

WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT? THE CHECKERED PAST OF ENTERTAINMENT AT UNB

concert review
by
Luis Cardoso

In an ideal world good bands would draw large crowds, who in turn would be appreciative and lively in their applause. They would be well paid and well treated by club owners. Audiences would prefer these honest bands playing original music over disk-jockeys spinning the same commercial smash hits over and over again. Last term's **Last Clash Bash** in the **Social Club** proved that by no means live in an ideal world.

Last term saw well-attended shows both in the Social Club and the Cafeteria for a parade of commercially successful Canadian bands, bands who've been spotted for heavy rotation on the nation's hit video in music video. **Much Music**. A number of these bands put on lame shows, it seemed obvious that they would rather have been playing Montreal's **Spectrum**, or the **Diamond** in Toronto. The audience, however, lapped them up.

So why does an honest, hard-working alternative band like the **Incredible Casuals** from Cape Cod get treated like shit by an audience that seemed happier dancing to **M.C. Hammer** (or just **Hammer**, as he now prefers being called) and **C&C Music Factory**? I guess I've answered my own question. The answer was obvious to Casual's guitar player Aaron Spade, when he asked the audience if they would prefer to have the band

play our songs they've heard played on the radio in the clubs *ad nauseum*, before launching their rendition of the **Stones** *Honky Tonk Women*.

The Casuals play rock and roll they way it should be played, that is, in the tradition of a long line of bands that began with the **New York Dolls**, **Ramones**, and **Jonathan Richman and The Modern Lovers**; then was picked up by a new wave of English bands calling themselves punks, like the **Clash**, the **Jam**, and the **Attractions**, and who live on in a handful of bands eking out a living

in a business that rewards the likes of **New Kids on the Block** and **Milli Vanilli**. You

Ironically, the Casuals are a great party band. Their original material is interesting, dynamic, and has enough hooks to scare away the entire salmon population of the Miramichi. The covers they play (you won't catch them playing **Tom Cochrane**) are challenging and playful. One would have thought the Last Clash Bash crowd was there for a big party, a shin-dig, a wing-ding; unfortunately they turned out to be ding-dongs, especially the people who yelled out, "You guys suck!" as the band left the stage at the end of the night.

And, alas, the dilemma of the club owner!

What to do? The band played their first set to a crowd of approximately 100 people. Not a big crowd for the ballroom. When they returned for their second set, the music in the club wasn't shut off. Adding insult to injury, the owner asked them to lower their volume. Because the music in the club wasn't shut off (the DJ continued to churn out everybody's favourite dance hits) the band played their entire second set to an audience that ranged in number from 20 to 50. The law of the jungle, give the people what they want.

It hasn't always been this way. UNB has had a checkered past when it comes to entertainment. In years past entertainment committees have actually been very successful presenting alternative acts; bands like the **Dub Rifles**, **Teenage Head** (in the **Frankie Venom** era), and top-ranking blues bands like the **Nighthawks** have all done well here in past years. The Casuals would have done well here in those heydays of alternative entertainment. Universities should be venues for alternative music. Instead we're being spoon-fed a diet of generic Canadian bands that make their living touring campuses across the country. Think

about it: how many times have **54-40** and **Grapes of Wrath** and the **Skydiggers et al** played our lovely campus?

The Casuals have recently released a CD on the **Sonic Trout** label. The album, **Your Sounds**, recorded in Orleans, Mass., and Philadelphia, Pa., was produced and engineered by Chris Blood, the band's sound technician. Blood also puts out **Sonic Trout**, an East Coast music magazine. Blood was somewhat disappointed after the show, but this band is a seasoned unit of veteran professional musicians; they've been together well over 10 years, and bands that have played together this long are difficult to faze.

Bass player **Chandler Travis** and gui-

tar players **Aaron Spade** and **Johnny Spampinato** all sing. In fact, Travis sounds like **Elvis Costello**. **Clarke Marty** is a solid drummer whose licks serve as a solid foundation for the frenzied, inspired guitar playing by Spade and Spampinato. Among other notable venues, the Casuals have performed at New York's infamous **CBGB's**; they've also toured America east to west and north to south.

The best response to the crowd, however, came from guitar player Aaron Spade, who upon hearing the morons who yelled out, "You guys suck!" as he was about to leave the stage, turned around and gave the tired, pathetic audience the finger. Yeah!

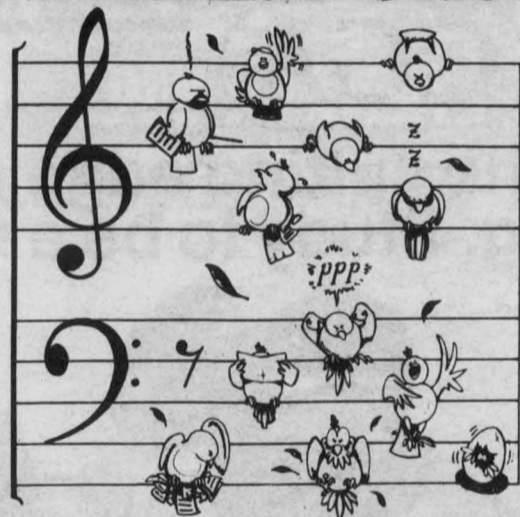
The **incredible Casuals** are a rare breed these days, and that is a sad commentary on the music industry.

the incredible casuals



For more information on the incredible Casuals or *Sonic Trout*, contact Chris Blood at Trout Towers, po Box 1544, Orleans, MA, 02653-1544

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Who? Open to full and part-time students at UNB and STU. We've got a core of people returning for the new season, but we're looking for more men's and women's voices. No previous experience required - - just desire to sing good music in good company.

When? Rehearsal is every Monday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. in Room 23, Memorial Hall, beginning January 6.

What? The Bicentennial Choir performs contemporary and traditional choral music at a variety of on and off campus concert events and special celebrations. We're planning an exciting and rewarding program of performances and social activities for 1991 - 92.

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