

Chalking up commercial success

By TRACEY REID

When it comes to Toronto-based band Chalk Circle, people on the radio aren't the only ones who want to play their stuff. Their first album, a mini-LP entitled *The Great Lake*, outsold everyone's expectations. Their record label, Duke Street Records, project a total sale of 5,000. The debut went on to sell 30,000 copies.

On the success of their new album, *Mending Wall*, the band started a tour which included a show at York in the Founders College dining hall last Thursday. The band seems to have grown up a lot since their early days. A new sense of maturity can be seen in both the songwriting and playing.

Chalk Circle had just finished doing several shows out east with Rush, and then five headline shows in Montreal. Several university dates have also been tucked under their belts as well as a show at the Ontario Place Forum in July.

The band opened the York show with "My Artificial Sweetener," immediately capturing the attention of all present. As the song wound down, drummer Derrick Murphy gave new meaning to the word "drums" as he left his drum kit to play on the wall of the dining hall. Guitarist and lead singer, Chris Tait, then decided to bow to the mural on the wall before launching into their second song, "Hands." At this point, the band's adrenaline really started flowing and the "real" Chalk Circle came alive.

The band seldom strayed from the recorded format of the album. Few

songs were extended or adapted in any way, but all were played with intensity. Each had a harder edge, less apparent on the albums. Songs such as "April Fool" and "Me, Myself, and I," both from "The Great Lake," were played more up-tempo and at times seemed to soar to frenzied heights.

Other pieces, such as "N.I.M.B.Y." the band's next single "which should be out last week," according to Tait, and "Park Island" were more controlled and caused an unexpected hush to fall over the crowd.

During the show each member of the band proved himself quite capable of holding his own. Tait, while playing a mean guitar, also has an admirable vocal range, handling everything from the throaty seductiveness of "Empty Park" to the heights of "Part Island." Brad Hopkins, the band's bassist, plays in a way which enables him to be just as much a frontman as Tait.

Keyboardist, Tad Winklarz, adds a touch of class to the ensemble with his capable style. Winklarz also supplies sax in all the right places, producing a melancholy sound where needed and a jazzy, light touch to other pieces.

Drummer, Derrick Murphy, gives the band its sense of humour. Watching Murphy, one could see just who keeps things light within the band. His expressions and actions were enough to make anyone laugh as he played the entire encore with his towel wrapped, turban-like, around his head. He also must have thought the crowd looked hungry—as the show wound down he broke open a

bag of salt and vinegar chips and flung them at the audience.

Before the show Tait said that the band was enjoying every minute of their success. They take the bad with the good because, according to Tait, "You can't expect everything to be a bed of roses no matter what you do."

Though worn-out and tired, Chalk Circle definitely appear to be enjoying more of the good. A new video for "N.I.M.B.Y." (Not In My Backyard), shot while the band was out east, is still in the editing stages but should be released in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, the band will be continuing their tour, with shows at RPM on the 26th, the Spectrum in Montreal, and possibly a few shows out West. The new year may also see the band breaking into the US market which is yet to be conquered by the young Canadian quartet.



Talk about shady characters Lori Lee Yates (above) and the rest of Rang Tango played the Grad Lounge last Monday night. The band plays mainly country music with a little touch of rock and jazz.

New meaning to indigestion in film

By NORMAN WILNER

There's only one problem with Jack DeVries (Chris Mulkey). Up until two weeks ago, he was a nice, normal family man. Now he's driving a black Ferrari, holding up banks and indiscriminately blowing people away on the streets of Los Angeles.

Jack DeVries, you see, has an "uggy" inside of him.

This uggy, which has the ability to slop into people's mouths and take them over completely, killing them in the process, has come to Earth for no other reason than to have fun. And what is fun to a parasitic, possessive "uggy"? Driving fast and partying hard.

"If he wants something, he takes it," says good uggy Kyle MacLachlan. "If someone gets in his way, he kills them." MacLachlan divulges this to his human partner, police detective Tom Beck (Michael Nouri), who finds himself thrown headlong into the struggle that has raged for years between good and bad uggies.

It is the basic thread of humanity—gained, lost, and abused—that makes *The Hidden* so much fun to watch, and which gives the standard extraterrestrial chase story something to aspire to. The film is a B movie with A sensibilities. Director Jack Sholder (whose last project, *A Nightmare On Elm Street Part 2:*

Freddy's Revenge, was something of a disappointment) has invested *The Hidden* with a glossy, high-tech look and a rambunctious, energetic feel.

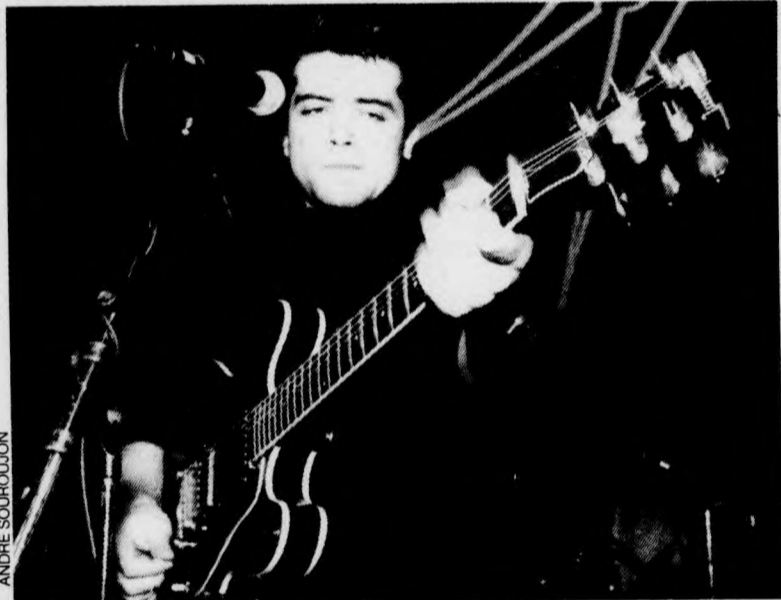
MacLachlan, as an enigmatic-yet-heroic uggy who pursues the evil one because of a lust for revenge (which makes us wonder just how good this good uggy really is, of course), is terrific. As the film begins, the alien has inhabited this human form for a month but hasn't quite gotten the hang of it yet. He still has a slight problem with cutlery, and a major intolerance of alcohol. Of course, his human partner (Nouri, the only man in *Flashdance* who wasn't a total sleaze) must teach him how to be human. Like Jeff Bridges' *Starman*, the ways of man are totally bizarre to him. Nouri's performance as "Lloyd Gallagher" is a joy to behold, full of slightly mechanical actions and intense facial expressions. One of the clues to ugginess is a very piercing gaze, you understand.

But why are these uggies battling it out on Earth? No explanation is ever given, but we get some hints as to how they got here. A forest fire about a month before the film starts is apparently caused by the aliens' arrival, and the evil uggy wants to stay on Earth and "be President." Apparently, all it wants to be is appreciated; the bad uggy is attracted to a popular Senator because he "is the one they all applaud." An insecure uggy? The mind boggles!

At any rate, the final confrontation between good and evil is something of a letdown; the story just ends, without much of a climax. We'd know all along that one of them would win; the ending simply shows us which one. And then there's a little scene which ties up all the loose ends, but in an irritating, ambiguous manner.

The presskit makes it all clear, sort of, but how many of you are going to get a chance to read it? No, the final scene of *The Hidden* is just not up to the rest of the film. Of course, this is a minor quibble. Why bother picking at one minute when the other 94 were so good? And, when sweet Clarence Felder (the portly actor who plays Bobo Pritzler on the new *Hooperman* TV series) becomes host to an evil uggy from space, and you find yourself believing it, you know the flick is better than average.

Just to round things out: the creature from space is called an uggy because that's the first word that ran across this writer's mind when he saw it. The thing in *The Hidden* is a black, tumorous mess with four hairy feelers and a gout of slime covering its body, ending in a myriad of pseudopods. It's only seen by the audience once (well, once and a half), but that's enough; the uggy of *The Hidden* is as disgustingly repulsive as they come. And it gets in through your mouth . . . !



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