

ARTS

DIRECT DRIVE by James L. Stevens

Jimi B.
JIMI B.
A & M Records (SP9069)

Blech! I am unimpressed, unamused, and totally repulsed!

The vinyl this album is pressed on could have gone to a better use elsewhere...anywhere! There should be a rider on the record cover: WARNING; This Album Contains Bland, Banal Music! Really, I had a hard time finding any originality or energy on this effort by "cute-guy" Jimi B. (see album cover for cute-guy reference). Does Mr. B. really think that people are going to buy this junk? Not only is the music less than inspiring, but the lyrics are blasé and clichéd; a real pile of bile. I have friends who yawn with more intelligence, wit and energy.

The only point of interest about Jimi B. and Jimi B. is this: He is Canadian, the album was recorded in Canada, and the record was pressed and packaged in Canada, and yet he sings such heartfelt tunes as "Red, White and Blue" and "All American Boy".

Is that fish I can smell in the air?

Speak & Spell
DEPECHE MODE
Sire Records/W.E.A. Music (XSR 3642)

File this album under "D" — for "disco".

Depeche Mode is another synthetics band (meaning that none of the members know how to play any real instruments and are therefore not real musicians). In trying to deliver the ultra-trendy electro-pop sound, Depeche Mode has coughed up nothing more than what I consider to be re-worked disco. I kept expecting John Travolta to strut out from my stereo as the record continued playing.

There are a few solid electro-pop offerings on *Speak & Spell*, so it is far from being a completely wasted effort by the band. The two best cuts are "Dreaming Of Me" and "What's Your Name?". These two cuts seemed to have a fuller sound and more depth to them than the others on the album. As well, there was not the ever present "thumpa-thump" percussion track on the tunes. A suitable choice for fans of The Human League.

Up and Coming

MUSIC

Nylons; SUB Theatre; Thursday to Saturday March 25-27; 7:30 and 10:30 p.m.; Tickets at all BASS outlets.

READINGS AND SPEAKERS

Mary Howes and Steven Hume; SUB Art Gallery; Friday March 26; 12:00 Noon; admission free.

The two will read from their poetry. Hume, as you may be aware, is a big wheel in local journalism.

THEATRE

Country Chorale; Theatre Network; until April 4; 8:00 p.m.

This country musical is about "a small town girl with big-time dreams, of the boy who wants to take care of her, and of the music that envelops (sic) them all (sic). I just love press releases.

For those who missed our literary supplement, the poetry newsletter *World of Poetry* is having a poetry competition with over \$10,000 in cash merchandise (!) prizes. Rules and official entry forms are available from WoP, 2431 Stockton Blvd. Sacramento California 95817.

The High Level Gallery, which specializes in framed reproductions of works by famous artists, will be vending its product in Room 142 SUB today and

Radio Clash
THE CLASH
CBS (12 EXP 02662)

Review by Russell Mathew
Edited by J.L. Stevens

Radio Clash is a consistent follow-up to the very successful *Sandinista*, which was a series of experiments into various musical types. This time the experiment is (with all due respect) The Clash meets trendy. Radio Clash covers White Funk, electronics, sound effects 'dub,' and even a verse in French all in one 4-song EP. The four tunes are basically all different versions of the same song. The two versions on the first side are quite funky tunes with very strong guitar work, good horns and a dash of electronics thrown in for good measure. The ever-present percussion line makes this side a good candidate for the dance circuit. The flip-side has quite different treatments of the song. The first version begins with a rather shrill and annoying female chorus repeating "This is Radio Clash" over and over. Interspersed with this are various sound effects, including honking car horns. It fades into a kind of "Radio Dub" with lots of electronic effects and fragments of vocals coming off much like *Sandinista's* "Version Pardonner."

Literally, Radio Clash is more of a Clash 'manifesto' of all things in the world which concern them than the expression of any particular thought. War, America and the evils of international power politics are the dominant themes here as with all of their more recent work. They peacefully boost their causes acting as a 1980's pirate radio service: "This is not Free Europe: Law and Armed Force Network, This is Radio Clash from pirate satellite ... This is Radio Clash using oral ammunition, This is Radio Clash, can we get the world to listen?"

All in all this is a very strong work but one must approach it with an open mind, for on an initial listening it may sound too much like the disco which everyone loves to hate. If you give it a fair change, you should not be disappointed. It is an exciting taste of what can be expected from the forthcoming, as yet untitled, Clash album slated for European release in April.

Friday. Might be worth a look.

Second City Revue at the Point After is offering student discounts on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Cost is now \$5.00 and meals are optional.

Ronnie Hawkins and the Good Brothers (!!!) are at Devil's Lake Corral this Friday (tomorrow). Aging *Gateway* hack Kent Blinston thinks the Good Brothers are merely OK, but that just goes to show you what the ravages of syphilis can do to one's hearing. Oh yes: if you do decide to go, make sure to reserve your table in advance.

The Undergraduate Philosophy Club is showing the NFB film *War Story*, about a Canadian doctor in a Japanese POW camp in World War Two, Tuesday March 30 in Humanities AV L-2. The notice they dropped on my desk didn't mention a time. Now isn't that just like philosophers to overlook little critical details.

The University of Alberta Film Studies Programme with the NFB is showing *Les Bons Desbarres (Good Riddance)* in Physics P-126 today at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. The filmmaker, Francis Mankiewicz will be present for discussion after the second showing. The film won eight "Genies" and is described by Jay Scott of the *Globe and Mail* as "superb". It is in French with English subtitles.

And for a mere five dollars you can treat yourself to the 1982 Spring Festival of World Unity this weekend at King's College and get in on the latest program to save the world by yakking. The organizers say, "In coming together we will share our insights and energy and discover our individual capacities to contribute to the unity of the planet."

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? J. A.



The neighbours in Point St. Charles have a tete-a-tete.

Reality hits the stage

Balconville
Corbett Hall
Until April 3

review by Jens Andersen

If creating convincing characters is the hardest task facing the fictioneer, then playwright David Fennario has quite an accomplishment in this play about life in Montreal's seedy Point St. Charles, for he has created out of his imagination a gaggle of working-class folks who walk and talk just like the real item.

To appreciate the enormity of this achievement one has to consider all the pitfalls of stereotyping he could so easily have fallen into in conjuring up a cast of characters which includes a no-good, unemployed drunkard, his nagging wife, a harassed, middle-aged single mother, an English boy (her son) who finds love among the ruins with a French girl, a half-wit delivery boy, a solid, respectable married working stiff, and the hustling MP who is running for re-election in their riding.

In about 98 per cent of all plays with a Romeo-and-Juliet-of-the-ghetto situation, for instance, the affair would be painted as a triumphant victory of the spirit over the material world, or a tragic crushing of the aforementioned spirit by cruel reality. In *Balconville*, however, the budding romance simply drifts into boredom, with the lovers unable even to work up much enthusiasm about their disagreement over disco music.

And MP Bolduc, when he goes campaigning from door to door, has none of the exaggerated oiliness of the usual politician of book, stage and screen; he is merely an average non-entity with a fast

tongue and a head full of soothing platitudes.

There is almost none of the standard sentimentalization of working-class people into lovable, colorful characters, or helpless victims of oppression, or paragons of humble virtue (or some variation of these clichés). Instead one sees genuine proles: resentful, obstinate, boisterous, imaginatively foul-mouthed, and full of raw humour. The dialogue, the action and the mannerisms of the characters were so authentic that there were times I could have sworn I wasn't watching a play, but was back driving cab and catching a glimpse of some domestic drama through the front door.

Here recognition must also be given to uniformly fine acting, the realistic attire, and a simply superb set. And the lighting too, I suppose. Have I forgotten anything?

Needless to say, I recommend the play most highly. The only drawback of the play I can think of is that about 20-30 per cent of the show is French, which somewhat limits the comprehension and enjoyment of non-francophones like myself.

Oh, yes: if there are any pseudo-intellectuals out there looking for enlightenment about the so-called "Quebec problem," you won't find much here, except perhaps the revelation that the slight amount of hostility that exists between the French and the English is of the same routine kind that happens among the members of any social group. Even when the people in the play hoist the French and Canadian flags, it is over one of those incomprehensible hot-weather arguments that happen everywhere.

Mum's the word

Mummenschanz
SUB Theatre
March 18

review by Geoffrey Jackson

How can mime, which prides itself upon its freedom from language, be described with mere words? Any verbal explanation of just what the *Mummenschanz* Mime Troup did last Thursday night can only begin to describe what really happened.

A rock, after much diligent effort managed to climb a ramp, and the crowd cheered. A tall green slinky played catch, throwing a yellow balloon ball to the audience. A strange multilimbed creature had an intense fight with itself, so intense it was hard to tell who was winning. Such descriptions as these are shadows of what really happened.

Yet I can describe how the audience reacted to all this strangeness; with wonder; awe, and laughter. I said laughter last because *Mummenschanz* does not normally engender belly-roaring, fall-in-

the-aisle hilarity. Instead they draw out chuckles, smiles, and soft, gentle laughter.

Perhaps *Mummenschanz's* greatest talent lays in their ability to express emotion through the most unlikely objects. During the intermission Lydia Biondi came out, in black, wearing a black cube for a head. She was a very surreal figure indeed. Yet she instantly created the persona of a coquettish girl; flirting with the men in the audience and admiring the children, all without a word. By the end of the intermission her black cube head seemed to possess character and personality despite its lack of features. This sort of skill is very rare indeed.

The troupe consisted of Liona Biondi, John Murphy, and Peter Schelling. Mime requires a discipline as rigorous as any form of dance and these performers showed their skills without a moment's faltering.

The show lasted two hours and everyone could have happily had more. This sort of theatre is so special and unique that one can only hope that they will return to Edmonton in the not-too-distant future.