

COFFEE SPOONS

by David Schleich

In the Peace River country, I saw a dilapidated log cabin near the edge of one of those enormous fields of grain. The building interrupted a continuity of golden, flowing wheat. Around the cabin green bushes and grasses. And on the roof of that log and sod place little wind tossed seeds had taken root and fooled by the soft shingles, had sprung lifeward, higher than the grain, closer to the sun.

I went to the building through the grain. Machined rows of plants, that grain. Close up they no longer seem en masse a flowing top to the field. Row to row the wheat thrives and twenty lines turn at once where machines turned. But near the cabin other plants are strewn where wind chanced to leave them. Each grassy stem came to grow by accident in its place. But, taken whole, the plants around that homesteader's ancient home were orderly. Efficient in their business of being green and of taking that building of logs and earth down, down, to the ground. To become a mound in a field, but still an obstacle to the machines.

The door to the cabin was gone. A blank black framed by grey-black, bleached, dry wood. Inside, dark, cool silence. The sense of thick, heavy air. Wet wood, wet earth, wet decay. I saw a thick armed woman, suddenly, near the fireplace stoking coals. And then I heard a baby crying in some dark corner. I smelled rabbit stew ready near the fire. And then, behind me, a towering, browned man with beard. He stepped in, through me. His eyes were glassy near the fire. He spoke little. And as he ate, his arms moved the food from plate to mouth almost greedily. His arms were browned to his turned up sleeve. Near one wall I saw a half completed chair, a new piece of furniture for a future home. And, beside the chair many little wood-working tools. The activities of the evening when the dark and quiet of that peaceful land impinge, heavily, slowly, and in private dreams these parents begin to dance through tamed fields, easier fields, of rich golden grain, trusting, with those plants, the sun, the rain and God to make them strong and wealthy.

Outside, suddenly, the doppler roar of a threshing machine. As suddenly, the people of the cabin disappeared. Where a fire had danced, now broken stones and mouldy wood. Where a man's wood-working tools had been, useful and used, old machinery, rusted, discarded, stored by later men. Outside, the machine came closer, closer. Inside, the sound put me into the blades of that American machine. I left the cool building. In the sun I saw the red, moving monster turning slowly away from the old cabin. The driver hadn't seen me.

He was very young and tanned deep brown. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows. The red machine followed the rows. In the instant before they fell those million plants swayed in the wind, unaware, it seemed, of the sound, the whirling blades. And they fell gracefully, without protest, aware, it seems, of how futile it would be to rage against the beast.

Beautiful Day coming

Well, It's a Beautiful Day is coming to town.

But then you already know that so what can I say?

Maybe you'd like to know something about the group. (the information contained on the jacket of their first album was at best sparse.) Fine.

The band was formed in 1967 in San Francisco. . . ah, San Francisco, 1967. . . those were the days. Do you remember when you could still believe in love and peace and maybe McCarthy had a chance after all and Woodstock was coming and then *If You're Going to San Francisco* came out and what a summer that was.

And that's probably why you'll like *It's a Beautiful Day*. They, perhaps alone among the major groups have managed to retain, if not the style of that glorious summer of '67 but the feeling of it's happy days and golden nights. It is this "Feeling of '67" that suffuses much of their music.

But don't get me wrong. That's not the only reason why you might want to go and see them. They're tight and their style consists of an almost-unique blend of such diverse musical influences as rock, jazz, blues and the scholastic, a claim that many groups make but that only a few, *It's a Beautiful Day* possibly included, can support. And it's not too pretentious.

Oh yes, you wanted to know about the group. Please pardon the digression.

Well anyway, they were formed in 1967 and were brought together principally by David Laflamme, a classically trained musician who had had some experience in jazz prior to his formation of *It's a Beautiful Day*.

Mr. Laflamme plays electric violin, sings and writes much of the material that the group performs.

Other vocals are done by Patty Santos, surely one of the most comely ladies in rock today.

Keyboards in the original group and on their first album were done by Linda Laflamme, David's wife. She has since left the group and the keyboarding is done now by Fred Webb, a former jazz pianist.

Drummer Val Fluentes got his training in Chicago while bassist Mike Holman and guitarist Hal Wagonett both grew out of the San Francisco scene.

The group's first album, *It's a Beautiful Day*, did much better than anybody really expected so they released an abridged version of *White Bird* which had limited success on AM stations.

Since the release of the album, *It's a Beautiful Day* has grown

steadily in popularity both in North America and Europe and are now ready to release another album and another single.

The album *Marrying Maiden*, was released in Canada somewhere around November 1st and it looks like another victory. The same goes for the single, *Soapstone Mountain*.

And that's about all I can tell you.

So if you, too, have fond memories of what it was like when it was still young and good, maybe *It's a Beautiful Day* is a show you would enjoy.

Appearing with *It's a Beautiful Day* is the James Cotton Blues Band a solid, dependable New York Blues/Jazz group.

The concert is set for 7:30 p.m., Sunday November 14 in the Jubilee Auditorium. Tickets are \$3.50, \$4.50 and \$5.00 and are available at Mike's.

Art Gallery stuff

There's a bunch of new stuff coming up at the Edmonton Art Gallery that you folks might like to know about.

The biggest of the coming attractions (at least as evidenced by the size of the press release) is an exhibition of a selection of works by that famous frontier artist Paul Kane, which will be at the gallery from November 10 until December 12.

Native Canadians will also be getting their two cents worth in at the gallery this month.

The first, from November 10 to January 30 is a collection of Indian art and artifacts indigenous to the plains Indians. It includes clothing, utensils,

weapons, tools and decorative designs. Many are similar to the objects that Paul Kane drew on his journeys.

The second is a display of Eskimo sculpture in soapstone and whalebone that will be at the gallery from November 10 until December 5.

These carvings come from the people of Povungnituk, Great whale river, Sagluk and Coppermine.

From November 10 to 15, art gallery members will have the opportunity to purchase these sculptures. From the 15th to December 5, the sculptures will be open to purchase by the general public.

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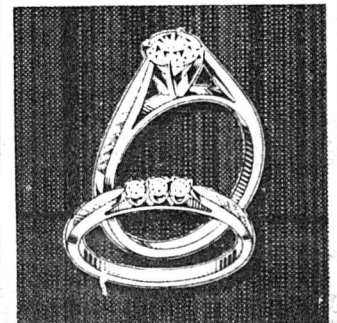
"The James Cotton Blues Band"

Jubilee Auditorium — reserved seating

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tickets—Mike's News—\$3.50—\$4.50—\$5.00

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