

Keath Barrie only mediocre

by Cheryl Downton

Valentine's Day brought a musical mixture to the Cohn stage when Keath Barrie returned to Nova Scotia for two near sell-out conferences.

The pre-show was handled by Suzanne Stevens, her own vocal back up, and the band which backed Keath Barrie. Stevens, a Quebec native, looked rather anemic, as did her three-member back-up. This was a result of costume and lighting, neither of which was very complimentary. Stevens has an adequate voice, but is lacking in stage presence, and her show had a night club flavour which did not suit the Cohn atmosphere.

She sang several numbers with pretty much the same effect, that is, coarse, harsh, almost screeching. The audience was not overly receptive, and the entire mood was strained and forced. The band and back up were not in tune with Stevens, although the final number was a little more cohesive. Stevens looks uncomfortable on stage, and comes

across better on radio.

Barrie, on the other hand, is a more relaxed performer, and did not strive to create a frenzied atmosphere. Instead, he kept his musical selections rather toned down (sometimes it seemed too much so) and did not attempt pieces he could not handle. Much of his performance consisted of a crooning of ballads in the Crosby/Como style, although he attempted two or three numbers which needed broader tone coloring.

Barrie, a recent convert to the music scene, has spent much of his 44 years as commercial film-maker, and has studied acting and ballet. His recent turn to singing is fulfilling a life long ambition as a musician. He offers a simplistic, sentimental approach, and as he does not have a wide voice range, much of his music tends to be too mellow for the material being performed.

His Valentine's day performance contained a little dancing, a lot of singing, which slowed to almost

talking in some selections. He sang some old and some new songs in an effort to show that the older song writing style is not dead. He did a competent rendition of "Blue Heaven", and sang several original compositions, including "Apalaticola", which he described as the song which started things moving for him, and "San Sebastian".

Apparently Barrie is more than a little stuck on Nova Scotia, its landscape and its people, and has written several songs about his 'Nova Scotia home'. He sang a couple of songs describing Nova Scotia's scenery and its effect on those who witness its beauty, including a song entitled "Nova Scotia". Barrie is somewhat a romantic, and combining this with his awareness of Nova Scotia history, wrote and sang a song "Evangiline"; a song which tells of the expulsion of the Acadians from Grande Pre. These were well received by the audience, although a latter tale of nationalism and pride in one's country did not

go over as well.

Barrie writes songs which convey his own personal thoughts and feelings, but these songs, although moving and descriptive, sometimes fall short of modern day turnings. His 'anti-feminist song' (renamed in honour of the day as 'my Valentine's day song for those of the fairer sex') and the song that followed, entitled "My Way", were rather sweet, but definitely old fashioned. All women no longer want to be seen as just soft, gentle, helpmates, and marriage and children are not always the things to strive for.

The band accompanying Barrie on this tour (they've been together for less than a month) can be termed no more than adequate. The pianist was the best of the five piece ensemble (a home town boy from New Waterford), but even he was not outstanding. The bandleader, Don Thompson from Athabasca, Alberta (Barrie's home) played sax and flute, and played them badly, and came across as a little too swishy.

For his final selection, Barrie chose to recite a poem he had written concerning Canadian nationalism and Quebec separatism. The message he wanted to communicate was one of 'Canadians are we all', but he appeared a little taken aback when a burst of spontaneous applause and mumbblings of approval were heard after the first stanza, which mentioned that some people thought all Separatists should be shot or hung!

The concert was enjoyable, but could not be called outstanding. Barrie has a nice voice, but he could certainly do more with it.

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Women in Revolution

KINGSTON (CUP) -- Women attending a conference on Women in Revolution here Jan. 13-16 were able to make two assumptions by the end of the weekend -- they are all working for the liberation of women and they all believe it cannot be achieved within the present social system.

The establishment of an autonomous women's movement became the focus of discussion on how to combine those two.

Varda Burstyn, who led the final discussion at the conference said an autonomous women's movement must differ from radical feminism.

Radical feminism, Burstyn said, develops ultimately into sex war because it says woman's role is developed from her reproductive function resulting in a society divided into two sex classes.

On the other hand, she said, Marxism says "women's oppression is in fact rooted in her biological capacity for reproduction but is also a question of the way society is organized into classes which cements and gives configuration to the way women are oppressed."

Patriarchy and class society are intertwined, Burstyn said.

"If we want to liberate women we come smack up against the power of the state. That state isn't going to give us any of the power we want."

"That's why socialism and feminism have to be aligned. Not because the working class is more important -- because it's not."

But feminists have been hesitant about joining socialist groups, she said, because they fear participation "will mean a de facto subordination

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