

Examining the quality of metaphor Cool Blue interview

by Geoff Ineson

Dateline: Saturday night, March 20, Club Flamingo. Two great musicians for five dollars: can't go wrong there. And we didn't go wrong with Jeremy Robinson opening for John Bottomley. Bottomley was just finishing his *Songs with the Ornamental Hermits* tour in Halifax, and there was much rejoicing in my heart that I had the chance to see him live.

Songs with the Ornamental Hermits is musically tight and was performed live in this exact same spirit. His style is dominated by wide-ranging musical and lyrical motifs, from folk-tale to hard-rock, back to folk again. The album itself totes eleven new Bottomley originals including one co-written with Jocelyne Lanois (formerly of Crash Vegas), and an incandescent cover of Gordon Lightfoot's "The Way I Feel".

Song writing for John Bottomley comes from a very personal and "surreal world, that's just my other world", a world in which he finds his motive for metaphor. "You have to take some time out... I walk around a lot in the mountains of Vancouver." Toronto's mentality is tied into the concrete, whereas Bottomley's particular approach to writing music has matured to a stage where being a hermit sometimes is preferred.

This skill is most evident on "Bell Tower Radio", which has such a mournful, convincing melody, and intense storyline. "I actually had a chord structure that lasted for about

ten or fifteen minutes," says John explaining how the song originated. "Then I went home and listened to it for two, perhaps three weeks. During that time I was also thinking of several images that would tie in with that particular sound. That's when 'Pilgrim coming in from the rain' surfaced."

Bottomley attributes the flexibility of his work to mostly playing the bar scene for seventeen years. Of which, nine years was spent playing with the Toronto based punk band, Tulpa. "There's been a long transition process. It's a struggle all the time... either musically or playing on stage," says the thirty-two year old performer who reminded me of a healthy Bob Geldof.

However this seasoned and competent entertainer didn't seem to struggle last Saturday on the Flamingo's stage. He rocked out at first; wound down for a few ballads; rocked out again; then came out for a solo number and a full-band encore. His lyrics are brilliant literary constructions and his music mostly depends upon intricate rhythm shadings and modulations.

While Bottomley obviously has high hopes for *Songs With The Ornamental Hermits*, as a first-rate craftsman, he's elated with having been able to do some noteworthy work.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Me: So what's it like being part of the Halifax scene now?

Paul: It's never been like this. It's never been this good. It's great. It's fun. [In the mid-late 80's] all the bands hated each other. But now it's like everybody knows what's going on...

Barry: You'd think that it would be the reverse. All of a sudden there has been this intrusion of the dollar sign...but I think that it's made everybody realize that they don't want this to implode - we don't want to screw ourselves, so let's be nice to each other.

Me: How did you find working in the studio? Is it fun?

Paul: It's a hoot! For the most part...but playback is such a hoot...as you hear everything coming together - it's such a rush.

Me: So, what's next for Cool Blue Halo?

Barry and Paul: Well we gotta get some more bucks...our first run of tapes is pretty much sold out so we have to get more tapes done...and then the full length cd...and then probably some gigs in Toronto this summer [in support of the cd].

Me: Meanie has a low B on her 5 string bass right?

Paul: Low B - yup...I kinda thought, you know, what's the use of having that string, but on some things that we've done she'll hit the low B and it's HUGE.

Me: I know this is a lame question but where'd the name come from?

Barry: I had a vision when I was 12 years old...(laughs).

Me: And it's three words.

Paul: We haven't shortened it down to "Halo" or "Cobalo". Someday, some big record company guy with a cigar is going to say "It's just gonna be 'Halo boys'"...(laughs).

Cliff: Or "CBH".

Me and Paul: No - too close to GBH.

You may still be able to pick up Cool Blue Halo's five song cassette at Sam's. In addition, they will be playing with Toronto band Squirrel at the Deuce this weekend (26th & 27th). They will also be on Breakfast Television ASN on the 31st (7:00 am) and they are opening for the Crash Vegas on April 3rd.



REMINDER

REPAY YOUR CANADA STUDENT LOAN

TO AVOID DEFAULTING, KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR BANK:

- when you begin a new school year;
- at the end of your studies;
- if you move;
- if you drop out;
- if you become a part-time student.

CONSEQUENCES IF YOU DON'T:

- poor credit rating;
- no further Canada Student Loans;
- collection action;
- withholding of income tax refunds.

ISSU Dalhousie Student Union AND MOOSEHEAD

PRESENT **the LeSLie spit tree**

AT THE **GRAWOOD**

ONLY \$4.00 APR 2ND 1993



Department of the Secretary of State of Canada

Secrétariat d'État du Canada

Canada