

ARTS

Pyramids powerful, Dragnets awesome

The Shakin Pyramids/Dragnets

by Ken Lenz

In a city where average bands dominate the cabaret scene, Saturday's Dinwoodie was a welcome return to the fast and furious roots of rock and roll.

The Dragnets opened for Scottish rockabilly band The Shakin' Pyramids and demonstrated what appeared to be the best performance in this city since the Bopcats appeared at the Convention Inn last year.

Lead guitarist Drew Bermann's nearly flawless playing combined with much improved upright bass and solid drumming has turned the trio into a very tight unit.

After the Dragnets finished what had to be their best performance yet the crowd was well-prepared for the headliner, The Shakin' Pyramids.

The addition of acoustic rhythm player "Railroad Ken" in the Pyramids' lineup provided the extra fullness and energy that the Dragnets were lacking.

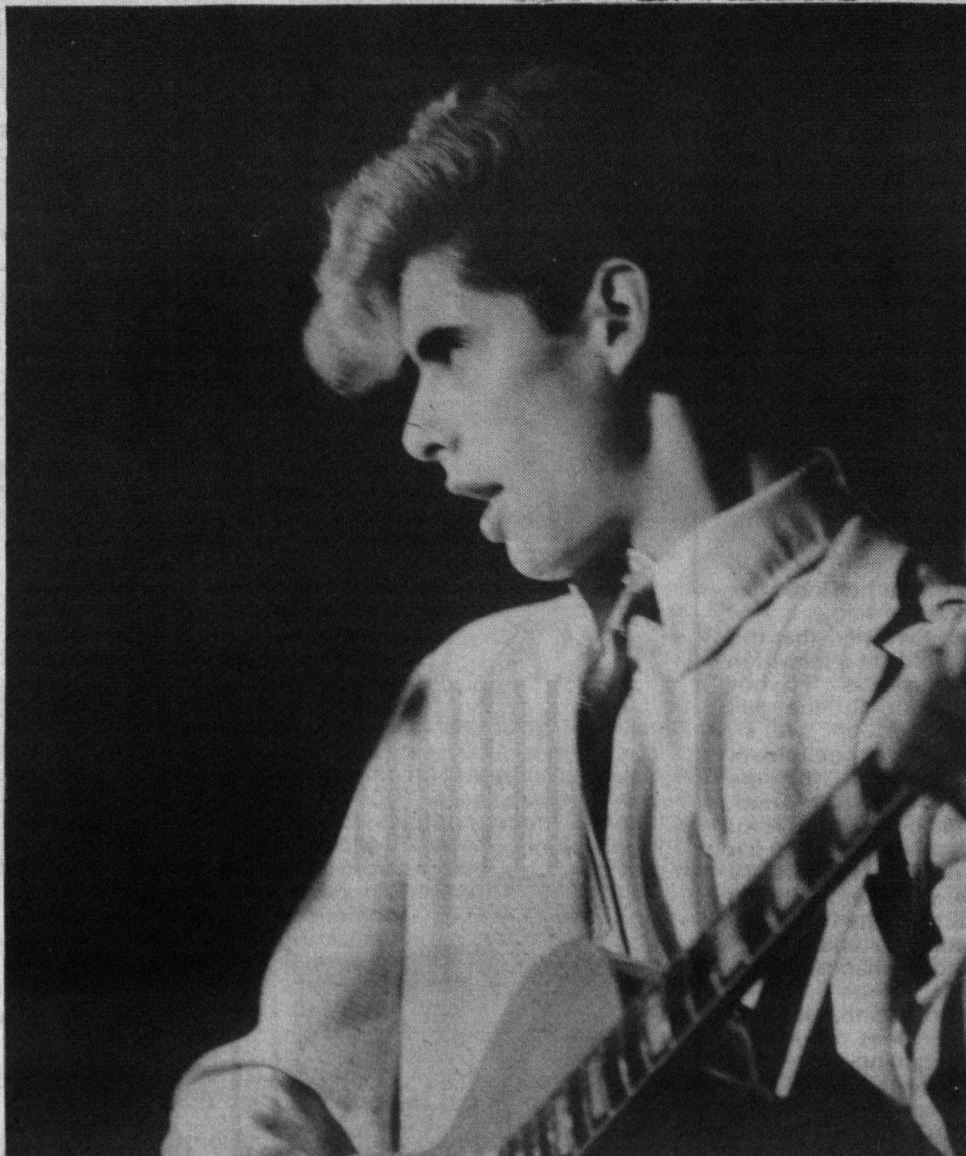
By the end of the first three numbers, Teenage Boogie, Cry, Cry Kitten and Hellbent on Rockin' the dance floor was packed with the energy maintained right through to the second encore.

Rockabilly needs neither the politics of groups like the Clash and the Jam nor the complex well-arranged melodies typical to the Beatles. It is fast fun music mostly about trains, girls and rock and roll, containing the uninhibited, free for all style created by originators like Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis.

The Pyramids combine some of the best of the original rockabilly sound with the blues-rock influence popularized by Elvis Presley.

In a generation where video game orchestras seem to dominate the underground music scene the resurfacing of rockabilly in pop music is a very welcome sight.

The Shakin' Pyramids will be in Edmonton for the next week. They are pure entertainment, well worth the money.



Drew Bermann, lead guitarist for the Dragnets, turned in a great performance at Dinwoodie last Saturday night.

Nexus coming

by Dave Cox

Nexus Theatre, Edmonton's newest theatre company, is about to spring to life. The company, which plans to do lunch-hour and late-night (after eleven) theatre, was just recently formed.

Its general manager is David Russell, and along with Ben Henderson and Robert Shannon (MFA students in Directing and Design, respectively) he does the artistic direction. The executive is completed by Linda Pollard (publicist) and Tim Davison.

The first play the new group is presenting is Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* Feb. 1-4 at noon in the Centennial Library Theatre, directed by David Russell.

The second play, directed by Ben Henderson, is Sheldon Rosen's *Frugal Repast* March 22-25, same time and place. And their third planned effort is *Something Unspoken* by Tennessee Williams, presented at the Art Gallery theatre April 26-29 at noon, also directed by Monsieur Russell. Tickets are \$3.00.

The Bald Soprano displays the talents of Tim Davison, Brenda Henderson, Robert Morelli, Colin Murdock, Linda Pollard, and Blair Wensley. It is not a musical, nor does it contain a bald soprano. It is theatre of the absurd, focusing on the absurdity of language. Sounds jolly good, eh wot?

Up & Coming

Thursday, January 27 at 12:30 p.m. Western Canadian author Edna Halford is giving a reading from her book *A Sleep Full of Dreams* in HC-2-42.

That evening at 8:00 p.m. acclaimed French Guitarist Pierre Bensusan is performing at the Provincial Museum Theatre.

And at the Provincial Museum until February 13, what I hear is a very good display of "contemporary art from the prefecture of Hokkaido, Japan" is showing.

ROUNDAOUT



Phil Collins - Hello, I Must Be Going Atlantic 7800351

by Nate LaRoi

The major difference between 1981's *Face Value* and 1982's *Hello, I Must Be Going* is that on the new one Phil Collins had the cover shot taken in profile.

Beyond that, there's little difference between this latest effort and its predecessor. Once again there are lots of cute family pictures inside ("and this is my kid") if you're into that sort of thing. I'm merely thankful he didn't print up the lyrics instead. Getting personal is all right, but Phil's attempts to deal with his divorce are generally either half-witted ('I Cannot Believe It's True') or just plain embarrassing ('Why Can't It Wait Till Morning'). Musically, I'd call this LP typical Phil

Collins, only that would be something of an understatement. The wavy piano and bright horn section of 'It Don't Matter to Me' make it this year's version of 'I Missed Again' while the ominous synthesizer and heavy drumming of 'I Don't Care Anymore' make it this year's version of 'In the Air Tonight'.

'I Don't Care Anymore' becomes almost comical as Collins tries to introduce a little anger in his voice to go with the bitterness of the lyrics. If you want to smash the nice guy image, Phil, you're going to have to try a little harder.

Collins sounds more comfortable when he's being cheerful as on the bouncy Four Tops cover 'You Can't Hurry Love'. He's also getting very good at being very sappy as on 'Don't Let Him Steal Your Heart Away' and 'Why Can't It Wait Till Morning' which should bear tremendous appeal to

fans of Air Supply and Barry Manilow.

I don't deny that Phil's music is, for the most part, pretty likeable. But what this commercial schlock has to do with the art-rock of the original Genesis I really can't say. Only the spacey 'Thru These Walls' even begins to be as adventurous as Peter Gabriel's solo LP's.

I'm also beginning to get the feeling that Collins is running short on material. Trying to maintain simultaneous careers as a member of Genesis and as a solo artist may have been an overcommitment. Along with *Face Value* and *Abacab* this is his third major project in 18 months and, unsurprisingly, it's the weakest of the three.

Perhaps he simply didn't have enough time to make this one really worthwhile. "Hello, I must be going," says Collins. "See you, Phil. Come back when you've got something a little more substantial."

Farley Mowat boring as usual

The Serpent's Coil By Farley Mowat

review by Bruce Pollock

Occasionally even the most boring of authors produces a book or other work that shows a great deal of promise. My initial impression of *The Serpent's Coil* was that this was such a book. Now I am unsure.

It has become somewhat of a meaningless cliché to say that the ultimate test of a good book is the reader's inability to put the book down. On that basis I would have to say that this book would rank among the worst that I have ever read. Put quite simply I found it an extremely disagreeable, almost morbid, task to struggle through this book.

In all honesty I have never been a raving fan of Farley Mowat's. Although the author did, in a few rare instances, manage to gain my attention, he did not manage to retain it for long. To be fair there is very little that can be done with a historical novel in that the author feels bound by the existence of certain real events and characters. Even accepting that these limitations exist there are a number of complaints I have about the novel.

Before I state my complaints however a little background information is in order. *The Serpent's Coil* is a history of deep sea rescue in the western Atlantic. First

published in 1961 it is, above all else, the story of the Merchant ship *Leicester* and her rescue by the deep sea salvage tug *Foundation Josephine*.

My major complaint with this novel and, for that matter, with all of Farley Mowat's corpus is that it is boring. This is most disappointing because history doesn't have to be boring. In my opinion this is where the author fails in producing something other than a mediocre book.

My other concern is that when reading the book I was given over to the feeling that somehow I was being left high and dry. I felt that I could only observe the action and that, try as I might, I was not drawn into the story and therefore I could not truly understand the thoughts of the characters.

This may be due, in part, to the regionalist nature of Mowat's novels. As a native Albertan I find it hard if not impossible to relate to a tale of Eastern Canadian seamen. Without the necessary cultural background the reader probably will not be able to truly appreciate and understand the book.

It would be extremely disrespectful to anyone who, despite my comments, decides to read this book to relate the ending of it. Suffice it to say that while Providence intervenes to save the men of the *Leicester* the reader cannot, with any degree of certainty, look forward to a similar fate.

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