

GENREKIDE

MICHAEL EDWARDS

MISCELLANEOUS RAMBLING AND GROWLING

I just got sent a CD sampler from Arista with three new bands that shows their commitment to all that "cage-rattling, head-banging, mind-bending, dancing-on-the-precipice Rock". Or in other words, their latest push for 'alternative' music. By now you should know my feeling about this classification of music, but after listening to this disc I feel even more cynical because the quality of music is almost non-existent. Its that sort of generic, loud guitar, screamed vocals, trying-to-sound-like-someone-from-Seattle-or-whenever-is-fashionable-this-week music that doesn't make any effort to sound original or fresh. After the first listen I didn't even notice that I was listening to a different band every second song. And yet this sort of thing is getting the big bucks from the record companies, and also the promotional backing whereas other superior bands fall by the wayside. But its not a bed of roses for these fledgling bands either as many are dumped after their first album fails commercially - I have heard them affectionately called "tax losses" by the majors. Real sad. So I shall reserve my judgement at the moment until I see if Arista decides to continue backing these bands despite lack of sales although I think I know the answer already.

And why is it that the major labels seem to assume that the only types of music that university students listen to is either the chart bound ma-

terial or the fashionable 'alternative' stuff? I would dearly love for some nice jazz reissues to turn up on the entertainment desk one week, or maybe some nice classical music, but oh no, we get Belinda Carlisle and Pearl Jam instead. Sigh. Its really quite frustrating but they just seem to realise that we might be interested in something a bit more inspiring but they give us Pearl Jam. Just a friendly notice in case any of them read this; a bit ambitious I'll grant you but I can but dream. I will try to do at least one feature on some of the jazz reissues that Verve have been filtering out over the last while in the next few weeks.

Still feeling all concerted out after Friday night, so I didn't make it to the Student Union celebration on Saturday where the music was provided by Road Apples whom I believe specialize in Tragically Hip cover versions. I think that we can utilize this band in the years to come - what do I mean? Well, every year the 'Hip' visit campus thanks to those nice Student Union people and then they complain bitterly about the amount of money that they lose over the venture. So what I propose is that we book Road Apples but tell everyone that the Tragically Hip are going to play. The night of the concert we make the 'crowd' sit as far as possible from the stage, crank the smoke machine up to the maximum, light the band from behind and hey presto - everyone is happy. Then the VP Activities can use the money that they saved on the evening to book some real bands. Just a thought.

But to end on happy thoughts; the Hello Recording Club has made it through its first year and is getting ready for the number two. For the uninitiated, Hello is a CD of the month club set up by John Flansburgh of They Might Be Giants; ten times a year they issue a CD by an artist containing some exclusive tracks that you can't pick up anywhere else. During the first year they have featured discs by Frank Black, the Residents and the Nelories among others not to mention some other people that you probably haven't heard of before. There have been some real goodies in the past year too, with my own highlights being a rather dramatic version of 'Duke of Earl' by Frank Black and also a disc by the Band Of Weeds (who I can only describe as a rather cool brass band that made Led Zeppelin seem acceptable). And all for about \$50 a year too. The second year promises to be really interesting too - already confirmed are XTC's Andy Partridge, Mac from Superchunk, the other John from They Might Be Giants (absolutely no nepotism here...) and many other surprises that they just won't tell you about just yet. But what I can tell you is that John promises releases by people that have full-blown personality disorders rather than gentle neuroses. Hmmm. If you feel the urge to participate then you can call 1-800-HELLO-41, and as always, remember to tell them who sent you....

Yuk-Yuking it up with the Business Society

by Mark Savoie

So I go up to Yuk Yuks faced with more than just a little bit of trepidations Not only did I not have enough money to afford the purchase of any humor inducers—because of a student loan hassle which makes me no longer question the rationale of drive-by shootings—but I was also forced to sit with a bunch of Business Society Executives geeks (replete with pocket protectors) and with the ice queen whom we call THE BOSS seated within striking distance.

The first act of the evening was some B.C. guy who goes by the name of Harry Doupe, primarily because that is the name that his parents gave him. After a few gratuitous and yet well-deserved shots at the Business Society he got to the theme of his act. Unfortunately for both him and the crowd, his act did not really have theme. His act was dependent upon the crowd being willing to respond to his jibes and queries with straight lines upon which he could build an act. However, perhaps because he was the first act, the crowd was mostly unresponsive, leaving him reaching for material. Had he had a stronger monologue upon which to fall back, he undoubtedly would have been much funnier.

He did however, at least remember his entire act, which could not be said of Bonnie MacFarlane. Shortly after 30 minutes of her act she admitted to not being able to remember the rest of her act and left the stage. This may have been a cop-out, as her rapport with the crowd had become so frosty that even the ice queen, THE BOSS on my right was finding it a

mite bit cool. The problem was that Ms. Bonnie's humour was of a largely sexual nature, which slammed feminists to an extent. This riled a couple of feminists of my acquaintance, who seemed ready to challenge Ms. MacFarlane to an immediate debate on political correctness and gender relations. Needless to say it lowered the humour content of the act. Had she been allowed to pursue her material on moving from the farm to the city, and on the sluttiness of her sister, her act may have been better received than it was. But then again, probably not.

The final act of the evening was Jamaican Ronny Edwards. The man went through the standard ganja jokes required of a Jamaican humorist, but also discussed the lighter side of being black in a mostly white society. The refreshing aspect of the act was that while the audience—comedian banter of the first two acts had had a hostile edge, Ronny Edwards and the audience seemed to generally like each other. Even his conversation with the guy in the wheelchair after the handicapped parking spaces joke was of a positive nature. This may have been helped by the fact that the wheelchair dude had the better line. The best part of Edwards' act was that he was able to complete his monologue without depending on the audience for help. The banter was there, but it was not a necessity.

Ultimately, I had a good time and was glad that I went. Would I still feel the same had I not been given a free ticket is open to question, especially given the efforts of the first two acts. But Ronny Edwards was enough to make the evening worthwhile.

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