the performers were evidently enjoying themselves on stage - which is important. Looked at in these terms, rather than in terms of actual quality, I'd say the "44th Annual Red n Black Revue" was a success.

Powerline - A Pleasant Surprise

by Stephane Comeau

It isn't often that a cover band proves to be very impressive, but this was the case with Powerline, a Nova Scotia based band that opened up for the Pursuit of Happiness on Friday.

Although the band's performance lacked any original material their performance was an energetic one that succeeded in getting the crowd pumped up for TPOH (who, unfortunately, didn't live up to expectations).



Powerline's hard hitting performance did justice to tunes originally done by such names as Led Zeppelin, the Cult and Allanah

Myles. A lively party mix. Powerline is definitely a band to see if one is looking for a rockin' good time.

UJAMAA In BAND WARZ '90 Provincial Finals

Fredericton's Reggae band UJAMAA recently qualified for the provincial finals in Labatt's nationally syndicated BAND WARZ '90 being held this year in Moncton.

Quiet for some time in the Fredericton area, UJAMAA has spent much of the last year writing and creating a more distinctive sound, and playing outside the city. Having won the semi-final round of BAND WARZ '90 at Fat Tuesday's

club in Moncton on Monday, they are now set for the final on November 12. The final pinnacle of this national competition is a recording contract and over \$175,000 in cash and prizes. UJAMAA asks anyone who would like to support them and keep the Caribbean sun shining in Fredericton to come to Fat Tuesday's on Monday.

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