

Arts & Entertainment

McLachlan, guests celebrate FM88's birthday in style

Sarah McLachlan/ Jr. Gone Wild/ Big House
Dinwoodie Lounge
Saturday, March 4

review by Rodney Gitzel

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday TO you, happy birthday dear Seejayesar, happy birthday to you! (Well, we didn't get to sing it at the show, so I sing it now.)

CJSR put on a fifth-birthday party Saturday at Dinwoodie and they managed a lineup about as strong as they might have with two of Edmonton's most popular bands, along with a singer who has been making rapid inroads into everywhere.

Local rock quartet Big House put on a

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fairly energetic set, and if the crowd wasn't jumping around and having a great time, the band sure was! However, I was none too impressed by their songs. I recently heard and fell in love with their "Nothing to Understand," which came out on a compilation record a couple of years ago, but the recent gigs I have checked out have been disappointing. Not only are they wont to dirgify that song (fortunately, then, they didn't even play it at this gig), but there seems to be little trace of whatever it is I find so appealing in that one song in any of their others. Not that their songs (all originals, this night) are bad — I just find them disappointing. Oh well.

The crowd (me, too!) was more appreciative of Jr. Gone Wild, creating a big bouncing mass of heads around the stage. Maybe everyone figured they'd best get in on it now, as the band won't be back for three months. But anyway, Mike McDonald's voice was actually in good shape (he said God must be smiling on him) and he didn't even seem remotely wasted! But he looked at his watch often

enough to make you think he couldn't wait to finish.

Jr.'s set included two or three tunes from their album from a few years back, a large number of recent regulars, and a handful of new tunes (one of which showed bassist Dove to be hopelessly hooked on C&W). At one point, Mike asked for requests — whether he was serious or not, they still played MY silent request, breaking into an absolutely MANIC rendition of "Cosmos," probably one of their best songs. (Dove and the drummer, Duke Bronfman, looked worried, at times, that they might not keep up.) They also threw in some covers, including a Moe Berg ("a friend of mine," sez Mike) rocker about making the rich pay, as well as "Hey Bo Diddley" and (as usual) "Like a Rolling Stone," both of which went over well with the crowd.

Sarah McLachlan's set was in trouble before it started. By the time the sound system was up and going, they were twenty minutes late in starting (the other two bands had been bang on time). Then, the moment the band started playing, problems with the left side of the system became badly apparent. By the second tune, "Steaming" (my fav), the snare had been cut from the mix, and the rest of the drums were soon to follow — and this in a song which is all but based on the snare drum! It was not looking good, and the crowd was getting irritable. Finally, "Steaming" ended, and one of the techs told Sarah and the band (none of whom

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had had any idea that anything was wrong) to take a break. So they did.

They came back a few minutes later, the problem was gone, and things turned out pretty well.

McLachlan was odd to watch in her black sixties-ish dress, and sporting short



Sarah McLachlan on stage Saturday night. The triple bill also included local favourites Jr. Gone Wild and Big House.

wiry hair, a headset mike, and lots of eyeliner. It often seemed strange that such a strong voice was coming out of this serene person who barely had her mouth open! But anyway, she and her band went through pretty much the entire *Touch* album, as well as some new tunes (including "Trust," "the first single from the American release of our Canadian release") and a couple of covers.

The band seemed to be enjoying itself, with the keyboardist (the same guy from the album) going from quite sour at the beginning to jumping around like crazy, and with the bassist continually prodding and encouraging the quiet McLachlan. And, if I may be typically male for a moment, here, the drummer was definitely

the most watchable creature to set foot on stage all night. But now I get to redeem myself, a bit, by noting she was also one of the most listenable, too. In most of McLachlan's tunes, at any given point the drums will have the most interesting material, and this drummer played the part well. And for that matter, so did everyone else in the band.

By the time the set was over, the crowd (especially the guys by the stage at McLachlan's feet) seemed won-over, and demanded two encores, which the band gleefully performed (they redid "Steaming"!.) McLachlan was thrilled by the animated response she was getting, and almost got pulled off stage when she went to slap hands with those (undoubtedly) extremely sober guys up front.

O'Vertigo Danse original, experimental

O'Vertigo Danse
SUB Theatre
Saturday, March 4

review by Rosa Jackson and Jo-Anne Jait

"Popcorn! Popcorn!" yelled a dancer frantically as he ran wildly up and down the aisles of SUB Theatre.

Several members of the audience raised their hands. "Far too close!" he exclaimed. Bravely, we put up our hands. "Perfect!" he screamed, and flew across the theatre, throwing a bag of popcorn towards us. "Let's imagine we've got a movie now, OK?"

As we munched on our popcorn, our minds boggled at the sights on the stage. O'Vertigo Danse, a company from Montreal, was putting on an entertaining, though rather unusual, performance. Described as "A vision of the American society in the 1950s, through the images of this prosperous and flamboyant era," *Full House* portrayed men and women in love, and various other concepts which were left to the imagination.

The show opened with what seemed to be an enactment of a wedding day. The barefooted groom, wearing a suit, stood with his back turned to the audience while the bride (also barefooted) writhed about the stage, kicking her legs and occasionally leaping. Eventually, the groom turned around and they danced entwined, sinking onto the floor. Their movements were slow and sensual, and we wondered, "Will they

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keep their clothes on?" Only the sounds of their breathless panting could be heard. This went on for an excessively long time. Fortunately, they remained clothed.

Finally, the sound of music! A welcome change of pace came with the entry of five more dancers, carrying champagne glasses, and the re-introduc-

tion of a melody. This, we assumed, symbolized the wedding reception. The dancers formed a circle and began an inventive pattern, flipping over each other's joined arms. The pace built, as did their laughter. The pattern was broken, however, when two of the dancers started to kiss. In disgust, the other dancers exited. The remaining pair danced provocatively; he removed her shoes seductively and deposited them offstage. Again we wondered, "Will they take their clothes off?" To our pleasant surprise, they didn't.

A particularly absurd moment occurred when a man, pretending to walk a tightrope, toppled off the stage. Similarly, near the end of the show, a man dropped a woman off the edge of the stage. Did this illustrate the merciless ending of a relationship? We're not sure. There were, in fact, many instances when the dancers bravely threw themselves across the stage; sometimes into the arms of others, and sometimes not. They demonstrated a great deal of acrobatic skill; the physical conditioning necessary for this was apparent from

their muscular physiques. The women easily picked up, carried and threw the men.

Using balloons, cigarettes and roller skates, the company demonstrated the effective use of props. One dancer, wearing a '50s style bathing suit, sunglasses and wheels, wrought havoc with the rest of the troupe, cutting them off and generally making an exhibition of herself. The dancers spoofed television of the '50s and '60s, playing soundtracks from *I Love Lucy* and cigarette commercials. Somehow, they managed to keep time to people's voices rather than to the rhythm of the music. Often, there was no music at all, yet their motions were still synchronized.

Full House, an uninterrupted hour and a quarter long production, was exhausting for the audience as well as the performers. At times enthralling and at times tedious, it taxed our minds as we attempted to decipher its many philosophical connotations. It was, nonetheless, original, experimental and enlightening.