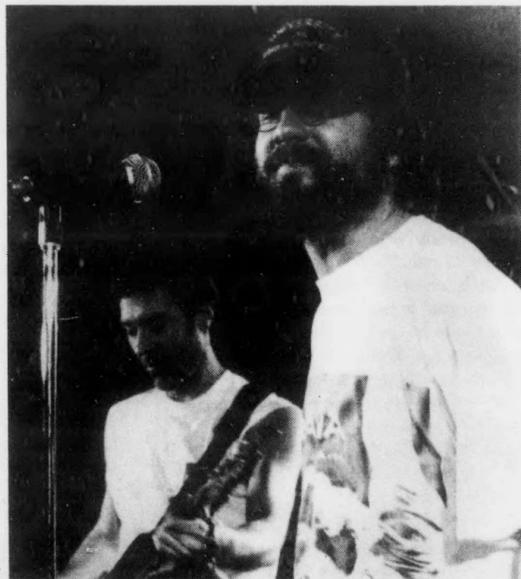


Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad: The Skydiggers and The Mahones At the SUB

by Chad Ball

First of all, a question: What natural law dictates that concerts must always start at least one hour later than scheduled? Just something to think about. On Saturday, January 21, the SUB cafeteria and SMART PACC played host to the first University concert of 1995: the Mahones and the Skydiggers. As I stood in line at the originally scheduled time of 7:30, I happened to notice that a third band, Modabo, was also scheduled to perform. This, however, was not the case. As the crowd grew more and more impatient, the only person to take the stage was Paul MacLeod (who I originally mistook for a roadie). Although it appeared that this may have been a last minute adjustment, Paul gave a very inspired performance of mellow acoustic tunes without any backup. This allowed his very plaintive, REM style vocals to shine. This type of music would probably have had more of an effect at a smaller club or coffee shop, however, Paul MacLeod did appease the audience enough to endure another extended wait for the Mahones.

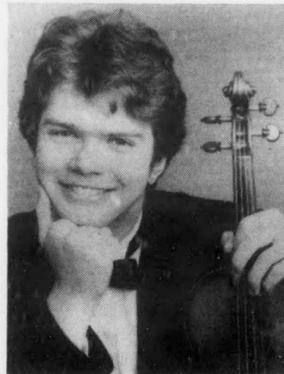


The Mahones were some of the best musicians I've ever seen in Fredericton, mixing the traditional five piece band with a few unorthodox instruments such as a violin and an accordion. Although I was skeptical when they took the stage, my doubts were quickly silenced: this was drinking music at its finest. The Mahones seemed to switch from celtic style pieces, not unlike Spirit of the West, to songs that would have been just as appropriate on "Rita and Friends". The energy put out by the Mahones spread quickly through the crowd of about 300, most of whom were doing the best jig possible in a crowd. This led to a small portion of the audience to attempt a square dance, which eventually just turned into a bunch of people running into each other. By the time The Mahones were finished their set, the atmosphere in the cafeteria was more like a big party than a concert. My only complaint is that they did not return for an encore.

After another lengthy intermission, the Skydiggers appeared. I must admit that after the excitement generated by the Mahones, the Skydiggers music seemed a bit anticlimactic, however, it was well received by their fans, who were particularly enthused by the animated song intros (you had to be there to understand). Overall, The Skydiggers put on an impressive performance, but just didn't stand up to the atmosphere created by their openers.

The Mahones and Skydiggers was one of the more exciting concerts to play the SUB Cafeteria lately. Maybe if this type of thing keeps up, the turnout would be a little bit better than it has been lately, and UNB might not be considered such a risk for performers.

Millennium: Transcending The Ages Of Music



Violinist
Scott St. John
led the piano
quartet

by Neil Duxbury and Cheryl McLean

On Saturday, January 21st, the Millennium piano quartet, led by violinist Scott St. John, came to town to play a concert at Memorial hall.

The varied program started off with Mozart's Piano Quartet in E flat.

ND: "I found this a very pleasant piece, "subtle and gentle" as Anthony Pugh's programme notes say, perhaps a bit too pleasant for my taste."

CM: "I thought it was good opening, passionate and rich, as I tend to like the older classical pieces"

The Mozart was followed by a new piece which had been composed by Heather Schmidt, the well regarded new Calgary composer, especially for this tour. The piece is for the rare combination of trumpet, violin, viola and cello, with Guy Few swapping his piano for a trumpet, and features some interesting role reversals between the instruments.

CM: "I respected the piece for creativity but personally found it dark and ominous."

ND: "I enjoyed this piece, especially the string fanfares and the muted trumpet sound."

After this piece the quartet lost its viola player, Douglas McNabney, and became a trio for the last four pieces before the interval. The first of these was an arrangement for Piano trio of Kresler's Miniature Viennese March. This was followed by three "jazzicals" from Ilan Rechtman, which as the name set are a crossover between jazz and classical.

ND: "The trio seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely playing these four pieces which made for a very good atmosphere to take us to the interval."

CM: "I found them whimsical and craved to be in a smoky jazzical bar drinking bourbon."

After an interval spent viewing ???'s angel based art in the adjoining rooms, we returned to our seats to await Dvorak's Piano Quartet in E Flat. The St. John of the quartet introduced this thoroughly, putting it in place with Dvorak's other work and his reference points.

CM: "After a fifteen minute introduction how could you not like the piece?"

ND: "It was four movements of different moods which lived up to the advance billing. I especially enjoyed Shauna Rolston's cello solos."

After the tumultuous applause following the finish of the regular programme, the quartet returned with a short but beautiful encore before our departure into the night.

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