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to churn out hard rock that sounded like every other Canadian hard rock band that preceded them; from *Haywire* to *Platinum Blonde* to *Glass Tiger*, they copied it all. Top 40 drivel with no redeeming qualities. But who knows what the judges would think? It was formula music, and they might go for it.

Sweet Temptation then took the stage. They struck me as a very professional country band, and they played a full hour of both country standards and recent hits before beginning their fifteen minute original set. These guys were a professional cover band. They covered other people's music skillfully and energetically; plenty of stage presence. Their original tunes, however, were weak, especially when set up alongside the country classics they played. The audience lapped it up. They were the local boys and the folks were out in full force to see them. The place was packed, and it began to make sense to have them play last. (Keep the folks there to fill the tills with beer money, by god!) As their set drew to a close, Stacey Crawford approached me to reassure me that audience response counted for nothing.

Nevertheless, a very enjoyable set overall. They were a nice bunch of guys; very affable and pleasant to talk to. And when we were both declared winners we congratulated each other and wished ourselves luck. It was to be country music against reggae riddims in the final of a rock-oriented contest. I loved it!

The Third Night

More revealing information: in a phone call from Stacey Crawford, I learned that the regional final would now be held in Newfoundland, and would feature three bands. The winner of our provincial final on November 12 would win \$750 toward

travel expenses, a Casio keyboard, a Casio digital horn, and various other musical goodies such as drum sticks, drum heads, guitar strings, and so on. \$750, of course, would not be nearly enough to get us to Newfoundland and back (I was counting on winning). It had cost us approximately \$200 for each trip to Moncton. The upcoming trip on November 12, in fact, was only possible because of the generosity of College Hill Social club manager Matt Harris.

When we arrived, I sought out Stacey Crawford in the bar to tell him that I thought it would be fair to use a coin toss or some other impartial method to determine who would perform last that evening (playing last is generally considered an advantage.) He told me that we would be playing first because the sound technicians had informed him it took longer to set up our stage gear than it did *Sweet Temptation's* gear. I countered that I didn't think we should be penalized for the type of equipment we used; he made sympathetic noises but insisted that it wasn't his decision; it was the sound technicians' word that decided the issue. I pressed no further. (We were to learn later from the sound technicians that no such conversation between Stacey Crawford and themselves ever occurred. These are the dynamics of the situation: the winning band was to play again after the decision was announced: if the band that performed last were to win, no time would be wasted setting up their stage gear.) I also complained to Stacey about the treatment the bands were receiving from the bar staff. Considering that *Fat Tuesdays* was getting free entertainment for nine weeks from the bands, the least they could do was to give us free soda. Instead they gave each member of each band six beer tickets, of which it took two, and forty cents to get one beer, two to get a large draft, one for a small (mini) draft, and one plus twenty cents for a soda pop. All to no avail.

We took the stage with a revamped set. Much of the music we hadn't performed on the other two occasions was performed this night. Our best set yet. We played like a band possessed. Kwame was wild on stage, and the music was performed without flaw. The songs ran into each other, and when the last number faded away, the audience cheered wildly. This was a good sign considering the bar was again packed with friends, family, and fans of local boys *Sweet Temptation*.

When they took the stage, however, the place erupted. They played the same set they had played the week before, with the exception of one new original song: the same exciting, professional band that we saw the week before. A cover band, nevertheless, and this competition was about finding Canada's best new original band. We had to win dammit! We were Newfoundland bound.

When they came off the stage we gathered to congratulate them on a well played set. I spoke to the drummer and bass player, and the latter told me he was impressed that we played all original music, and that he felt it gave us an edge. He went on to say that they were a cover band, and had written their originals specifically for this competition.

We milled about, announcing to each other how nervous we were. I was at this point very confident we would win. *Sweet Temptation* had shown the judges nothing different from their previous performance. Butch, the drummer, told me that Stacey Crawford had invited them back to play the following Monday (a paying gig) earlier in the evening. I found this odd since the winner hadn't been announced, and waiting to invite the winner back seemed to me to be the logical course. In fact, when they were invited back, the bands hadn't even performed yet. Ah well, I was anticipating the judges' decision.

Stacey took the stage. He began by thanking all who were involved in

the competition; this seemed to go on for an hour. He then announced the prizes, which included recording time at CMS studios (this we hadn't known). And then he declared *Sweet Temptation* the winners.

I was frozen in shock. It took great effort to muster up smiles and handshakes of congratulations to the other band. And when they took the stage for their acceptance hooting, I stood dumbly beside the stage, unable to move, hearing the wild screams of approval from the audience. Then suddenly Kwame stood before me saying it was a set-up, and to go bring the van around so we could load our equipment and get the hell out of there.

I fought my way through the crowd. I caught snatches of sympathetic mumbling from the crowd. The closer I got to the door, the more adamant and upset people seemed about the outcome. Outside, it was extremely cold. The wind blew through my jacket and stung my face. I was still numb with shock. I could not fathom how all our effort in rehearsals, all the thought that went into constructing our sets, the band bank account we had emptied, and the two years of writing music, had just seemed to evaporate. I brought the van around, and Kwame was outside engaged in a very heated conversation with Stacey Crawford. I was too upset to get involved, but as I loaded the van I could hear what was being said. Kwame was attempting to get the results of the scoring which Stacey would not give up. All he would say is that we had won every category but "commercial appeal." We had lost by 24 points out of 300. He also said that audience participation counted for 5 points. I stopped what I was doing, and dumbstruck, approached them. He had made a point of telling me, the week before, that it counted for nothing.

Kwame could not fathom how a cover band could have won the contest. He apparently had approached the judges after the decision had been

announced to determine their criteria. They wouldn't want to tell him any more than Stacey was to tell him later. They did say that we were an extremely tight band that obviously believed in what we were doing, but that *Sweet Temptation* had more commercial appeal. Patronizing stuff. We finished loading the van and left. As we pulled away we could hear *Sweet Temptation* performing the same songs they had performed earlier in the evening.

The End

I guess the judges chickened out and went with the crowd. That's how I console myself. I don't even want to think about a predetermined outcome; it makes me too angry. Of course, I know that some will label me "sour grapes," but many in the audience that night, especially the crowd from the Universite de Moncton, came out to speak to us while we were loading the van, expressing their sentiments of frustration and disbelief at the outcome. Many of them said they would be writing letters to the editors of the Moncton papers. One chap who was in town from Chicago and happened to catch the show was furious. He gave Stacey Crawford an earful of his verbal venom; as a completely impartial onlooker, he claimed, the only conclusion he could arrive at was that the whole competition was bogus.

This type of support was somewhat consoling. But we learned our lesson; beware of commercial competitions that are run by breweries. What the hell do suds producers know about la music? And what did we expect from people who can't even

spell?



Festival in the (son!!!)

otia. Bummer. t that night. We set. Some of us owed; the songs d the excitement and on stage I consoled my- solid and spoke tion that things from onstage that ce. Kwame had es a promotional of description of y would get the rical content. w. Yuk. They e set of covers t and Shout" to e Wall". Really they then began es of original usaw all the band blonde keyboard ge. He proceeded companying him- upon synth layer. and then returned

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IT'S A GSA
DOUBLE FEATURE!!
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28th

6:00 - 7:30 PM ROOM 146,
LORING-BAILEY HALL

&
COLLEGE HILL SOCIAL CLUB



Graduate Student Association
University of New Brunswick

Club Cosmopolitan

Presents

The
Toga Party
Of The Year!



Saturday, November 24th

EXTRAS:

Prizes For Best Costume
NO Cover Charge before 10:00 p.m.

Downtown on King