

Joe Keighley on commitment, hard work, and the new DOA

interview by Ron Kuipers

Ain't it funny how memories come back to haunt you? See, a band calling themselves DOA were a substantial part of my musical past. Back in the early/mid eighties I listened to these guys quite a bit. I was an angry, bored, middle-class, white kid sick and tired of listening to Loverboy and Foreigner.

Bands like DOA saved thousands of kids like me from the cesspool of commercial rock stagnation. If not through their musical prowess, they saved us by way of their big-middle-finger attitude. A few musicians in the early eighties had the balls to snub their noses at the big record companies' rock and roll formulas. DOA played hardcore when the term meant something besides speed and thrash.

I haven't listened to, or thought about, DOA for a long time. That's why it's funny finding myself talking to singer/guitarist Joe Keighley (aka Joey Shithead) in my third year of university. My tastes have altered somewhat, but I still have good memories of this band. After listening to their latest promo cassette (on which they cover "Where Evil Grows" by Terry Jacks), I discover that I haven't missed much during the interim. But when I do think about the band now, I remember a killer live act, and a group who really feels what they do.

One thing is certain: This is a band that works their collective butt off, and has been persistent and committed ever since their inception. The band has pressed a ton o' vinyl, including an album called *Hardcore '81*, that helped popularize the handle 'hardcore'. That word has since become associated with a type of music that doesn't really fit their sound.

"We took that term to be different when it first came out," says Keighley, "to us it meant more hardworking, committed, and that you didn't take any bullshit." And while he admits that there definitely exists an element of hardcore style in what DOA does, Keighley describes their music as "really hard-hitting riffs, with really hard-hitting lyrics."

It is definitely true that DOA pull no punches with their lyrics. In fact, Keighley feels that one of the most positive things to emerge from the whole punk phenomenon was "a turn back to political music." For him, the re-emergence of a social conscience in



DOA does Edmonton December 14. Check 'em. Live they don't disappoint.

rock and roll was a positive change from "the completely mindless music that usually dominates every generation." "It's still going on," explains Keighley, "but now people are slightly more conscious that there is a world around them, and not just a disco dance beat throbber on the dance floor."

The group also takes their politics outside of just lyrical preaching into the realm of activism. The benefit single "Where Evil Grows" is set to be released on January 5, and "the idea behind it is to raise money and awareness to try and combat the pollution from the pulp and paper industry in Canada and, more specifically, British Columbia."

DOA joining hands with Terry Jacks, who produced the single, is a mixed marriage to say the least. "I think it would be hard to imagine two things further apart," says Keighley. But he's happy with the song. DOA

are known for doing covers of older songs. For instance, they cover BTO's "Takin' Care of Business" and they also do a pretty cool "Roll out the Barrel."

The band has recently signed a six-record deal with Enigma, for five studio and one live album. After eleven years of just going for it, the band is finally beginning to cross over into more mainstream markets. "For us the idea is, if you want to get through to people, you're going to have to reach more people, and not just preach to the converted. Some people would prefer that we remain the same forever, but as a person, and a band, you have to grow and try to do some different things."

The only irony is that the band isn't really doing anything different. It's more like the rest of the business has finally caught up to what bands like DOA are, and have always

been, doing. "Record companies are always conscious in the way that they want to make money," Keighley explains. It seems that now the situation is one where the record companies have finally realized that there is money to be made in different kinds of music, music outside the formulas. Keighley attributes the heightened interest in more alternative types of music to the punk rock explosion of the late seventies and early eighties, an explosion that DOA was very much a part of. "It's not like [the record company executives] have all of the sudden become a bunch of great guys," he says.

So what exists in DOA is a hard-working, hard-rocking band. They're not really progressive musicians, and they haven't changed a whole lot over the last decade, but they do what they do with honesty and feeling. They're great live, and you can catch them December 14 at The Metro.

Network opens *Roxy* with mixed success

One Beautiful Evening (Or Two)
Small Change Theatre/Theatre Network
Through December 17

review by Teresa Pires

The title to Small Change/Theatre Network's latest production is rather misleading; instead of *One Beautiful Evening (Or Two)* it should be changed to *One Boring Evening (Or Two)*. Or better yet, for the sake of accuracy, *One Beautiful Evening (And A Second Really, Really Boring One)*. Not even the excitement of being at The Roxy, Theatre Network's new home, could make up for the

...there's only so much bingo the average audience can stomach...

deficiencies in the play.

Although the play gets off to a promising start in the first act, which is set at the Wildrose Community Hall in 1938, all the vitality and humour is lost in the second act; set in the same hall 50 years later.

The Beautiful Evening occurs on Christmas Eve 1938 when an eager, undaunted Bill (Greg Dowlan-Coltman) convinces Flo (Jan Henderson) to be his wife. Bill gets down on his knees to practise his declaration of love on Max (Robert Astle) before trying it out on Flo, only to get the ring stuck on Max's fingers. Happily, the ring eventually gets to

Flo, as Max has bigger things to think about; in particular, his very pregnant wife, Alice (Jan Miller).

Alice's acrobatics every time she has to move, Flo's delicate reticence, and Max's charming concern for his wife are evidence of the actors excellent abilities, for they manage to convey all of these emotions without ever saying a word. Since the play is a mask, the only words that are spoken are over the PA system in the hall. In the first act, the annoying, Julie McKoy voice belongs to the quirky Christmas Holly Hostess.

This voice, even more annoying than in the first act, becomes the Bingo Caller for the second act. The whole second act is little more than a long series of Bingo games. Flo and Max, the two lonely survivors of the two couples (and now strangers to each other), look to Bingo for relief of their loneliness. Bingo, however, is a poor substitute for a companion, as revealed by their physical reactions to the game.

Their reactions to the repeated good luck of a mysterious cowboy (Greg Dowlan-Coltman) range from disappointment at their losses, to conspiratory hope when they get their hands on one of the cowboy's playing cards, to frustration. They relieve this frustration by physically abusing the card.

But there's only so much Bingo that the average audience can stomach in a play. Although a mask concentrates on character rather than plot by definition, *One Beautiful Evening (Or Two)* would be much more rewarding if another vehicle had been chosen for character development. Not only is the play limited, but it also comes across as unbalanced because of the excessive amount of time spent actually playing the Bingo games.

Yet my proposed change to the title is not

quite accurate either despite the boredom incurred by the Bingo. One beautiful moment redeems the last act at the very end — when

Flo and Max leave the hall, they walk out arm in arm, helping each other down the stairs. And it is the Bingo that brings them together.

