

entertainment

Burton tears old Founders down

By Ted Mumford

As the Rolling Stones' El Mocambo dates proved last winter, the surprise guest appearance is one of the great spine-tingling phenomena of rock 'n' roll that sets it apart from the rest of showbiz. Although Margaret Trudeau didn't come as part of the deal, York had its taste of this excitement Saturday night as Guess Who leader-rising homegrown star Burton Cummings joined the ribald duo of MacLean and MacLean for a surprise concert at Founders dining hall.

Actually, it wasn't that much of a

surprise. Cummings had dropped in to share the Chimney's stage with the MacLeans the previous Monday, and for those who hadn't heard the scoop on the Founders show on Toronto radio stations Saturday, there were some onstage clues: Blair MacLean sauntered in wearing a Burton Cummings t-shirt (but for that matter brother Gary sported a Good Brothers model), and there was an upright piano next to the MacLeans' guitar and voice mics.

While talk of the imminent arrival of Cummings and a dozen other never-to-appear luminaries buzzed around the room, the Glace Bay

brothers took to the stage, sans Burton. In their set, they proved once again their ability to be irreverent, shameless, vulgar and tremendously good fun.

They stalk a strange path: immersing their audience in the toilet humour that most of us would never admit enjoying elsewhere, and carrying it off with enough class to make it a cleansing, almost cathartic experience.

The full house audience was in an uproar even before the MacLeans arrived on stage for their third concert at Founders in four years. Judging from the deafening

response to favourites like the spoof of Stompin' Tom Connors' "I Been Everywhere" ("I've Seen Pubic Hair"), Founders loves them. As a neighbour explained to me, "MacLean and MacLean have the right image to appeal to a university crowd." (Especially an inebriated one.)

Although in the public eye the MacLeans are synonymous with obscenity, they ought to be known for their topicality as well. For example: "If Trudeau and Rene Levesque were both drowning, who would be saved?" Answer: "Canada".

Blair MacLean's super-capsulisation of the plot for "Star Wars", complete with a bawdy ending, was brilliant. Other vulgar delights were a sampling of the graffiti the MacLeans have collected from across the country and a skit in which the "Star Trek" gang encounter an alien civilisation whose members had a predilection for fellatio. (One interesting aspect of the MacLeans' show is most of their sexist smut picks on men rather than women, or is asexual.)

Not long after the MacLeans' set Cummings arrived on the scene, and after a momentary delay at the door (no Founders ID) he strutted through the audience to the stage, provoking a hysteria which prevailed for the rest of the evening. When he appeared under the lights, looking disheveled and well lubricated with Heineken, it was obvious he intended to shed his showbiz skin and get down to some serious basement rock, in what he called the "Las Vegas revue of MacLean, MacLean and Cummings".

In two sets sprinkled with bad-natured jibing between himself and the MacLeans, Cummings gave a running lecture on the history of rock 'n' roll - illustrated amply with tributes to Franky Fontaine, Billie Joe Royal and "the greatest man in rock 'n' roll, who, sadly, died a month ago." The examples included "Runaround Sue", "Mama Hated Diesels", "Mack the Knife", "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance", "In the Boondocks", "Teenager in Love", "Return to Sender", "Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby", "Bye Bye Blackbird" and "Gimme that Wine".

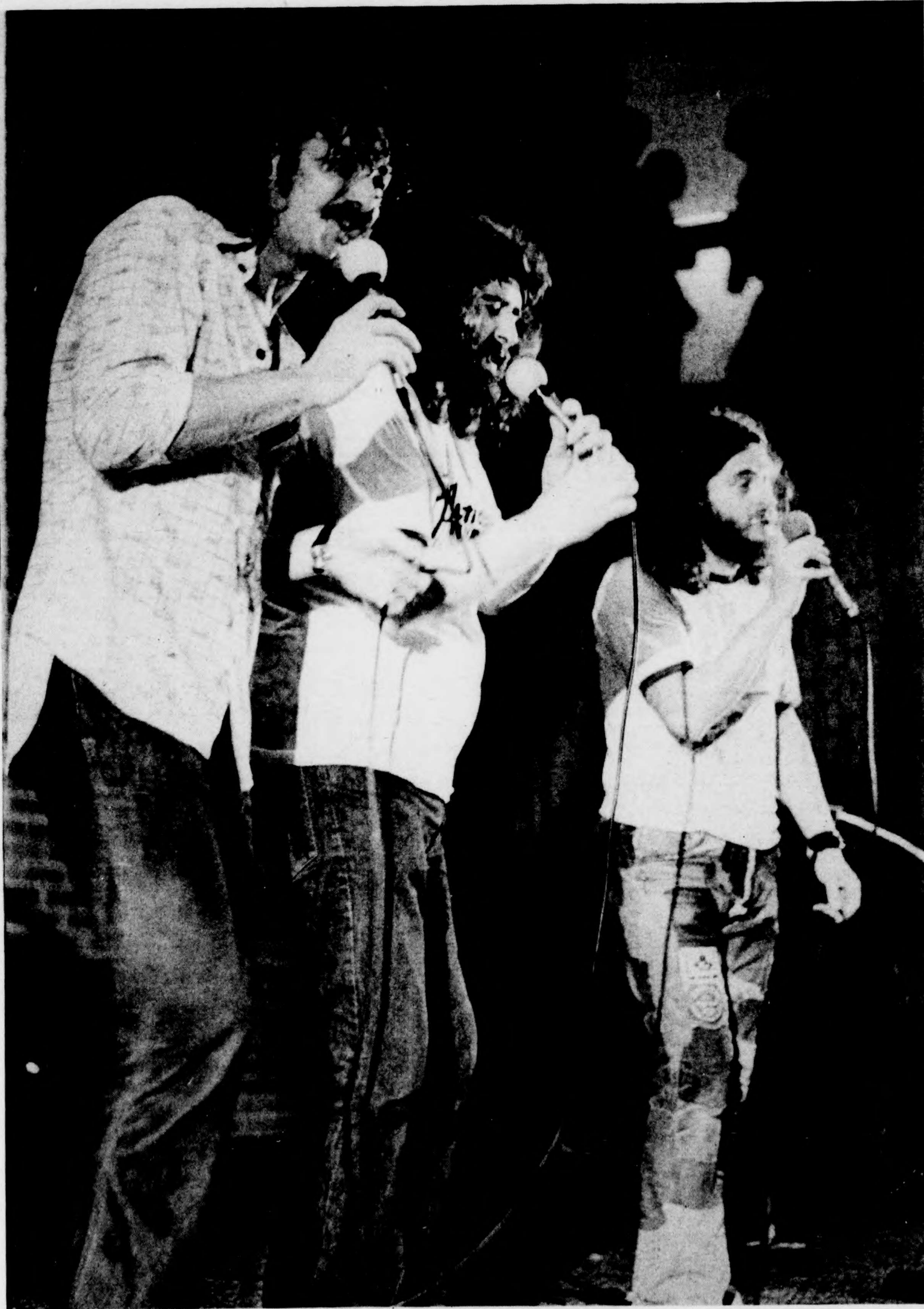
With the MacLeans providing supporting oohs, ahs and bomp-she-dooos, Cummings pounded out his rock 'n' roll scroll on an acoustic guitar borrowed from a Vanier student, sitting down at the piano only long enough to croon a tasteless attempt at MacLean-style humour (at least the MacLeans have taste in their tastelessness) as well as his ballad "46201", which was the only number drawn from his long list of discs. The other blast from Cummings' million-seller past was the trio's demolition of Randy Bachman's "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet".

Although the audience went wild for "I se the Bye", played "down east style" by the MacLeans, then by Cummings à la lounge lizard, the best responses of the evening followed Cummings' bellow of "Founders YAHOO!" and the trio's version of "The Night they Tore Old Founders Down".

In an evening of obscenity the only disgusting performance was by Burton Cummings' ego. The clearer it became that the seasoned practitioners of toilet humour were getting all the laughs, the more vicious Cummings became in the insults he hurled in their direction. His habit of proclaiming his wealth was also disturbing: "Have you seen the cars I own? I don't even have enough education to get in the goddamn army, but I've got more gold around my neck than any (expletive deleted) general in this man's army!"

Maybe it's just a put-on on Cummings' part. When I talked to him after the show he was friendly, if somewhat burnt out. He dropped in on the show because, "I just decided to take a night off - the tour I'm on finishes tomorrow night in Hamilton. Hell, we've played together lots of times. Gary lived in my house for five years."

Cummings' cross-country tour included a CNE grandstand show and stops at several Ontario campuses. Perhaps it's fortunate no student council at York could afford his \$15,000 tab. York saw him for no fee - Canada's most successful tunesmith, out on the town, and playing up a storm.



Former Guess Who leader and all-around Canadian rock hero Burton Cummings stopped in at York between London and Hamilton concert dates last Saturday night

to join MacLean and MacLean onstage at Founders Dining Hall. Above, the threesome perform "Bye Bye Blackbird" a capella. As the "suprise appearance was

broadcasted by a number of Toronto radio stations, students packed not only the hall and its balcony but also neighbouring pubs and windows around the hall.