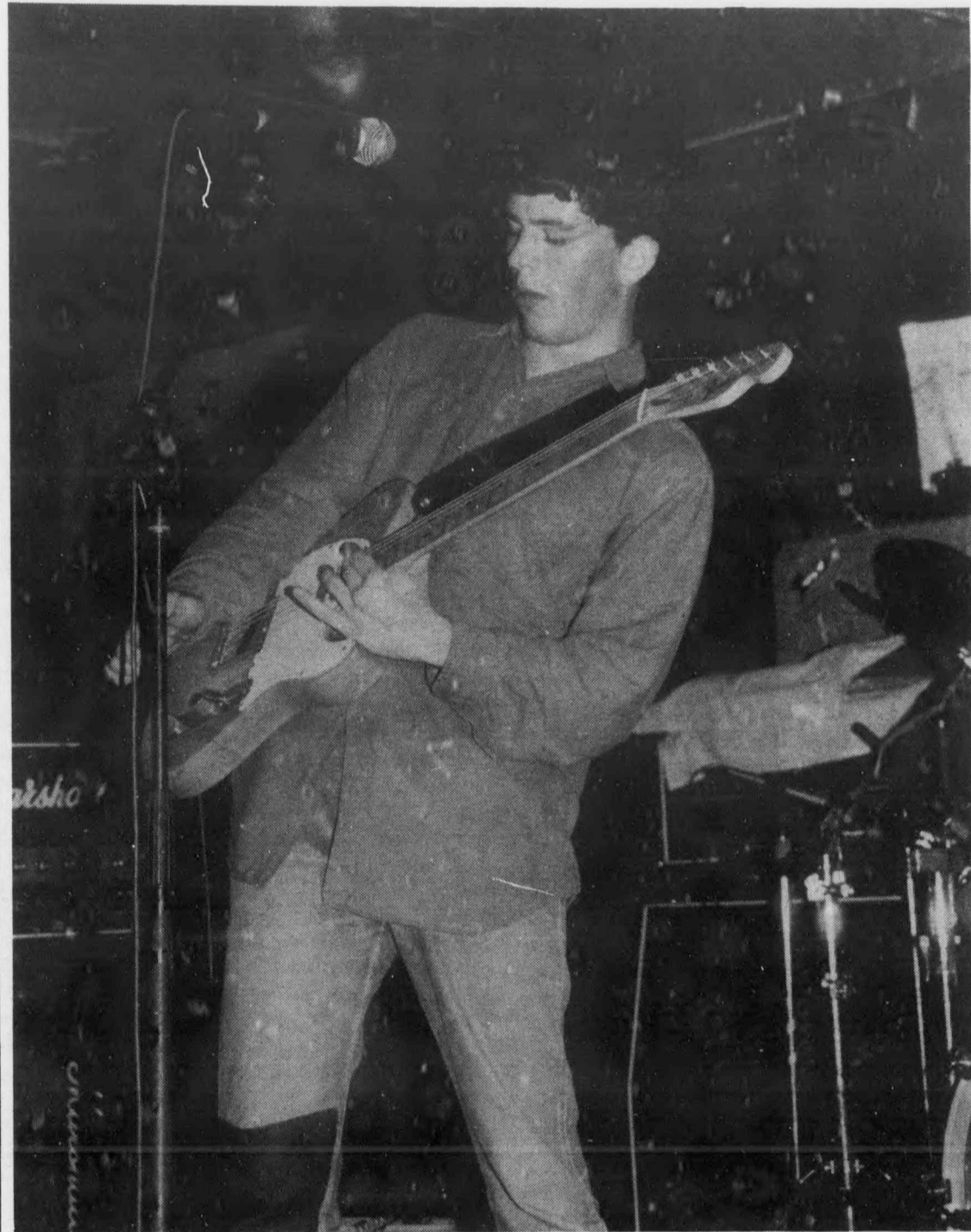


The Halifax Pop Explosion



Chad MacQuarrie of Fredericton's Karen Foster waxes cathartic

Christopher Flanagan

This Punk-Pop music festival began on Wednesday the 22nd and wrapped itself up on Sunday the 26th. It featured numerous bands from North America with headliners being the likes of Baltimore's Velocity Girl, Montreal's Dough Boys, and Redd Kross from California. These recording artists were backed by an army of talented groups and performers, some of which are not signed and truly fit the description of Independent Band. It was bands like these who captured the hearts of audiences with their talent, dedication, hunger, and expression. These Indie performances, almost all from local maritime artists, captured the true spirit of the festival. One of these was Fredericton's own Karen Foster. In this article I will attempt to describe the highlights of the shows I caught at the festival.

Friday night's headlining band was recording artists The Dough Boys. These guys didn't waste time approaching the Double Deuce stage and instantly ripped into their current hyper hit "she". The Boys' show continued at a speed and intensity which included pleasant multi vocals, clever pop hooks, and sudden bursts of lead guitar. This four piece, guitar oriented band faltered only slightly by offering a couple of slower grunge like numbers which were heavy enough to be called impressive. Just like their jumping, hair flying entertainers, the audience was in a musically intoxicated frenzy. The combination of excitement, alcohol consumption, and crowding created a mass in front of the stage which people referred to as "the Mess". No one was hurt and the crowd was fully satisfied by an encore which included

a cover by former Halifax band Jellyfish Babies.

The following afternoon saw an all ages show at the Deuce. Local boys Merge were highly entertaining with their dynamic use of distortion and feedback. Songs were sometimes mellow then suddenly chaotic. Backed by pretty boy vocals and a groovy underlying beat, Merge's all too familiar sound was still greatly enjoyed and applauded.

Lou Barlow transformed the Deuce into a relaxing coffee house with his acoustic performance. His improvised list of songs include material he performed with mega groups Sebadoh and Dinosaur Jr.. Barlow's singing and guitar playing was flawless (once tuned), expressive, and charming. His songs were an intelligent mixture of poetry and pop. The audience easily embraced his relaxed and informal stage presence.

The independent group Scarce drove all the way from Providence, Rhode Island to become one of the talks of the festival. Their show of powerful stage performances and song writing made them a surprise hit. Their material ranged from heavily strummed pop sing alongs, to hyper-speed head rocking ditties. A song the female bass player described as "our pretty song" turned into an intense ballad from the eerie pits of I don't know where. All three sang giving vocal variety and blended harmony. The bassist's arm shot high and fast across the bass as she gyrated, bobbed, jumped, and lunged to their music. Her male bandmates showed similar intensity while playing the guitar and drums. Those present at this show and their evening spot witnessed a convincing show of talent, dedication, and expression. People were excited.

Fredericton's own Karen Foster opened the Saturday evening perform-

ances at the Double Deuce. People expecting to see a female solo performer were surprised to find themselves being forcefully grooved by an aggressive bass and drum oriented rap reinforced by guitar blasts. This first song introduced the audience to the instrumental mastership of Chad MacQuarrie (Guitar, Vocals), Rob Parish (Bass), and the merciless Greg Smith (Drums). The band's remaining numbers were power jams which flowed through tasteful punk oriented songs. These songs often progressed into tight climaxes of audio bombardment. Sometimes these bursts would excitingly come from no where. Chad, the chief song writer, is the head on the group with his schooled guitar skills and his aggressive vocals. He is vitally supported by the tight, soulful, and always hard driving rhythm body of Rob and Greg. The latter was a blur of flesh and wood as he pounded out intricate beats full on complicated fills. The small early crowd acknowledged Karen Foster's showing by a rocking of heads and applause. If you get a chance, check these guys out.

Redd Kross were an excellent headlining band with their poppy punk sound and their psychedelic, California fun loving attitude. The band was complete with a Valley Girl keyboardist and their collection of glam rock classics which included an explosive version of Kiss' Deuce. The group and audience had a blast together.

I would love to describe the many more live bands I saw the weekend of the Halifax Pop Explosion but time, space and skill keeps me from doing so. As a generalization, what I saw of the festival entertained me to death. Hope to see more of this in the future.

Whut's Gwan On

Auditions:

On Thursday, October 14, auditions will be held at D'Avray Hall for this year's Christmas Pantomime. Auditions will run from December 16-18 at the Memorial Hall Theatre. For further information call 454-1027.

Auditions will also soon be held for One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. The play will be performed at Memorial Hall from January 27-29. Audition dates have not yet to be set. For further information call director Paula Dawson at 457-3840, or watch this column over the upcoming weeks.

Seeking Staff and Crew:

Arsenic and Old Lace is seeking technical assistance and stage hands. This production is scheduled for October 28-30 at Memorial Hall. For specific information, call stage manager Lisa Smith at 459-3961.

Theatre UNB's upcoming Alternative Theatre Festival is also looking for off-stage help. For information call producer Greg Doran at 459-8778. Don't be fooled by the faces under the lights: backstage is where the action is.

The Christmas Pantomime will also be requiring off-stage help in the form of a costume designer and people who can sew. And once again, please call 454-1027 for more information.

No Stronger Than Words

On Friday and Saturday, October 15-16, Theatre UNB will be presenting No Stronger Than Words, an evening of monologues and dialogues written by local writers. The show begins at 8:00 in the Cellar Theatre (Carlton 139), and admission is \$3.00. All proceeds will be donated to the Rape Crisis Centre. Please help us support this important institution.

Submissions to Whut's Gwan On should be dropped off by noon on the Tuesday before publication.

Le Salon des Refusés at the UNB Art Centre

UNB and STU Students Have you picked up your framed reproduction from the UNB Art Centre?

Today is the last day to pick up a print from the UNB Art Centre's annual print loan exhibition. UNB and STU students with valid I.D. cards may pick up their prints on Friday between 12:00 noon and 5:00 pm.

For more information phone 453-4623.

Capital Film Society

New Venue
ON CAMPUS
Tilley Rm 102
Alfred Bailey Auditorium
Screening at 8:00 pm
October 4:
Indochine

Grand Opening New Brunswick Craft Centre

The New Brunswick Craft Centre contains a retail craft shop of fine crafts, a craft gallery, a craft library, the NBCC administration offices, studio space for crafts people and artists, administration offices of the N.B. Writers' Federation, and meeting rooms which are available at no charge for non-profit cultural organizations. In total there are over 20 functional rooms in this three centre.

We cordially invite the general public to join us in celebrating the Grand Opening of the N.B. Craft Centre at our open house reception on Tuesday, October 5, 1993, 12:30 pm to 9:00 pm. The centre is located at 103 Church Street (corner of Church and King St.) in downtown Fredericton, New Brunswick.

For more information about the NBCC and its new Craft Centre, please contact Connie Saulnier at (506) 450-8989.