

• Originality lacking in Bentall show

**Barney Bentall & The Legendary Hearts
The Plasticine Replicas
Dinwoodie
Saturday, March 18**

review by Ron Kuipers

It doesn't seem to take a whole lot to entertain people these days. The flash of a boyish grin and a good dose of alcohol seem to do the trick. Or so it appeared at Dinwoodie Saturday night. Which leaves open the question: How do you criticize a listless concert when so many people were obviously enjoying themselves?

Well, just watch. Actually, when they first burst on to the stage (really, they did), Barney and his buddies looked like they were ready to cook. They opened with just a smokin', bluesy, rock and roll number. But unfortunately, it was not a sign of things to come. The concert soon slowed down to a snail's pace, and nobody seemed to care or notice.

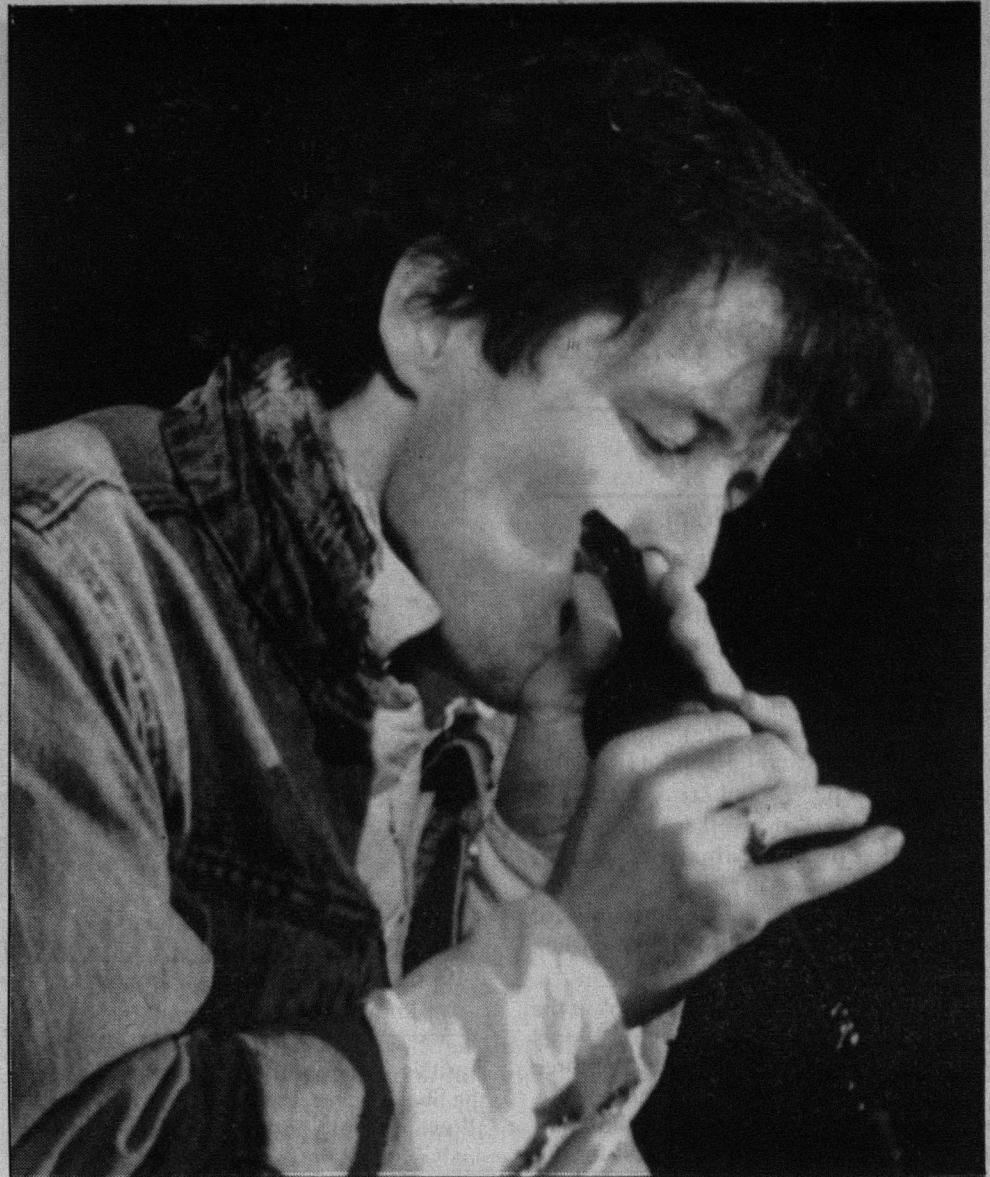
Now, a band's live show and their current album need not have anything to do with each other. But in the case of Barney Bentall, they do. Both lack originality, and worse, both contain only a superficial vitality.

This superficiality was never more clear than during the song "Come Back to Me." Right in the middle of it, with the music low and in the background, Barney figured it was time to "get personal" with the audience. He told them how low he had become since the high he felt winning a Juno. He was sad because, alas, his girlfriend had dumped him. Now, according to Barney, she left him for some lawyer

making a hundred grand a year, saying "she had no choice." All hearts bled. But then again sung Barney mournfully, she could always "come back to me baby." Now that didn't seem very rehearsed at all, did it? But really, he wasn't trying to fool anyone, and no one was fooled. No one cared. After all, they were just there to have a good time.

But it shouldn't be that easy. First of all, an artist should be honest; honest with himself, his music, and his audience. The music should be his own, and even if it falls within the domain of some rock and roll tradition, it should have the artist's own peculiar stamp. Barney Bentall lacks all of this. And this is an area where he can, should, and will be criticized. Yet thousands of people across Canada are letting him get away with it. It was no different Saturday night.

On a more positive note, however, The Plasticine Replicas opened with a highly charged set. This band is relatively new on the national scene, and they show some promise. They were doing some absolutely ultra-thermal things with their guitars, and they played a ripping cover of Steppenwolf's "Magic Carpet Ride." They lacked the flash of the cute boy-next-door Barney and appeared somewhat awkward on stage. But ultimately they were honest and cut straight to it, sparing the audience of all the B.S. that would follow. The only minus was that at times you couldn't tell them apart from The Grapes of Wrath or The Northern Pikes. But it's still not too late for them to create their own new thing.



Ron Sears

Barney Bentall listlessly, superficially playing the harmonica while boring our reviewer at Dinwoodie, Saturday night.

What it all boils down to is originality. Not too many people are concerned with it anymore, and that's sad. Barney Bentall's early success is a tribute to that fact. He knows what he's doing, and he does it. His superficial brand of Springsteenism was

all too apparent Saturday night. He shouldn't get away with it. If rock & roll is going to continue to mean anything at all, people simply have to demand more. They must fight stagnation and insist on originality.

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