

# York Band adds life to icecube line up

By TRACEY REID

They have just about everything you could possibly want in a band. Still Life, a "York" band, comprised mainly of York students, past and present, helped open the Fine Arts Festival on Monday. According to Russ Lackey and Norm Liota, both guitarists and co-founders of the group, Still Life has never sounded better or been more balanced than it is now.

Liota and Lackey formed the band two years ago when they began working together on some material, trying to transfer what two guitars could do into a seven-piece band.

"What we basically wanted was to set up two guitars, bass, drums, percussion and sax," explains Lackey. "This grew from two guys sitting in the basement in Bethune. Then we graduated to playing in my living room with five other people and playing anywhere. Now we're playing weekends at the Horseshoe, Lee's Palace and the Cameron. It keeps developing.

The band is well matched and each instrument complements the others, producing a tight, solid sound. The balance with Liota and Lackey speak of is very much in evidence. Both claim that the current band is

their best band to date. "The group we've got now is good. It's a situation where there is almost no friction."

In the Fine Arts Building on Monday, each member of the band proved himself a player of high quality. Liota and Lackey continue to be the main song writers in the band and usually have ideas "sketched out" before approaching the other members. The music ranges from songs like "Time Is Yours," which seems to rush forever forward, threatening to explode at any time, to "Find A Way," a song with a taste of the islands. The resulting sound is extremely diverse, a commendable achievement for a band so young.

Nicholas Hockin, the band's percussionist, is another asset, his more than able playing and incredible agility driving such songs as "12/8 Jam" to lighting speeds. Hockin wrote a traditional African folk song, played in the first set on Monday.

Bassist Steve Bright provides a strong bottom to each song. Bright brings both bass and stick to the forefront in songs like "Time is Yours" and "Colours of Life."

Mathew Fleming easily meets the demanding job of lead vocalist. Although at times on Monday the sound system left his voice overpo-

wered by the rest of the band, his voice is powerful and commanding. Brian Humphries, Still Life's drummer, provides a strong beat and keeps every song moving forward with skill and apparent ease.

The newest member of the band is John Pagnotta, who doubles on soprano and tenor sax. Pagnotta adds the finishing touch to Still Life's distinctive sound, providing the perfect amount of sax without ever overdoing it. His lively "costume" also contributes to the festive atmosphere created when the band plays live.

It looks as if Still Life has finally achieved the balance which Lackey and Liota had been striving for so long, through many personnel changes, and the band is looking to the future with optimism. The band is also keeping its options open; the members have decided that if they want something done, they'll do it themselves, without compromise.

In the meantime, Still Life will continue to play and develop. Three shows have been arranged for the near future: Lee's Palace, February 26; Founders College, March 3; The Horseshoe Tavern, March 10. If you missed their show on Monday at the Fine Arts Festival, don't make the same mistake again.



**ADDING LIFE TO THE ICE:** Members of Still Life (above) performed on Monday during the opening of the Fine Arts Festival. Clockwise from left: Nicholas Hockin, John Pagnotta, and Norm Liota.

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