

How many guitarists does it take

by Bruce Adamson

How many blues guitarists does it take to screw in a lightbulb? Ten — one to do the job and nine to say, "I could have done it better."

Face it, Toronto is a blues-rock heaven. This town's club scene is absolutely chock o' block with groovin' I-IV-V acts. Jeff Healey, The Phantoms, The Bourbon Tabernacle Choir, Jack De Keyzer, Paul James and Morgan Davis are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

The newest addition to my incomplete list is Wild T and the Spirit who have been gigging around town in support of their debut release *Love Crazy*.

As with virtually all bands who seem to appear out of nowhere, Wild T and the boys actually date back a number of years. Band leader Tony Springer was a member of Rough Trade in the early 80s, and went on to front a highly successful Hendrix tribute act that played every beer joint

Love Crazy
Wild T and the Spirit
WEA Music

between Windsor and Montreal. Tony then linked up with Frozen Ghost's Arnold Lanni, who produced and co-wrote much of *Love Crazy*.

And the result? A solid blend of

bluesy-rock licks with slick production hook-laden tunage. It's not the newest combination in rock n' roll, but it sounds cool and is an accurately reflects the band's live show.

"Mean, Mean, Mama" is a Colin Jamesish number complete with an imaginative horn arrangement that sounds extremely hip



beside Springer's screaming axe-manship. "Love Crazy" is the big single; you know, humungus cast o' thousands backing vocals stuff. The guitar line is reminiscent of Jimi's Band of Gypsies material, which isn't a bad thing.

Love Crazy is not without its shortcomings. "Can't Getcha Out of My Mind" is pure formula pop. The vocal is strained and the tune

lacks soul and conviction. In addition, alot of the lyrics throughout the album are incredibly cliché.

However, this comes with the territory. Straight up rock n'roll has never pretended to be anything but beer drinking music anyway. Wild T and the Spirit know this and milk it to the hilt. I've heard this before, and frankly Scarlett, I don't mind hearing it again.

Phrancly folk

by Ira Nayman

Positively Phranc
Phranc
Island Records

The first thing one notices about folksinger Phranc is her amazing voice, which is reminiscent of early Judy Collins. It is soft, well-suited to folk music; but it can also growl and scratch if the song demands it.

The next thing one notices is the folkie quality of the songs: simple arrangements (usually just Phranc on a guitar), nice vocal harmonies, squeaking guitar (a little overdone, but, then, folk music isn't for the squeamish).

The songs are a typical folkie mix of serious personal torch songs ("I Love You" and "I'm Not Romantic"), lighter songs ("Gertrude Stein") and political songs ("Dress Code," "Outta Here" and "Tipton"). *Positively Phranc* is everything a good folk album should be.

I wasn't impressed with the way the press overplayed Phranc's lesbianism in reviews of her previous album, *I Enjoy Being a Girl*. In fact, if you weren't listening too closely, you mightn't even pick up on the fact that Phranc promotes herself as "the All American Jewish Lesbian Folksinger."

To be sure, Phranc seems proud of who she is, a worthwhile accomplishment in itself given our society's subtle (and occasionally overt) homophobia. Nonetheless, I felt the press should have given more attention to her music than her lifestyle.

After listening to *Positively Phranc*, I'm not so sure. I still believe Phranc's lesbianism was overplayed, but it is such a big part of her music that it certainly must be considered.

Most of the songs do reflect lesbian experience or a lesbian point of view; a beautiful a capella rendition of the Beach Boy's "Surfer Girl," for instance, takes on a whole new meaning when the performers are women.

"Tipton" is a song about a woman jazz musician who spent



Thrashers need Fixing

by Bruce Adamson

Metallica is cool and Megadeth's *Rust in Peace* is great but Cerebral Fix is awful.

"But how can this be?" you ask. "Don't all bands that wear jeans, t-shirts and high-tops sound the same? I mean, gee, isn't it all just a

bunch of mid-frequency noise anyway?"

Fear not. I shall bestow upon your eager ears information that will make you a more discerning thrash listener.

Let's use the latest Cerebral Fix release *Tower of Spite* as a guide book of what not to do when you, the reader, put together your own thrash band.

Rule Number One: Do not buy Black Sabbath's *Master of Reality* and then think you know everything about the roots of thrash. This is what the Cerebral ones did, and look at the hideous result! Every song sounds like "Lord of This World."

Every single song! First we have the atomic funeral dirge section, followed by the up-tempo double bass drum. Then the Fix return to the dirge and end it.

Rule Number Two: Develop your musical ability. The guys in Megadeth are creative players who push the limits of their musical territory. The members of Cerebral Fix are musically incompetent, visionless and stuck in a doom-and-gloom lyrical morass.

Enough said.

Tower of Spite
Cerebral Fix
Roadracer/Cargo Records



Toronto Philharmonic leads Sibelius celebration

by Stanley Feldman

The music of Jean Sibelius was celebrated by the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra on April 23rd in its last performance of the 1990/91 season.

Under the expert artistic direction of Paul Robinson we were privileged to sample the versatility of this Finnish composer, regarded by many as the greatest living symphonist until his death in 1957.

The program opened with the "Karelia Suite." In the spring of 1893, some students at Helsinki University were planning a historical pageant, drawing on episodes from the history of Karelia (now in the Soviet Union, but, at that time, Finland's easternmost province), an important source of folk heritage. Sibelius was asked to write the incidental music.

The lively mood of the piece is reflected in the "Intermezzo" (1st movement) and "Alla Marcia" (3rd movement), where a full orchestra including tambourine and cymbals propel the music on

with exhilarating melodies and rhythms. The second movement, "Ballade" is more intricate and ruminative, reminiscent of the calm of a midsummer night.

In his Toronto debut, the great Finnish baritone Jorma Hynninen was the special guest artist of the evening's performance. In addition to being a prolific recording artist, Hynninen is a leading soloist with the Finnish National Opera, and has been its Artistic Director since 1984.

Hynninen treated his audience to eleven Finnish folk songs of love, both requited and unrequited. His voice was robust and beautiful, and his performance was well appreciated by the enthusiastic audience.

The concert concluded with "Finlandia."

The very end of the 19th Century was a period of considerable political turmoil in Finland, and Sibelius was caught up in the mounting fever of nationalism. In response to the February Mani-

fest, whereby the Russians deprived Finland of its autonomy and curtailed freedom of speech and assembly, Sibelius wrote a series of patriotic tableaux.

One piece, "Finland Awakes" is thought to have been derived from actual folk melodies, but Sibelius emphatically denied this. An admirer persuaded him to

rename the work "Finlandia." Today, this tone-poem is universally recognized as one of the most patriotic pieces of music ever written.



Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.