

# Honky Red Farmer's Song

Unlike at his appearance here last March, people seemed to actually know who Murray McLauchlan was this time around. Tuesday night's SUB audience seemed to have some idea of what to expect, and provided applause at the beginnings of his better known songs. The band enjoyed themselves, and the audience did the same.

McLauchlan has added Ben Mink to the band, on mandolin and violin, to aid Dennis Pendrith on electric bass. McLauchlan is no longer just the singer of frequently sensitive lyrics, but a member of a band performing long instrumentals. Two old favourites, "Farmer's Song" and "Honky Red", were done in extended version, those raucous standards sounding better than ever. In general, the addition of Mink fills out the sound of the band in a way which they needed.

McLauchlan has a new album out (*Only The Silence Remains*) which should be released in Edmonton sometime this week. Like any live album, it's composed mostly of old favourites, in versions which we'll probably not hear again. The excitement which McLauchlan can convey on a good night is there, particularly in rhythmic numbers like "Linda (Won'tcha Take Me In)", while songs like "Two-bit Nobody" and "Billy McDaniels" sound almost exactly like the originals and are therefore almost as good. Not only that, but a few of McLauchlan's long intros, particularly the hilarious story behind "Honky Red", are here for posterity. The album captures the spirit of a McLauchlan

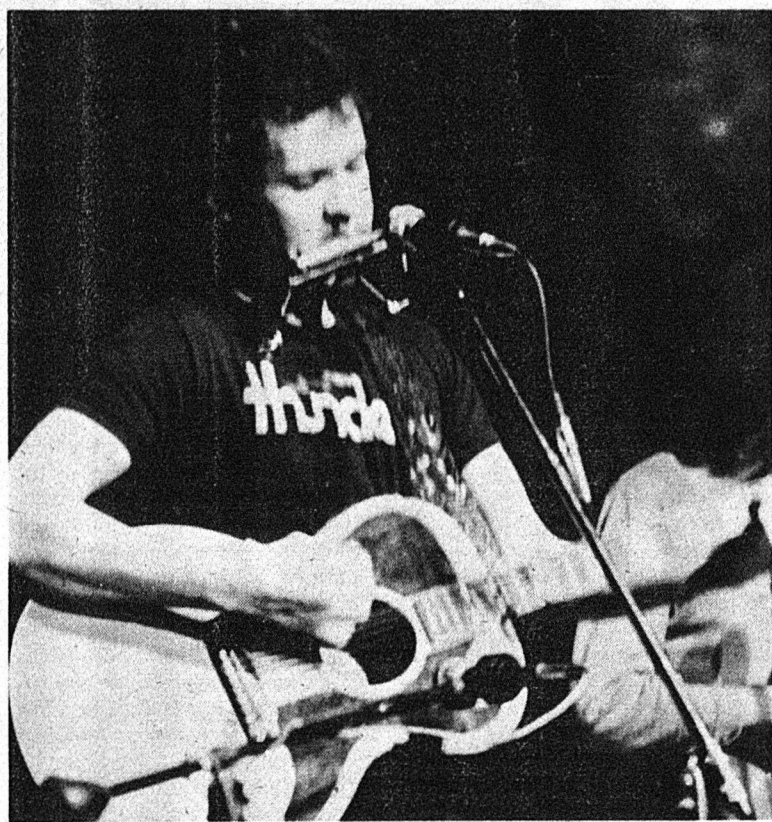


Photo by Gerhard Hiob  
Murray McLauchlan is still alive and singing. He played two concerts in SUB Theatre last week.

concert as well as can be expected.

After seeing last week's concert, though, it is easy to see that McLauchlan has improved in the past few months. With a third musician in the band, there is suddenly a larger variety of instrumentation available. The bridges between the verses are much more complex, and the band is able to come up with a more enjoyable sound. At its best, the instrumentation is well worth listening to in its own right, apart from the lyrics. That McLauchlan hasn't lost his

ability to write good songs became obvious after listening to the five or six new songs he performed. These works are as interesting as ever, complete with the fine and sensitive lines that one has come to expect from McLauchlan.

McLauchlan is one of our few young performers who is worth listening to as both a performer and a songwriter. His concerts are exciting, his songs fine and his vocal range suitable to his material. What else can anyone ask?

John Owen Robert Ferris

## Cowboys really eat 'em up

Murray McLauchlan played a concert in SUB Theatre last Tuesday night, after which the Gateway approached him for an interview.

Q: *Do you see that you've added a new member to the band. (Ben Mink, who plays fiddle and mandolin). When did you do this?*

McLAUCHLAN: Well, Ben played on the last album, and we got to enjoy playing together. We're sort of free like that, if you can make it you make it, if you can't, you can't.

Q: *Do you intend to add other people to your group?*

McLAUCHLAN: No. This size allows us a lot of versatility, a chance to play a lot of different sounds. If we increased the size, we couldn't be as versatile, we'd have a song and some people wouldn't be playing. This is about the best size.

Q: *How would you say your style has changed in the past few years?*

McLAUCHLAN: Well, now I'm playing music rather than just standing up and singing some words. I always had a sound I wanted to hear, but I didn't know how to get it. I'm getting it now. I'd say that I'm playing music that I like to hear.

Q: *Do you find that country stations give you more airplay than top-40 stations?*

McLAUCHLAN: Yeah, it's amazing, they really eat 'em up. They play almost any single we put out - they're the ones who got "Farmer's Song" going. I don't know why; I guess they've got a better format than the top-40 stations, they play more things that they like.

Especially in the Maritimes. I went down there to play and they knocked me off my feet. They really like me down there. Like this last single of mine:

"Henry Moore" was really high up on the charts all through the east, about number 10 everywhere east of the lakehead.

Q: *What about new records?*

McLAUCHLAN: Well, I've got a new single out ("Little Dreamer") and a new live album we recorded in the Maritimes. I've got another studio album coming out in February.

Q: *You're going to have extra musicians on that album?*

McLAUCHLAN: Yeah, I like to do things like that in the studio, have a lot of fun doing it.

Q: *What do you feel when you're performing?*

McLAUCHLAN: Rabid fear for the first few minutes, then I settle down with the audience. You know, sometimes an audience really gets you, and the energy starts flowing. Sometimes they're not, and you just play the songs and that's cool, too. It's good to stretch out, though...

Q: *Is there anything you really want to do?*

McLAUCHLAN: I'd like to tour and do it all at once instead of in bits and pieces; hit the U.S. and Canada at the same time. I'd really enjoy it.

## Mediocrity excellence placed side by side

In his performance at Dinwoodie last Wednesday, Leo Kottke proved to all present that he has mastered the art of the twelve string guitar.

Kottke was preceded by Dr. Leon Redbone, providing a set whose best attribute was its short duration. Redbone showed nothing more than adequate guitar and harmonica playing, with unintelligible lyrics interspersed with boredom and the odd bit of drawnout humour. His style and presence seemed only to mock the old delta blues artists.

As Kottke came on stage he expressed in only a few words his entire feelings toward today's music scene. He said "Hello, I'm Tammy Wynette." From there he settled into the masterfully slurred slide guitar work that has become his trademark.

Kottke has formulated a technique that cannot be placed into any existing idiom, yet has not become a cluttered amalgam of different styles. This nontraditional guitar style has been called by John Fahey, one of its major proponents, "American Primitive". Kottke made a spectacular demonstration of this style, using clean fingerpicking riffs contrasting with a background of dramatic slides and afterbears.

Appearing without a backup band, he played two Bozo guitars, one with open tuning for slide work, enhanced on occasion by an MXR phase shifter. Kottke adds to his captivating stage presence by telling stories about himself and his family to fill in time taken by his meticulous tuning.

Kottke has in the past performed with such bands as

Procol Harum. It is a shame that such a great performer as Kottke should now be accompanied by a musician of the mediocrity that is seen in Dr. Leon Redbone.

Craig McLachlan

## Cavemen on campus

Studio Theatre's 27th season opens Thursday, October 23, with William Saroyan's widely acclaimed *The Cave Dwellers*. The occupants of the "Cave" are a weird and wonderful collection of indigents in a lower east side theatre which is about to be demolished by a wrecking crew. The cast includes a discarded prize fighter, a forgotten leading actress, and the shell of a one-time vaudeville clown, who together supply the framework for Saroyan's examination of life as grace, courtesy and love, in a world that is frequently cruel and frightening.

*The Cave Dwellers* features the graduating class of what is generally acknowledged to be one of Canada's finest professional theatre training programs. The play is directed by Drama Department chairman, Thomas Peacocke, and designed by Roger Spiecher.

Performances nightly from Thursday, October 23 to Saturday, November 1 (excluding Sunday); curtain time 8:30. There will be a 2:30 matinee performance on Saturday, October 25. Box-Office opens Thursday, October 16, and tickets (\$2.50 to non-students; free to students with ID cards) may be obtained from Room 3-146 of the Fine Arts Centre, 112 St - 89 Ave. or by phoning 432-1495.

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