

Business as usual at this year's Red & Black

by Sam Morgan
Brunswickan Entertainment

The Red and Black Revue completed its 49th successful venture this past Saturday. Although initially plagued by low turnout on Thursday, the remainder of the days saw a respectable sized crowd fill the Playhouse. The theme of the night was Welcome Home, to compliment UNB's first ever Homecoming.

I happened to attend the Friday show and enjoyed it very much even though the temperature inside of the Playhouse reminded me of being stuck in a plastic bag with a campfire inside.

The whole evening was a wonderfully orchestrated production co-ordinated by Jeffrey Melanson and Kailey Finkelman who really outdid themselves in making the Red and Black a success.

The Revue was haplessly glued together by the Master and Mistress of Ceremonies Curtis Dorion and Jeanette Godreau. Dorion provided the humour and was a crowd favourite, while Godreau stood rigid in her blue lined sequined dress.

The production showcased a bevy of UNB song talent starting with an acapella sextet of UNBers doing a traditional Nova Scotian song about what else - beer. The Revue also provided an outlet for an obviously popular, but less talented band, Mallard, doing their broken off-key rendition of a Live song. Chandra2 was a duet of veteran performers singing late night radio perennial favourites Hootie and the Blowfish and Blues Traveller stuff.



Mirth and mayhem thanks to Brent Lockhart and Tony LePage
Photo by Roxanne Robinson

As well, a trio performed powerful Sarah McLachlan melodies.

The musical treat of the evening was a stunning performance by Bryanna White, who with her classically trained voice and adroit grand pianoish fingers, played and sang a gorgeous duet with Jeff Melanson. Andy Didyk, a gentleman who looks like John Sebastian, sang his personal best as he lamented about lost love and a song to his deceased mother.

There were several dance numbers, most notably a collection of women dressed in Club Monaco outfits. Collectively they looked like The Chestnut dance floor, which is good as opposed to bad. Anyway, their hips swayed with gusto and it was entertaining to everyone in the crowd. Girls V-Red B-Ball player, Donna Retson showcased her highland dancing talent while Michelle Doucet did a more modern dance.

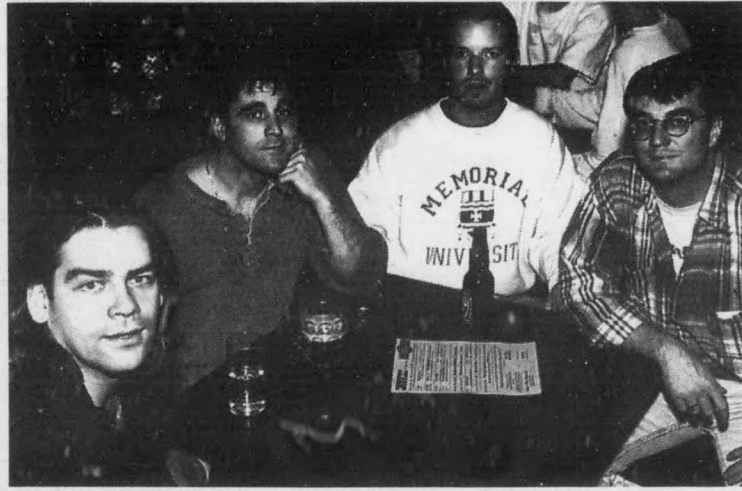
The production's comical content was provided by Brent and Tony, and

the Red and Black traditional news update. Brent and Tony were wonderful together, they were able to incorporate several lifted comedy routines and make them appealing. Like the invisible tennis and ping-pong thing. Tony of Tony and Brent in his Jim Carreyish gyrations entertained the crowd like there was no tomorrow and received the accolades of everyone. This guy is a talent. The News Update was wildly funny as "Jean Chrétien" made a guest appearance and discussed the referendum and "eating his house." Hey *The Bruns* was mentioned, so I was happy.

It was a great evening that ended in an orgy of delight with the all-Dancing and All-Singing "Just Us" that copulated in a version of Bjork's "It's Oh So Quiet" that signalled the kickline finale.

I was thoroughly entertained throughout the whole evening and can hardly wait for the big 5-Oh next year. See you there.

Great Big Sea continues...



Great Big Sea enjoy a swift one before taking the stage
Photo by Mark Bray

category is the band in at this time? Sean: Well, we're basically in the mainstream; we've been touring Canada for a couple of years. We do have a broad base, from Vancouver to St. John's, with the biggest following in the East Coast. We're a very known band right across the country. What I would like to see happen, is radio and music video television accept that we are a mainstream band. The only problem we do have, is radio.

Bruns: It's been difficult then to get airplay on radio stations other than campus stations?

Sean: The type of music we play, hasn't been pigeon-holed or labelled. It's just been lumped into a Celtic/light-rock music category and there's no format on mainstream radio for that other than Sunday morning shows. So we rely on campus radio stations, and certainly with this release, Warner Music is pushing for more airplay. It's been added to the local radio stations in St. John's and Halifax. MuchMusic has picked up our video. Because of the type of music

we play, we have a larger obstacle to overcome than most bands that are mainstream.

Bruns: It's noticeable that there is a lot of group rapport, as well as audience rapport.

Alan: It's just our personalities, you know. We like to meet new people. We do like to engage the crowd...we don't want this big magical barrier between the band and audience. It's more like a big kitchen party and we just play songs and have a good time. So everybody is involved.

Bob: We didn't learn to perform in rock and roll clubs. We learned to play in pubs much like this one, and in this atmosphere, the crowds want to be engaged.

Sean: Part of the show, is also the audience's reactions. That's part of the show. If that doesn't happen, it doesn't work out at all.

Darrell: We also decided that if ever the day comes when people just don't want to participate, we're just going to play polkas all night (laughter).

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