

Insert witty Sloan headline here

by James Covey

It was sloppy, it was loud, and it was loads of fun. Sloan played their first Halifax headline gig in over a year to an appreciative and decidedly young audience, about 750 strong, on Saturday night at Brunswick Hall.

Concert Review
Sloan, Brunswick Hall
Nov. 5th

The all-ages gig attracted hundreds of teens, who energized a less-than-stellar performance by the hometown heroes. Many people stood on tables and chairs, striving for a better view of the band. Bodysurfing was copious and continuous until guitarist Patrick Pentland laid down the law about the potential hazards of knocking down rows of heavy lights on unsuspecting skulls. The young fans at the front of the stage were singing along with favorites from Sloan's debut LP *Smeared*, especially on a hilarious rendition of "Underwhelmed" that collapsed into disorder when Pentland and bassist Chris Murphy engaged in mock hand-to-hand combat. (Meanwhile, that same night, in faraway Las Vegas, Nevada, George Foreman and Michael Moorer were duking it out for the heavy-weight boxing championship of the world. Coincidence?)

The band played eight songs from their exquisitely crafted new retro-pop album *Twice Removed*, some of which worked well, while others fell flat. Of those songs the highlights were Jay Ferguson's excellent vocals on "Snowsuit Sound," Patrick Pentland's memorable album-closer "I Can Feel It," and "Deeper Than Beauty" for which Pentland and Ferguson took a breather while Murphy and Andrew Scott did a guitar-drum duet. One of the major pleasures of the evening, though, was getting to hear how well the songs from *Smeared* are aging. The arrangements of the songs have evolved over time — "Take It In" sounded especially accomplished, and "500Up" was better than ever. The audience was also treated to a smoothed-out version of "Torn" from the band's debut release, the *Peppermint* EP, as well as a

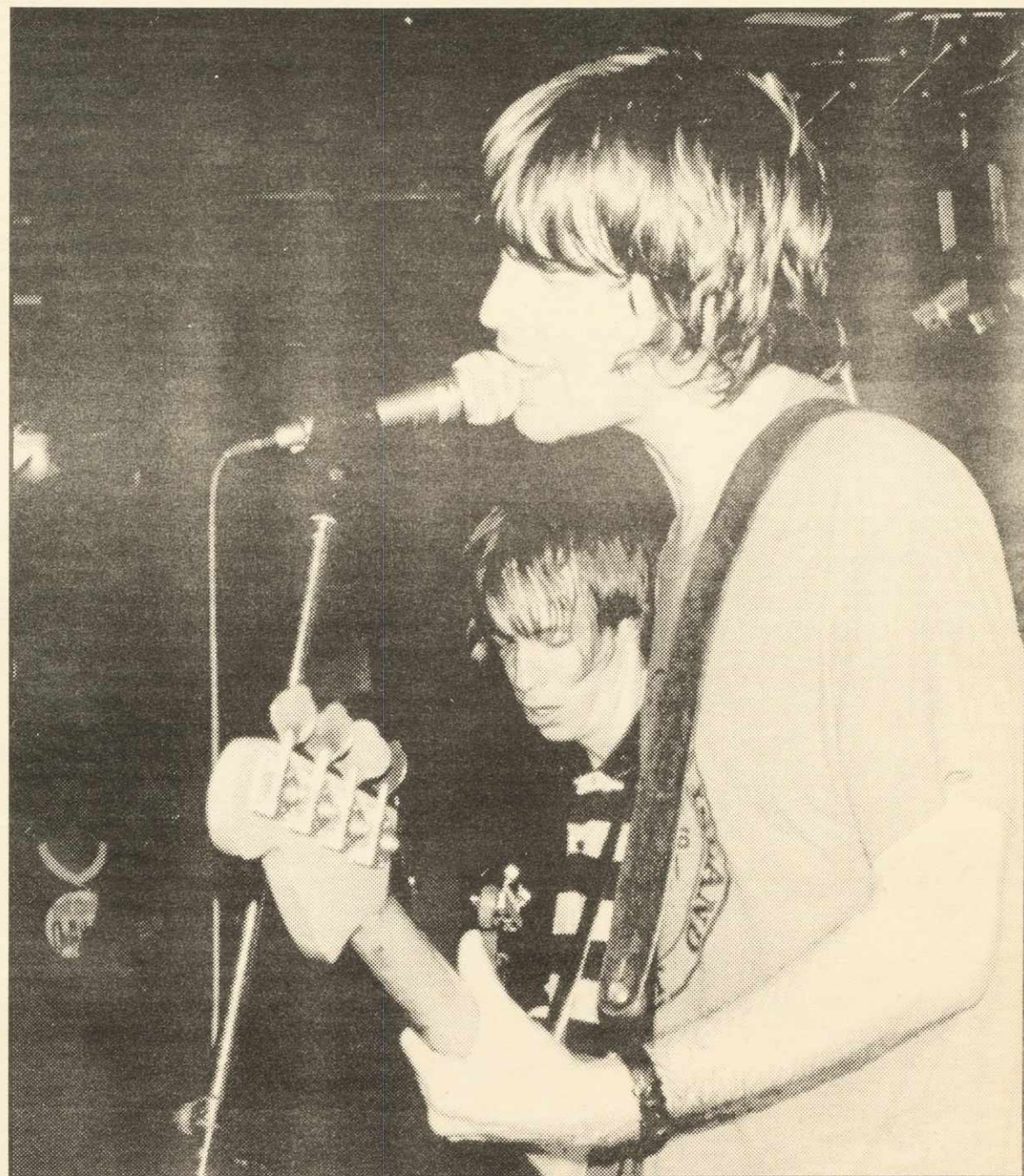
rearrangement of "Laying Blame," the single B-side that has a second life now that Eric's Trip have recorded a version.

The show featured a couple of opening numbers by Halifax's own dope MC Stinkin' Rich (by all accounts excellent, although I unintentionally missed him), as well as opening sets by tighter-than-ever garage rockers The Superfriendz and Truro trailer-park hip-hopsters Hip Club Groove who put on a truly show-stealing performance. Highlights included a superior rendition of "Kick Him in the Face When He's Down" (what does it say about me that I like this song?) and an excellent set-ending rock-rap collaboration featuring The Superfriendz.

Talking to Jay Ferguson a couple of days after the gig, I asked him about Sloan's recent tour. Canada's "a lot more fun," he says, because they've been doing an all-ages tour. In the States they've been playing bars, so the crowds have been smaller. *Twice Removed* is being introduced slowly in the States, it seems. The first single in the US will be "I Hate My Generation," but there will be no video made for it until it generates sufficient interest. Meanwhile, Sloan, thinking that "People of the Sky" would be the first US single (it is about to be released as the second Canadian single, following "Coax Me"), have made a video for "People" on the cheap (\$1000) with some students from USC in California. So, in roundabout fashion, if a video gets made for "Generation," the first US single might end up as the third Canadian single. Follow? I didn't think so. Don't worry about it.

When asked if a liquor license for Brunswick Hall would induce Sloan to play Halifax more often, Jay says, "The only reason that we don't play is that we're away so much, and Andrew lives in Toronto." He mentions that when Andrew is in town, the band likes to do one-offs such as their appearance at the Double Deuce last Christmas and their cameo opening for jale's *Dreamcake* release party.

Sloan have a track record of going well out of their way to support other local bands, especially through their own label, murderecds. When asked if murderecds could be called an "al-



Chris, Jay & Co. put on a sloppy, but "overwhelming" show...get it? "Overwhelmed"...

PHOTO: MIKE GRAHAM

ternative label," Jay says, "I don't think we're that alternative or Thrush Hermit are. I don't see how either Thrush Hermit or Superfriendz are more alternative than each other. We just put out bands that we like. A lot of labels usually bill themselves on a specific sound — like Atlantic; they started off R&B. Or Sub Pop, all Northwestern loud guitar bands at first. We're sort of all over the place."

Jay says that if their label has a

vision, it's simply "promoting bands from down here that would not otherwise have a chance to put out a record. The focus has been putting out bands from around here that we really like." Murder will soon stretch its reach, though, and put out a single by Montreal's Local Rabbits. Sloan may also release a single of their own in the months to come.

Sloan won't hit the road again 'til the new year, at which time there's a

chance they will head for Australia. It seems that a couple of major FM rock stations there are playing *Twice Removed*. Will they hit it big down under? Stay tuned.

Join "sloan" net!

Sloan net is an e-mail "discussion group" dedicated to the Halifax/East Coast music scene. To join or leave, send a note to jrcovey@ac.dal.ca

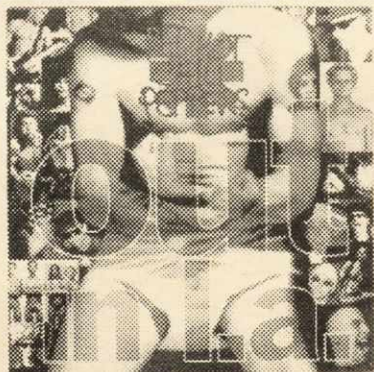
Red Hot Compiled Peppers

The new Red Hot Chili Peppers album should be out by the end of the year...hopefully. In the meantime they have released *Out in L.A.*, their second compilation in a row after *What Hits?!*. *Out in L.A.* consists of remixes, live recordings, demos, and various previously unreleased material.

Red Hot Chili Peppers
Out in L.A.
EMI 8/10

I can't understand why there are lame remixes on this album. They take up about 23 of the album's 55 minute running length. It would have been much more interesting to hear more over-the-top live recordings. As it is there are only three live tracks: "Castles Made of Sand", "Special Secret Song Inside", and "F.U.", which is a hilarious take on a Theloneous Monk tune.

After the live stuff, there are a bunch of great demos from 1982. They capture the energy which was quashed on their first two over-produced albums. The demos of "Get Up and Jump" and "Out in L.A." really smoke.



The highlight of the previously unreleased studio tracks is definitely "What it Is". Flea lays down an interesting bass instrumental and Anthony sings/raps over it. It's great to hear off the floor recordings of the Peppers way back before their first album. Although this compilation supplies this, it is no substitute for a new album — which should be interesting considering that guitarist Dave Navarro, of Jane's Addiction is now in the band.

Michael Graham

Flying Low

Big Ones, is a collection of 15 popular songs from recent Aerosmith albums. If you're at all familiar with and like Aerosmith, you'll not only know every song on this CD, but chances are you'll like them all too. There's no filler

here. Each and every song is one that's been getting a good amount of radio play, and is a well-known little ditty.

Aerosmith
Big Ones
DGC 6/10

The problem is, that of the fifteen tracks on this CD, five of them are from *Get A Grip*, with the remaining ten being no older than four or five years, which means many older, classic Aerosmith tunes won't be found here. A good party disk it may be, but since this is for those who already are Aerosmith fans, chances are they've already got each album these songs are drawn from.

I'd recommend this CD to people who've been thinking about buying a



Noise about Noise

set of Aerosmith disks to bolster their CD collection, rather than the dyed in the water, hard-core Aerophile. There's nothing new to offer them, but nothing really old either.

Steve Tonner

Hair Today...

Shampoo are the personification of contemporary London attitude. The Face (British controversial magazine and style bible) sums them up pretty nicely in a recent article: "Shampoo are two grown-up schoolgirls who've turned their private world of sweeties, ciggies and suburban naughtiness into a hit commodity. Welcome to the world of shameless pop."

Shampoo
We are Shampoo
Food/Polygram
7/10 (10/10 for attitude)

Their debut album, *We are Shampoo*, is unsurprisingly good. That's really something if you take into account the fact that the music is somewhere between pop and the Beastie Boys, the lyrics are (in a word) crap, and the

singing is shouting disguised by near tone-deaf tunelessness.

Smash Hits (British music/TV/film magazine) said of them: "Kylie and Danni (Minogue) eat barbed wire, wear their hair up, learn to swear, join the Sex Pistols and attack people with their handbags."

Their first single, "Trouble", is catchy in an annoying sort of way. But it's good. As is the rest of the album. With songs like "Viva La Megababes" and "Saddo", they shouldn't go too far, but their short stay will be a memorable one. They will, indeed, "Shampoo You."

Eugenia Bayada

