

Joe Hall and The Eyeball Wine Orchestra

Truck wipes out orchestra



The following article is a review of Joe Hall and The Eyeball Wine Orchestra (formerly Joe Hall and the Eyeball Wine Company), who performed to Hovel audiences last week. The review is broken up with parts of an interview

by Keith Layton
interview: Beno John

(The Man Who Lives in Room 54, from the album "Joe Hall.")
The man who lives in room 54 doesn't know what he is doing there watching the sky grow light and dark these are his important affairs and he wonders if it was like this for those who came before every time he closes the door.

It has been rumored that you are an expert on restaurants - which one would you recommend in the city?

"Ach - I always eat at the Adelweiss club."

Joe Hall's weekend performances at the Hovel, promised to be something special. The posters proclaimed them to be the cultural event of the decade and a chance to see Joe Hall's 19-piece dance orchestra. Knowing Joe Hall as I do I knew it had to be hype - but hype isn't quite the right word. Hall's lack of recognition combined with his black humour provide the basis for what would be hype if it wasn't all a joke.

Are you going to record more albums?

Joe Hall: "If we can, we've got plenty of material. Tony Quarrington (guitar):

"The trouble is that if you aren't commercial, you can't record for the commercial labels. It means you have to come up with a saleable image. That's pretty hard to do looking at Joe."

Still, Hall's black humour doesn't often get as far as his posters. Instead, it is reserved for the performance where most of his songs display an outlook on life uniquely Joe Hall's and in between songs where, in the company of his band, a continuous barrage of buffoonery is directed towards the audience.

What kind of shoes do you wear?

"Cop boots - These are cop boots - I'm a cop. Is there anything around here to drink?"

The Sunday night performance, given Hall's penchant for buffoonery, started normally enough. The band minus one Joe Hall walked on stage and began playing a jazzy blues tune. A pretty standard phenomena except that Hall isn't one to bother with such quirks of stardom as being introduced by his band. The twinge of inconsistency was resolved almost immediately though when Wayne (a Hovel staffer) came on stage and announced himself as Joe Hall! and all of the band members as Rich Little. Hall then appeared and introduced the band as George Dobo (the

Gateway had with Joe Hall and his company, as well as with songs from Hall's recent album. This hopefully simulates some of Hall's rather boozy, meandering style.



pianist) on bass Roger Braut (the bassist) on guitar and Tony Quarrington (the guitarist) - upon which they made the appropriate exchanges of instruments and continued to play.

Hall's first tune was a very nice love song about a man who was deeply in love with a woman and really enjoyed wearing her bra and panties. Amidst all the buffoonery and apparent lack of concern for just about everything one was struck by the tightness of the band as a whole and the competency of individual musicians involved.

Do you make a living with your music?

(guffaws, belches, chuckles)

Joe Hall: "Not with the kind of music we play."

Throughout the first set songs of a more serious nature (spiked with the odd touch of black humour such as Lady Love and After You've Gone Away contrasted the more light-hearted efforts (spiked with the odd touch of black humour). Of the latter the *Ramblin Hunchback*, a story of love at first sight between a hunchback and a hairlipped waitress in a diner, and *Nos Hablos Telephonos*, a comment on spaghetti westerns, stick out as classic efforts.

Probably the most impressive aspect of the performance were Hall's vocals. He writes songs that could be sung in a cocktail lounge by one of those silken voiced cocktail lounge entertainers. His delivery though, is loaded with impact. His vocals were especially effective on his "psycho rock tune" "Palermo on the Bay" while his almost rabid affectations were perfectly suited.

The man who lives in room 54 sometimes has urges to pray but finds in collecting his thoughts they are all in such disarray just random incidents he's helpless to prevent every time he closes the door

At the end of the first set it was revealed that for the intermission there would be a showing of films and the presentation of the Eyeball-Wine Company's radio play. Hall is a man of diverse creativity - a master of scenarios and language and it was interesting to see this creativity applied to other media than music. The films were well done, with oblique camera angles, and close up work adding to their impact. The first film, "Last Boogie in Bogota," worked with conceptual thematic elements which didn't make a lot of apparent sense but were quite interesting to watch. The second film, *L'heure de l'oeuf*, had a more definite plot line involving a conspirator depriving people of their eggs. The filming was reminiscent of a silent movie

Juxtaposed with the actors' movements were the oblique

camera angles creating a bizarre atmosphere.

The radio play has been taped for CKUA radio's Acme Sausage Company program. Like the films it was conceived and co-written along with Hall by Eldon Garnett, publisher of *Impuls(e)*, a Toronto-based Arts magazine. Along with Hall and Garnett, guitar player and English professor Tony Quarrington was a collaborator in the effort. The play has to do with social comment on various things such as power, consumerism all set in a story which is strange indeed.

After so diverse and entertaining an intermission it seemed a bit like Hall had outdone himself going into the second set. It was a strange sort of transition. The set picked up after a few songs though Hall chose to stick to some of the more restrained tunes in his repertoire.

Roger Brant (bass player): "We got thrown out of Peterborough after playing there for two weeks. The band before us lasted a year. We were playing to university students - they just wanted fag rock and Uriah Heep. In fact the Hovel is the only place that asked us back."

Of these "Out Along the Prairie" was perhaps the most impressive with its vivid visual imagery.

Out along the prairie - metaphor, the brain
Scrub brush ganglia exposed to the rain
and the land is so flat
and the lines are all straight
and the earth revolves 100,000 k.p.h.
(Out Along The Prairie also recorded by Betty Chaba of Betsy and the Blue Boys)

The concert was closed by "You're the only one I can trust," a song loaded with Hall's characteristic humor.

Hall's concert was certainly special. It was a sort of an aggregation of his work to date in the various mediums Hall can best exploit. A highly entertaining one at that.

Joe Hall: "We played the small town circuits here - Grimshaw, Stettler, Camrose. We toned our music down and tried to play some authentic country music. But those people don't know country music."

Roger Brant: "For those people country music is all uptown. They want to hear K-tel stuff and Freddie Fender singing about his Cadillac."

The man who lives in room 54 enjoys giving freedom to flies helping them find the hole in the screen while airplanes buzz outside He'll soon be leaving there he can go anywhere every time he closes the door.



Joe Hall at the Hovel



Photo Beno John

dirty linen

Gordon Turtle

Most people don't take the Canadian film industry seriously. In fact it's not cool these days to even admit a passing interest in any particular Canadian movie. This prevalent attitude is of course aided by terrible movies like *The Clown Murders* and *Nobody Waved Goodbye*, but it's a fact that some of the world's best cinema has been produced in Canada, especially in Quebec.

With the exception of *Goin' Down The Road*, I think it's safe to say that the best Canadian movies are made in Quebec. And one of the best film-makers to emerge from the sixties is French-Canadian director, Paul Almond, the protagonist of this column for this week.

Almond is most famous for his thematic trilogy of movies

which starred Genevieve Bujold, one of the world's finest actresses. Bujold was married to Almond at the time of these movies, and it was during the production of the trilogy that Bujold made her initial mark on world cinema.

The three movies comprising this trilogy are *Isabel*, *Act of the Heart*, and *Journey*, and today I will deal with the first of these three.

Made in 1967, *Isabel* remains, in my mind, a monument to Quebec culture. The movie is a sometimes passionate, sometimes stern and always eerie film that deals with a young woman's attempt to piece together her past. Bujold is perfect in the title role, as a girl who returns to her hometown to

care for her semi-invalid uncle. She is "courted" by two men; a rough and vulgar trucker, (Al Waxman), and a handsome, dashing man of the land, (Marc Strange). Both men are mysteries to the rather innocent Isabel, and the movie culminates in a scene of violence and hatred between the three.

Okay, so the story doesn't rate Zanuck-Brown, but the direction and acting in the movie create an awesome portrait of rural Quebec. The beauty and the harshness of a Quebec winter is captured with Almond's camera, and the backwoods nature, (for lack of a better term) of the Quebec rural people is portrayed with the delicacy and sensitivity of a man who is obviously in love with his heritage, and his culture.

The psychological suspense achieved by Almond is comparable to his contemporary, director Claude Jutra. Jutra is perhaps the more famous of the two, but there is little doubt that Almond is at least an equal to Jutra. *Isabel* is a fascinating movie that will make the most stoic shudder. But, more than that, it is a uniquely Canadian movie, that should attract and maintain admiration by all those who see it.

Nostalgia Questions, Week Five:
1. Does Bruno Gerussi really like McCaines frozen pizza?
2. Does Gordon Sinclair shoplift?
3. Does anyone miss the Canadian Reader's Digest?
Send responses to Gateway, rm. 282 SUB.