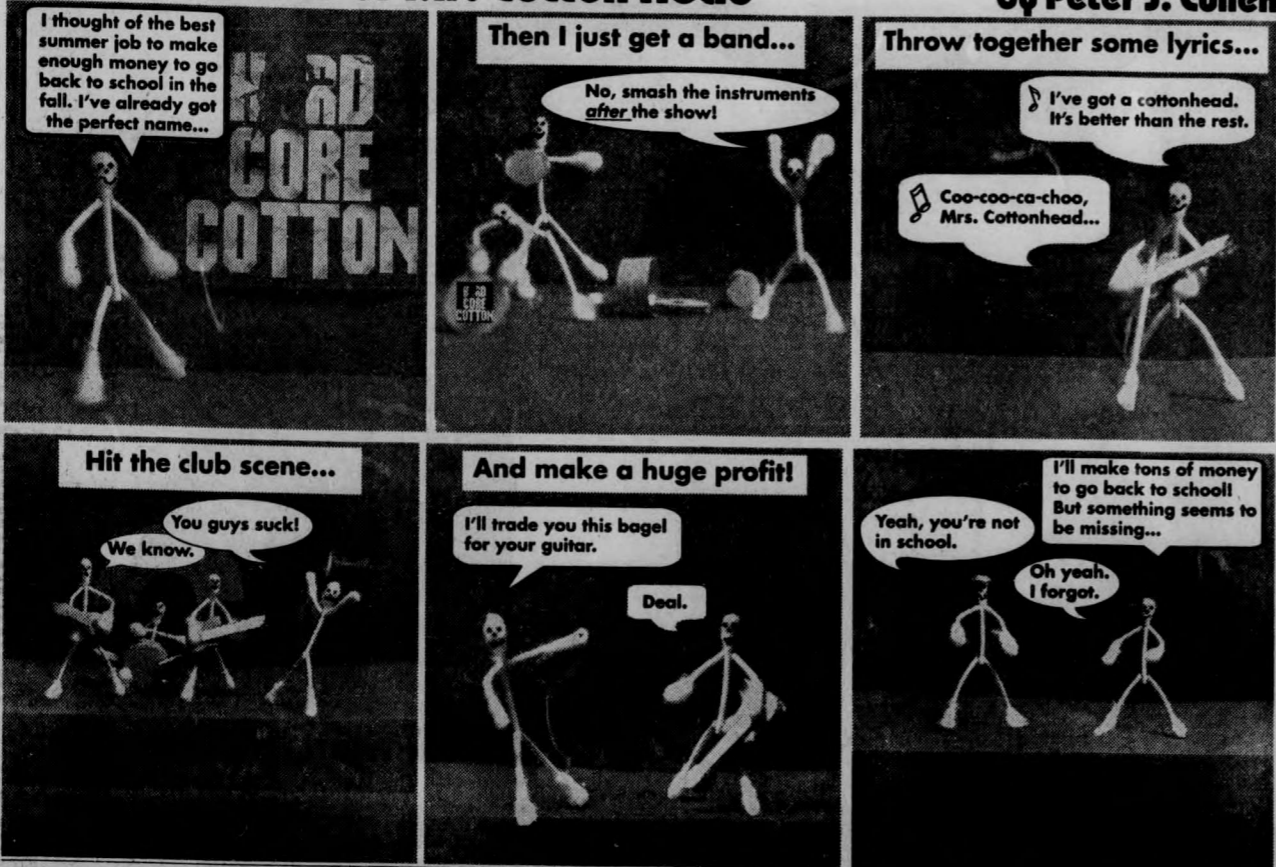


The Adventures of Mr. Cotton Head

by Peter J. Cullen



No Exit: Great actors, shame about the plot

ANTHONY DAVIS
THE BRUNSWICKAN

"All I remember is someone's spit on my face."
—The Rheostatics

Unfortunately, this is what happened with Theatre UNB's production of *No Exit*. The story is about three people of completely different backgrounds; Estelle, Inez, and Garcin, end up in hell and are surprised at what they find. They must first realize that they are dead, or "absent," as Estelle (played by Allison Surtees) calls it. They find that hell is not made up of torturers and demons but of themselves. They learn that they must conquer their emotions and themselves, and not some mythical demon.

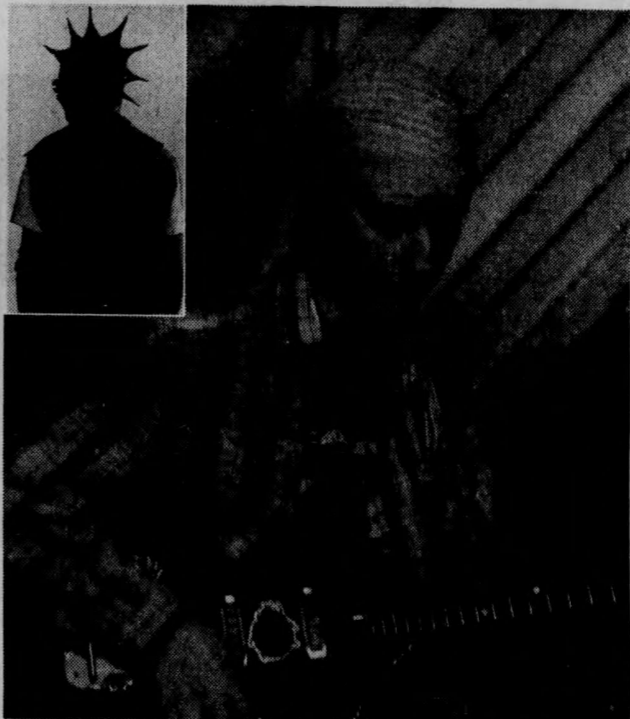
So, there is the plot, which in turn, translates into a lack of plot. If it were not for the superb acting and fantastic

setting, it would not be worth seeing. The cast, however, is outstanding, and they carry this play on their shoulders. Surtees, Paul MacDonald (Garcin), Jennifer Brewer (Inez), and the definite star of the show, Dana Nielsen (Hell's Valet), all work extremely well together to make this play worth seeing. The wit of the Valet is something else indeed.

The atmosphere is well set up from the minute that you walk into the theatre, as some sombre figures waiting to take your ticket. The stage setting itself is simple but effective, and there are some fantastic effects that really catch you in a surprising way.

So, it is well worth seeing for the cast, but not for the plot. Afterwards it seems that all I remember is Estelle spitting on Inez's face, and for that scene alone it is worth seeing the play. The production concludes on Saturday night at Memorial Hall.

The sounds of seven



LAURA GUAY PHOTOS

Britta played to his heart's content. Inset: The quintessential punk rock fashion.

LAURA GUAY

THE BRUNSWICKAN

So, it was a punk gig at the legendary St-Charbel's Hall. This was the first since May of 1995, when Chixdiggit played. You know, the guys from Calgary that play pop-punk-like tunes. Well, since their show, which ended with the hanging of a reversed cross and all sorts of destruction, no further gigs have been held there. But on Friday, January 24, St-Charbel officially opened its doors to punk shows once again.

Seven bands played: May Riot, Spinoza, Conniphen Fit, Shed, 3 Foot 7, 8 months and Alderknot. All local, some old, some brand new — like May Riot and Spinoza — and some were just in-between.

The musicians at this show seemed to outnumber the actual crowd for a little while. There were a lot of bands, perhaps too much to absorb in one evening. Of course, by the time the second band was up (Spinoza), the hall was oozing with a crowd made up of multiple piercings, tattoos, neon hair and torn clothing. (Brrr, it was cold out.) The audience was a good one — albeit very tame for the most part — and applauded politely after all the numbers.

Unfortunately there had to be the typical "drunk-punk" fight. Thankfully the organizers of the show took care of it quite quickly.

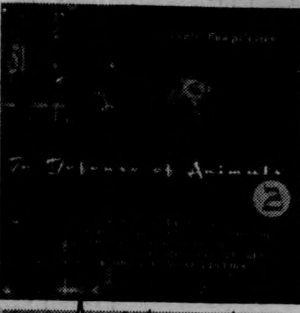
Although there were many acts, a few noteworthy bands stood out. May Riot played their first show and proved that bands don't have to conform to what is expected of them. Fronted by a woman, a guy on bass and a female drummer, they offered the nicest surprise at this gig. They were spacy, heavy, clean and just something new for the Fredericton scene. It was amazing because they managed to keep the crowd's attention, even during the expulsion of a very hostile drunk kid.

Speaking of originality and creativity, Spinoza is Fredericton's newest one man band. Yup, Phil Clark and a drum machine — it was beautiful. Phil also offered some comic relief of his own sort and offered a brief history of St-Charbel's Hall. His tunes were like milk. Pick something up from Spinoza, (apparently May Riot and Spinoza are releasing a split demo), and you'll understand the milk thing.

Shed, of course, have played many shows over the summer and fall. They have really grown as a band, and their sound has just become more and more daring. With crazy riffs and the faithful screaming Beate, who seems to be their only constant, they definitely did not disappoint the crowd, and upheld their Shed tradition of playing a good live show.

There were also classic local bands such as Liquid Light 28, Oh, I mean 28. No no no, now they go by 8 months (I wonder when they'll settle on a name). Point being that these guys have been submerged in the scene for four years and played a wicked set. It was quite different from what they usually present. Space, the final frontier. Go where no listener has gone before.

I think the beauty of this show was its strange mix of experience and rookie-like cuteness. Overall, all the bands put on a great show and I am sorry that I really couldn't possibly cover them all in this review. I really don't think the locals appreciate their own scene, but perhaps for the next show that comes up people will go to see some of these real musicians. I applaud that cluster of seven bands.



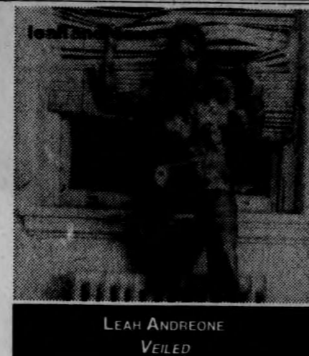
VIA
IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS VOLUME 2

Although the defense of animals may not be the best reason for a compilation album, it's definitely a good way to make money. With popular groups like Elastica, White Zombie, PJ Harvey, Bjork and The Chemical Brothers dishing out fantastic (remixed) tracks, *In Defense of Animals Volume 2* will certainly attract commercial attention. But although there are 17 tracks in the trip-hop/dance vein, not all of these remixes and various versions are gems.

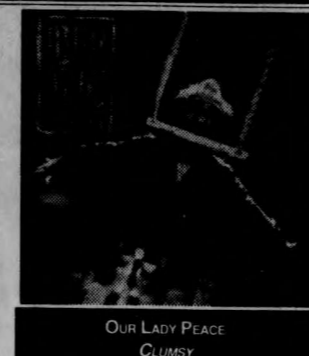
Moby's "Let's Go Free (Live 95)" is disappointing, and the Massive Attack V Mad Professor's "Cosmic Dub (Sly)" seems tame in comparison to the other tracks. But tunes from Alice Donut ("Moon Pie"), Ruby ("Tiny Meat — Mark Walk Remix") and Belly's beautiful "Spaceman" more than make up for the weaker songs.

The majority of the album is electronic experimentation, and the vocals take a backseat. But that, in the end, is what makes the album worthwhile. The good outweighs the bad, and the listener reaps the rewards. Oh, and so do the animals.

• PETER J. CULLEN



LEAH ANDREONE
VEILED

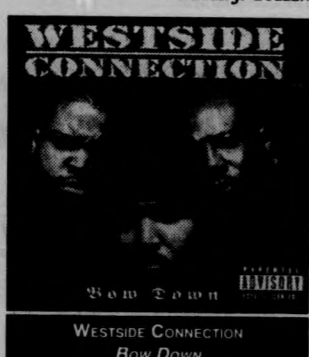


OUR LADY PEACE
CLIMSY

You gotta love it when you come across an artist by pure luck. I saw the cover of this CD and thought, "Hey, that looks pretty good." I was right. I was so right. I would love to compare Leah Andreone to someone famous, someone good so you'd run out and buy this CD, but I can't. She doesn't sound like anyone that I know. Aahhh! Something fresh. The music is strong, the lyrics are stronger. "Will you still love tomorrow / when you find out who I am today? / Will you know my name tomorrow / when you hear the things I have to say?" Yes I'm sure you're thinking, "Oh great, another Alanis Morissette." I can't really say anything that would make you think otherwise, either. However, I love hearing a spurned woman rock out. Move over Mariah, Whitney and Madonna. It's time for a New Women's Order. I know it's been going on for awhile, but because of great female artists like Andreone, it's being perpetuated. All the songs contained on this CD are very good. The tracks "Mother Tongue," "Who Are They To Say," "Problem Child" and "Will You Still Love Me" are stellar. Angry chick rockers are a dime a dozen, but every once in a while, one of them stands out. Leah Andreone does it with ease.

• DENNIS GERMAN

• JUD DELONG



WESTSIDE CONNECTION
BOW DOWN

Bow Down is an very good debut by Ice Cube's new rap band Westside Connection. The majority of the tunes on the album are above par, and all of the songs have redeeming qualities. Highlights include "Bow Down," "Gangsters Make the World Go Round," and "The Gangsta, the Killas and the Dope Dealer," which includes a sample from Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt." Definitely worth picking up.

• CHUCK TEED

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