

Caution Band Playing

By Mark I. Minor

After a long, hard week, the last thing I wanted to do was head for a tavern to check out another local band on Friday evening...but I promised and so, true to my word, I ambled down to the Dock to catch Caution. A couple of weeks ago, their manager humbly approached Al. S. Tare and I and invited Entertainment to attend. We informed him that we rarely review off campus but he seemed to be so enthusiastic, we agreed.

I was graciously welcomed by Caution's manager upon my arrival and after looking for familiar faces, I was summoned to a table by my friend Michelle. I happily found more friends to chat with. They left before the band started but Michelle stayed and before the first set and we had a wonderful chat about The Grateful Dead and my favourite, The Allman Brothers Band. The evening was taking shape...not such a drag after all. On with the show.

I found out that

Caution had been rehearsing for close to a year and that this was more or less their "coming out" gig. They are actively looking for club work so every manager in town was invited.

Caution was not really polished, which I may attribute to the nervousness of a first show, but they were definitely not just another trashy group of dirtballs who want to be rock stars. One could easily tell that they have been working diligently to put together a quality product. The music they played spanned four decades ranging from Chuck Berry's Johnny B. Goode to a catchy original called Wrong Way Down A One Way Street. The band's manager mentioned that they had about seven original tunes down and that a few more were in the works. It would seem that playing cover material is only a temporary phenomenon with Caution.

The first set also included old standbys such as B.T.O's 'Takin' Care of Business, Seger's Old Time Rock 'n' Roll and Bad Company's Feel Like Makin' Love. The weakness was Knockin' on Heaven's Door

which the band attempted in Gun's 'n' Roses style...a bad butchering of a wonderful tune.

During the first break, Caution asked me to classify them in terms of genre.

I asserted that with the pot-pourri of songs they were playing that general rock 'n' roll would suffice and added that they definitely attached a metal edge to each tune. Here we have a young band (old-est

member is 27, youngest is 18) who have taken their influences from 60's and early 70's stuff but are in tune with today's heavier recording artists.

Now, lets get to the nitty-gritty of musicianship. I was totally impressed by two of the four musicians in Caution. Jody Vincent, on drums, was clean, clear and precise. He managed to pull off short solos during each tune, often just before the final riff.

The fact that Vincent has only one arm and uses a prosthesis doesn't seem to make a difference. He has been playing since he was five years old and is a better drummer than most in this city.

Brian Thomas plays lead guitar in a manner reminiscent of the late sixties. He uses wah and fuzz with a style that I haven't heard for a long time. Thomas is innovative and is willing to take risks. His lead breaks are refreshing and capture the audience's attention...an interesting young player to say the least.

The front man, vocalist and rhythm guitarist Steve Smith is the oldest band member. He jams well with Thomas but is clearly not as versatile. His vocals lack power and endurance. Many hours of practice without accompaniment may allow for much needed improvement.

The bass lines, laid down by Mike Hatheway are simply consistent. Mike's youth may have something to do with this fact. He is the youngest band member and more experience could very well allow him to develop some originality. He gets a B+ for effort.

All in all, seeing Caution was not a waste of time. Their harmonies need work and they should concentrate on original songs if they want to progress. I suggested that they need to rent a more adequate sound system to handle the volume and tone they wish to deliver. They could have employed a better sound tech. I wondered if the guy at the console had any idea what he was doing. The band must realize that the person at the helm can make or break them in a heartbeat.

Finally, I must applaud Jennifer and The Dock for taking a chance and allowing new local talent to enter the bar scene. If the band really swallowed, the clientele would have disappeared, business would have been lost and the tavern's reputation may have suffered as a result, with caution this wasn't the case. I hope The Dock continues to recognize up and coming bands. Such a venue is badly needed in Fredericton.



Photo by Kevin G. Porter