

**CURRENT ROCK ALBUMS GETTING AIRPLAY  
ON CKDU RADIO  
27 January 1983**

ARTIST	TITLE	DISTRIBUTOR
Strange Advance	Worlds Away	Capitol
Depeche Mode	A Broken Frame	WEA
Bruce Springsteen	Live at Bedrock	Quality
The Nitecaps	Go to the Line	WEA
Talk Talk	The Party's Over	Capitol
Golden Earring	Cut	Polygram
Steven Warley	Steven Warley	Quality
Chas Sandford	Parallax View	WEA
Dexy's Midnight Runners	Too-rye-ay	Polygram
Icehouse	Primitive Man	Capitol

compiled by *psychedelic eric*, music director, ckdu.

# Rita MacNeil has vocal passion and power

by Michael Brennan

I'm sure **Rita MacNeil's** had a hard time as a singer-songwriter born out of the sixties and surviving the 70s and 80s. Despite the recent pop music trends and the insulting commerciality of the music industry today she's done it and her music's suffered nothing from it.

MacNeil is basically a country folk singer who's got guts to express herself honestly - faults and all - and have a good laugh too. That rugged integrity is what I felt most strongly from her performance at Ginger's last Thursday (she played four nights straight). She's an artist who struggles in her songs to reveal a part of herself as truly as she can. Her music is very personal and rough yet simple and compassionate. To describe her spirit it suffices to say that she's got some of the heart of Hank Williams. Because her power is more subtle it is best to see her in the small club atmosphere of a place like Ginger's where you can see her up close and hear her clearly.

The first thing I noticed was what an unlikely looking singer she is. She's large and short with a real fat baby-face; if it wasn't for her big, booming voice and tense expressions she wouldn't stand out visually. That voice, however, is powerful and certainly as piercing as that of the better country singers (she reminds me of Dolly Parton for one), and no one forgets her.

The band is perfect for that voice. They're responsive, subtle and very adept musicians, moving very well with MacNeil's singing. The sound is basically light country-rock but they blend a good assortment of influences into it; from jazz to traditional Scottish music. The music arranger is pianist Ralph Dillon, formerly of Buddy and The Boys. He's a very fine supportive pianist and guitarist as well (though he doesn't touch a guitar in this band). David MacIsaac plays guitar and he's an equally good musician; a true accompanist for sure. Scott MacMillan is on bass and another one of the "Boys", and Ron - Doug Park, filled in on drums for the Ginger's shows. He's a heavy drummer and added a rocker rhythm to the music - which I liked. Without the drums the sound would have been too folksy for me.

The two sets of material I saw Rita do had a few wonderful numbers. Although words escaped me some lines really struck. She sings from the gut and her voice matches that passion of expression. The maturity of her songs matches and sometimes surpasses that of the many well known singers inspired from the passion of Janis Joplin and the fire of Bob Dylan. Her material is directly about her life without ever becoming dourly self-indulgent.

The drug songs were most rec-

ognizable. "Drinking at the Peridot" (the Peridot is a Sydney bar) is a really great beer song: sad and lively, all in one. "90% Stoned, 10% Blue" is another gem I remember well from that night.

The one I really loved, however, was a newer Leon Dubinsky (of Buddy & The Boys fame) love song called "Love Comes First". I was very much struck by the beauty and power of this number. It's a passionate, simple love song and Rita did it justice.

I had enough after the second set, partly because the crowd was getting too big and too much like another party bar and also because beyond Rita's passion, the music just wasn't stimulating, exciting or unique enough to trigger much in me.

The musical direction feels like it can go nowhere today. It's just not as vital or lively as I imagine the music could be.

I wonder how Rita and her band would go over in New York where the audience had come to listen. Maybe most listeners would be tired of these dated folk songs about drinking and losing. Maybe they're just too regional to make a mark outside Canada's limited folk scene. I do hope though that Rita MacNeil makes as much money and gets as much recognition as she can because she deserves it. Any sensitive artist does who works as hard with what they've got.

## Neptune's Next

George F. Walker's exciting new thriller *Filthy Rich* opens as Neptune's fourth mainstage play February 4, 1983. *Filthy Rich* received its premiere in January, 1979, when the Toronto Free Theatre produced it as a sequel to the 1977 comedy-thriller *Gossip*, returning *Gossip's* central character, Tyrone M. Power, to the stage.

Tyrone M. Power, so named because his mother was a romantic, is indeed the last of the great cynics. Power gets caught up in a mystery, much against his will, when a mayoralty candidate disappears in the middle of an election. He finds himself up to his neck in trouble, intrigue and big city politics.

George F. Walker is one of Canada's top-ranking playwrights to emerge from the Seventies with a growing international reputation for works such as *Zatrozzi*, *Theatre of the Film Noir*, *Beyond Mazambique* and *Bagdad Saloon*. Each of

his characters emerge from the plot as if the great Raymond Chandler had created them himself.

Peter Froehlich directs the production, with set, costume and lighting designs by Roy Robitschek. Both director and designer worked together producing last season's *Endgame*.

Donald David stars as the central character, Tyrone M. Power. Susan Hogan and Kate Lunch are cast as the wealthy, beautiful and seductive Scott sisters. George Merner plays the part of the gangster Henry "the pig" Duvall, while Victor Ertmanis joins the cast as the slightly bent cop, Police Detective Stockhouse. Tony Nardi appears as Jamie MacLean, the cheeky messenger boy.

Neptune wishes to thank the *Friends of Neptune* for their sponsorship of the play. Tickets for *Filthy Rich* are available commencing January 21.

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