

Celtic covers and Michael Jackson

What's under the Kilt?

BY JEREMIAH HIERS

Last Friday at the Grawood, Kilt, an atlantic celtic-rock band, jiggled, reeled, punked out, and generally entertained Dalhousie students yet again.

If you haven't heard of these guys, there is a good chance you haven't yet realized that university is not all about studying. They have made multiple Halifax appearances in the past few months, and as far as being provincially diverse, they've got all of their bases covered. Kilt hails from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, PEI and Cape Breton (yeah, yeah, I know Cape Breton is part of Nova Scotia...supposedly).

Inside the bar, I waited an hour to see the band. I decided I needed a drink if I was going to wait any longer. At the bar, a kilted bartender raised his eyebrow and oddly accused me of being a Caper based on my choice of beverage — coffee.

The band finally took to the stage. In about three minutes they left again due to problems with the sound system — loud popping and hissing noises to be exact.

During the wait, I procured a refill of my drink and was looked upon rather suspiciously by a neighbouring customer who exclaimed, "Coffee? What

the hell?"

I was beginning to feel a bit self-conscious about my drinking habits.

About ten minutes later, Kilt began to play their first set. As usual, the set consisted of some traditional Celtic tunes interlaced with covers of well known Canadian-grown bands such as Great Big Sea and Spirit of the West.

Between songs the audience got an earful of the lead singer's rather obnoxious "wit". I've seen these guys before, and I have one suggestion for them: either gag your lead singer between songs or make him get some new jokes. "The more you drink, the better we sound..." wore thin after awhile.

The show wasn't all bad. As a matter of fact, in spite of the lead singer and the attendance of the *Dalhousie Coffee Hatred Team*, the evening was rather enjoyable. For those whose tastes lean towards the more contemporary (if the 1980s can still be called 'contemporary'), there were covers of "Come on Eileen", "I Was Made for Loving You, Baby" and other 'classics' best forgotten.

One of the biggest highlights was watching the Grawood crowd, now pleasantly drunk, erupt into moonwalking and falsetto voices as Kilt launched into "Billie Jean". This was entertaining in two aspects.

First, drunk people dancing always amuse me. Secondly, I enjoyed hearing a fiddle, mandolin, bass, rhythm guitar and traditional percussion playing Michael Jackson's brand of '80s synth-pop which a large, goateed, black-leather-jacketed man did an acceptable impersonation of Jackson's, shall we say, distinctive voice.

Kilt finished up, or so they thought, with a traditional medley of songs. But it wasn't that easy for the band to leave the stage. Immediately upon completion of the last song in the medley, the crowd began the inebriated chant of "Kilt! Kilt! Kilt!"

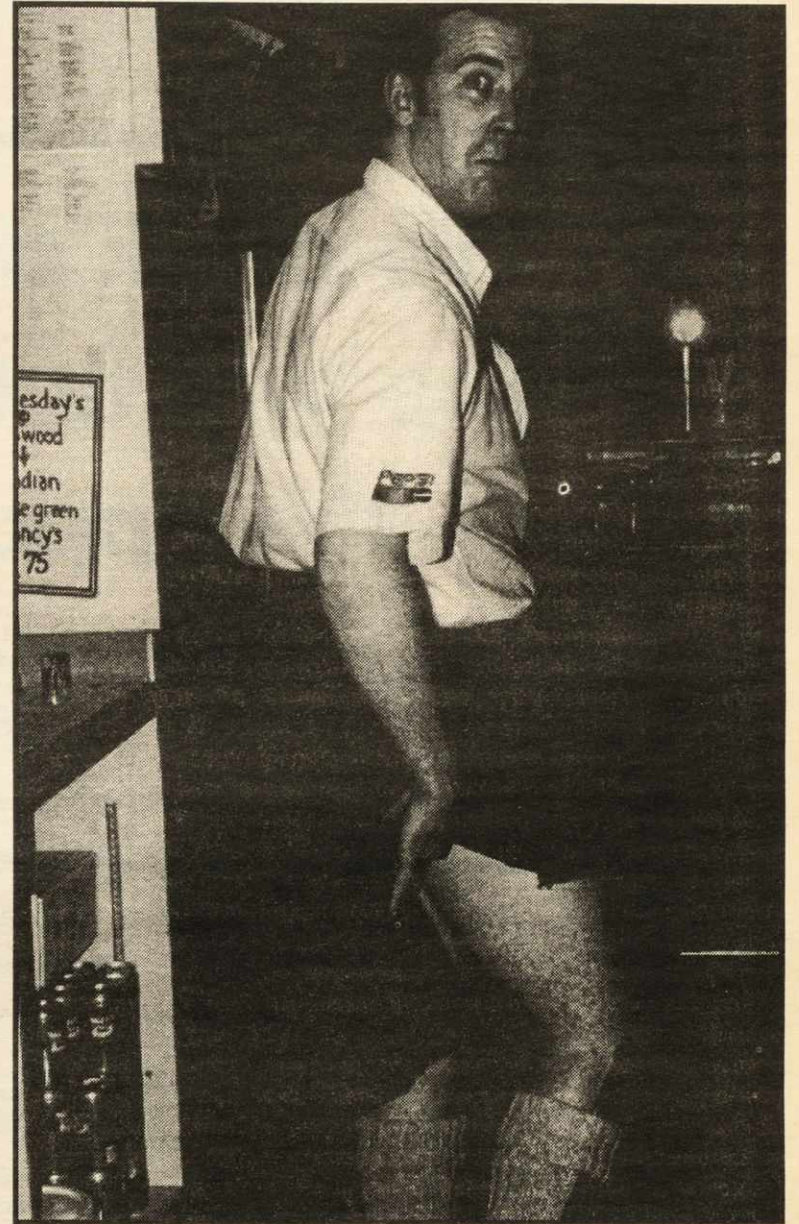
Not to be outdone by the crowd, the band leapt (well, sauntered) back on stage for an odd (remember there's a mandolin and a fiddle here) version of the Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated". This made my evening, loving the Ramones as I do.

So the morals of the story are:

If you have a chance to see Kilt, do so.

If you have a good band, don't make stupid jokes.

Not all people who drink coffee in bars are Capers. I, myself, am a Yank.



Bartender Ian MacLachlan shows off the Scottish in him in the Grawood during Kilt's show on Friday, March 6. (Photo by Tamara Bond)

Playwright's Cabaret supplies practical experience

BY GREG MCFARLANE

Trevor Pierce plans on opening his own theatre company in Yarmouth over the summer, and he believes the Dalhousie Theatre Department's *Playwright's Cabaret* is giving him the experience and ideas he needs to do just that.

The fourth year Theatre and English major is a student in Dr. David Overton's playwriting class, as are all of the writers being featured in the cabaret. Pierce's creation, *To Thine Own Self*, is to be performed this weekend.

Pierce, like all playwrights, had to hand his play over to a director who has the power to adapt it in any way he sees fit. Sometimes Pierce has not been totally satisfied with the results.

"It's a little annoying," Pierce said with a smile. "I'm helpless. You want to change things, but it's

out of your hands. But I love my director. He's really great to work with."

Yet it is that kind of experience that Pierce is looking for. As someone planning to make a career out of theatre, he knows that he has to be prepared to accept another artist's interpretation of his work.

"You write the play, give it to the director and he does whatever he wants to do with it," Pierce says of writing. "You can't do anything. Shakespeare would be rolling over in his grave if he saw some of the shows being done [with his original plays]. For example, [the Dal Theatre Department] is cross-casting *The Merchant of Venice*...guys are playing girls, girls are playing guys."

Also, although the series is called *Playwright's Cabaret*, it benefits many students who haven't had the chance to play larger roles in major

department productions as well.

Stuart Greer, who is in the technical program in the Theatre Department, has worked minor jobs on the technical crew for major productions. Now, he is the stage manager for the *Playwright's Cabaret*. He feels that the series will give him and others enrolled in the theatre program practical experience.

"It's student acted, student directed, and the technical aspects are all run by students," Greer said. "I get the experience of calling a show, [and] it gives the playwrights and the directors the chance of putting on a fairly professional production in that they have a thrust stage and they have a large quantity of well-hung lights."

"A lot of the actors are in second year acting class. It is only in third year and fourth year that [students] actually perform in departmental

productions. [For the time being], it gives them a chance to practice their craft."

Pierce agrees.

"The focus is on the playwrights, but it does spread out," he said. "We have twenty-one plays, so we need twenty-one directors, eighty to one

hundred actors and technical people for every show. It is a big group effort."

The Playwrights Cabaret takes place in Studio One in the basement of the Dalhousie Arts Centre from Mar. 12-14 and Mar. 19-21.

Bowling, beer, pot

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The story is about Jeff Lebowsky, the laziest man in L.A. County; a man who does nothing else but bowl. His name is the only thing he has in common with a local millionaire whose much younger trophy wife has been running up his bills.

The voice-over at the beginning of the movie promises an extra-ordinary tale but all we are left with at the end is a stupid story of a botched kidnapping with a little twist at the end. Sure, the previews looked good, and with Coen

veterans John Goodman, Steve Buscemi and John Turturro taking part, one would at least expect some great acting. But the problem here is the actors are scripted such flat characters that no amount of great acting could save this movie.

The Coen brothers are famous for having surreal dream sequences in their movies. These might seem superfluous and distracting to some, but I have always thought that they add to the overall feel of their movies. But the dream sequences in this movie seem

totally out of context and are only excuses to spend large amounts of money on lavish sets and fancy camera work. I can excuse a director for having a bit too much fun with his camera, but only if the product is well worth watching. If there is any underlying message in this movie, and I'm not sure there is, its lost under layers of allegory. Sometimes, hiding meaning behind too many symbols turns the act of watching a movie into something as mundane as solving a crossword puzzle.