

Have harp will travel

Reed man hot

by Suzanne Lundrigan

Ten a.m. is an ungodly hour for a musician. Rusty Reed of the South Side Shuffle strolls in the diner, orders tea, and looks around. "So," he shrugs, "this is paying the dues."

At 24, Reed, manager/front man of the Shuffle, is a veritable babe in arms on the Edmonton music scene. His relative youth has not hindered him as the Shuffle has graced the stage of the Sidetrack Cafe and Andante's as well as playing regularly at the Commercial Hotel.

Reed knows all about the "dues".

"I want to be a doctor on the harmonica. To get to that point, I'm going to have to rip my lips a lot more," he says.

Reed, whose lips "are already pretty calloused" picked up the harmonica at age twelve. "My brother had one kicking around the house. He bet me that I couldn't get a single riff out of it... I won the bet," he chuckles.

Harmonicas travel light and Reed took to practising everywhere: bathrooms, stairwells, and the oil patch. I was pipelining for a while and during breaks I would pull out the harp and play a few tunes. The welders really liked it... It got to the point that they would request that I be their assistant on jobs just so that they could hear the blues... I guess they liked that better than the sound of the blow torch."

"Blues music is universal... You can be making one hundred thousand dollars a year and still have the blues."

Regulars at the Commercial Hotel, Reed views that venue as homebase. "I bring guys I've just hired over there to try them out. The Shuffle always goes over well. Apparently they sell the most alcohol on the nights that we play."

The Shuffle has had its rough nights. On one occasion they spent the evening dodging strippers and brawling patrons.

There are other hazards involved with being a blues harmonica player. "I threw my neck muscles out once. I'd played a couple

of consecutive gigs and just pushed myself too hard."

Harmonicas don't last forever either, which is expensive. Reed estimates that he spends about one thousand dollars a year on harps. "My favourite is a 64 Chromatic, it should last me about six weeks. Sometimes I drink beer on stage to keep the whistle wet, as a result sugar gets into the reeds and corrodes them. Eventually the harmonica gets out of tune."

Reed made his debut on the Edmonton blues scene at 21. His parents were supportive of the decision. "They knew I'd always wanted to be a musician. I haven't been in the welfare line up yet. The only thing that will slow me down is a tragic death," jokes Reed.

"I just want to play the blues... keep a tradition alive. Most of the father's of music are dead save for B.B. King."

Edmonton has been good to Rusty Reed. "Granted it's been a hard road. When I started, there weren't very many rooms. things have gotten a lot better."

Swamp Thing... rapping from the depths

Swamp Thing
Malcolm McLaren
Charisma/Virgin

review by Blair Lowe

In the seventies, Malcolm McLaren was the major force behind the Jam, the Sex Pistols, and Bow Wow Wow. In the early eighties, he started a career writing his own songs.

Duck Rock was released and Malcolm toured from 1982 to 1984. In 1984 he made the song and video after Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

Swamp Thing is a spin off of McLaren's tour.

The title track begins with Malcolm's



Photo Ron Checora

Bluesman Rusty Reed of the Southside Shuffle.

explanation of the name *Swamp Thing* which is a name that a mother started to call her son because of his long hair. Pretty soon everyone was singing "Swamp Thing."

The song then proceeds to a long boring medley of something that more than resembles Jimi Hendrix' "Wild Thing" with 'wild' replaced by 'swamp'.

"Duck Rock Cheer" teaches us how to spell duck rock; here the group sounds like Menu.

"Buffalo Love" resembles Chaka Khan without the scratchin'.

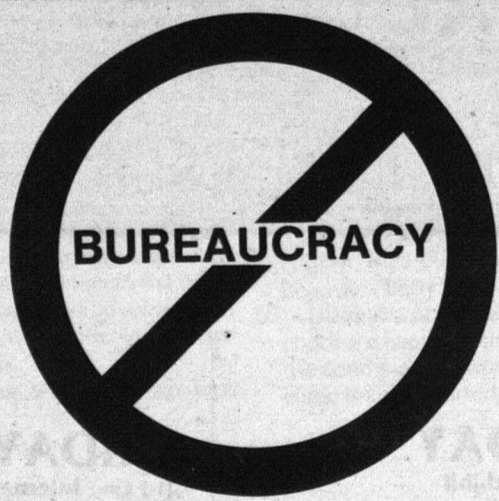
The drum beat at the beginning of "Supresto" sounds exactly like the beat in "Relax" by Frankie Goes to Hollywood. The rest of this song matches the artful synthesizer playing of the Art of Noise.

"Eiffel Tower" is a dedication to the French monument used to get American currency from American tourists. The singer calls the tower 'sexy'; I'm not sure how he came to that conclusion.

Malcolm should change the name of his band to Grand Mistress Flash and the Furious McLaren because "Boom Boom Baby" is unbelievably rap. Break dancers will love this song.

The album raps up with "Duck Rockers/-Promises" which seems like a continuation of the previous song with Malcolm mumbling cheap promises of sex in the middle.

If you are a fan of rap music you'll love this album. If your radio broke in the early 1980's, this album is a must as it includes almost everyone's musical style from that era.



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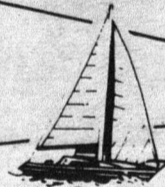
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