

Neuseiland CD release party

Al Tuck helps out

BY TYLER COMPTON

Neuseiland released their much-anticipated debut CD to a less than packed Marquee Club last Saturday night. Originally scheduled to open, Buck 65, (historically Stinkin' Rich) had to back out at the last moment — this, I suspect, is the reason for such a sparse attendance. After all, one would expect a sold-out crowd of 20-somethings bred on the Halifax alternative-music explosion of the early '90s. Certainly this all-star lineup is deserving of such support. Oh well, chalk it up to the downward spiral that the local music scene has endured over the past several years.

Al Tuck stepped into that which Rich backed-out from and mustered an enjoyable performance. I must admit that this was my first time having seen or heard Tuck, although the name is familiar from his days with No Action. This acoustic performance was mellow with all of the rough-hewn charm of a Neil Young solo performance. His voice even shares the same uncertain, almost pubescent quality of Young's. I was particularly enamoured with his swaggering rendition of Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again."

Neuseiland's lineup reads like a who's who of the local music scene during the past decade. With

talent from Thrush Hermit, Bubaiskull, Euphonic, and Superfriendz it is easy to see why anything by this group would be so eagerly anticipated. The lineup consists of Charles Austin, Drew Yamada, Joel Plaskett, Tim Stewart, and Andrew Glencross. Though not exactly household names, they certainly were (and continue to be) prominent figures in the local music scene.

It is nice to see successful local musicians that have managed to avoid picking-up any nasty Toronto pretensions (this means you Sloan). They humbly took the stage and began their first of two sets without any rock-star fanfare. The high-pitched cry of the 12" organ was immediately apparent and remained an omniscient presence throughout each song. I found this irritating at first and prepared myself for two hours of black turtle-neck, artsy-pop.

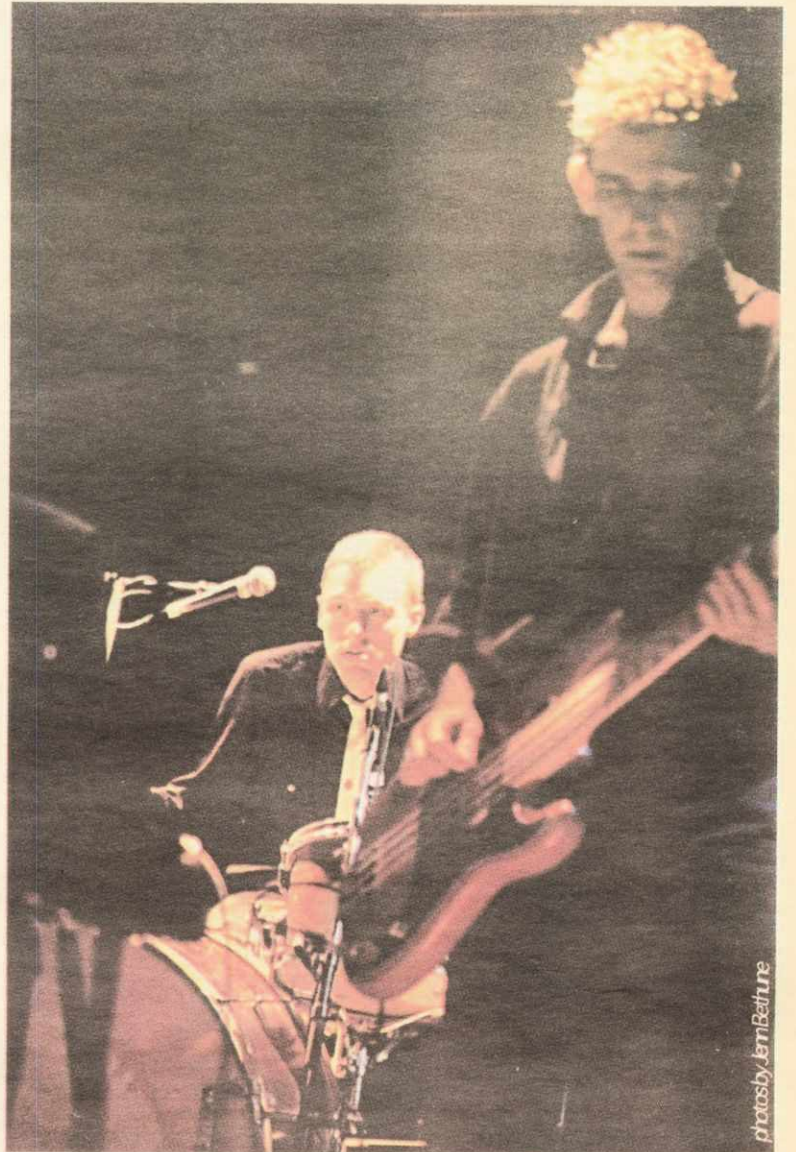
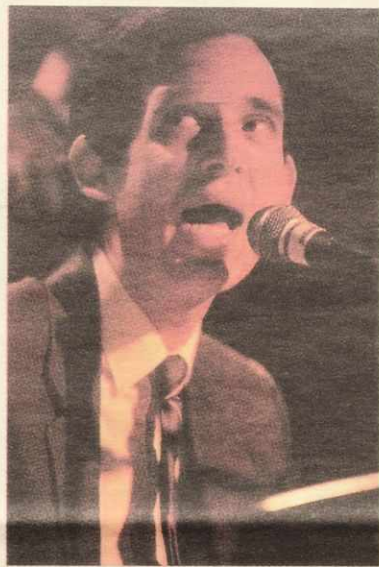
I quickly scrapped this first impression when the rhythm thundered-in and the music assumed a more soulful Rock and Roll feel. With clean, velvety vocal and guitar harmonies laid over a strong, throbbing rhythm, their sound is akin to Moody Blues meets Deep Purple. When I later discovered their true musical influences I realized that this appraisal is not too far off the mark. Most tunes assume a fluid, trance-like sound but this

is often interrupted by heavy, '70s rock style chords, clearing a path for some impressive drum and guitar solos.

Collectively, they draw influence from circa 1970s rock and all cite the Beatles' White Album as an early and lasting influence. Individually, however, their musical tastes are much more diverse and esoteric.

It is not difficult to hear the influence of Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin as well as that of Husker Du and The Smiths. Indeed, their music is an infectious mix of heavy, rock-based rhythms with late '80s alternative/college radio style melodies. The latter being a hallmark of the

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