

# The arts

## Nazareth falls short

### From rock to Jesus

What has happened to the Jesus movement that arose from the youth culture of North America? Was it, as some have suggested, simply a choice between Jesus and hashish?

Randy Matthews, a popular Gospel recording artist from Nashville, Tennessee, would say "I'm not an escape artist, and Jesus isn't just another high to get you through the night."

Randy's music has been forged from his early contact with Gospel music through his father, Monty Matthews, a member of the 'Jordanaires' Gospel Quartet who were also Elvis Presley's first backup group, and his own deep involvement in the Rock music culture of the U.S.

Randy's work is representative of a new breed of music that is personal in depth and exciting in form. Many said it couldn't, or even shouldn't be done, but "you can't keep a good man down". He has cut two records: "Now Do You Understand," a double album featuring Randy in concert, and his second album "All I Am Is What You See ... I Pray You See The Truth In Me."



The Liberty Union, an Edmonton group, are a nine member musical package including a brass section, piano, electric strings, and downright excellent vocal harmonization. They also are two time recording artists.

We in Edmonton will have the opportunity of seeing this Nashville performer in concert along with an inspiring locally based Combo, The Liberty Union, on Saturday September 27, at 8:00 p.m., in the cozy Victoria Composite Theatre. Tickets are \$3.00 at HUB ticket office, Gospel Supplies on 102 St. and the Canadian Bible Society on Jasper Ave.

After high school and a few detours, Randy was bent on becoming a rock and roll star, but a few thousand miles and a few hundred dances later, the lights and glitter began to dim.

He started to see that there was more to life than applause and a fast buck. This struggle led him to commit his life to Christ and His Ministry.

As a result of this Randy prepared for and took on a preaching ministry, but soon felt a desire to go to the people who needed him more than those in the church. He opened a coffee house in Cincinnati, and began once again to draw on his diverse musical capabilities as well as his college and seminary days to merge that "Old Message" into a viable and orthodox but vibrant form.

The promoters of this concert have begun negotiations with other Christian artists, both Canadian and American, in order to provide a viable alternative to what is being offered by the basically hedonistic broader rock music culture.

Nazareth entertained a sold-out Kinsmen Fieldhouse audience in classic rock concert tradition, with electric guitars, bright lights, smoke bombs and walls of amplifiers.

The biggest problem with the performance was that it was merely a good concert. Nazareth is a competent band but few of their songs could be called excellent. Pieces of music such as "Shapes of Things" and "This Flight Tonight" are too rare with the band. Also most of their classics are written by others.

That's fine, many great bands have gone a long way performing other people's songs (ie Cream), but Nazareth's concert presence was not completely satisfying.

To survive as a great artist on the rock concert stage one needs more than just fine music, especially in heavy rock'n roll. A performer has to be exciting, and he needs to have perfect audience control. He needs to have good communication with his audience; whip them up to a frenzy and keep them there in the palm of his hand. Nazareth never seemed able to establish this control.

Nazareth is a loud rock band from Scotland. Most of their songs are fast paced, tight rock'n roll with high screaming vocals. Their music has strong roots in North American blues and folk, with songs by such writers as Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan, and Randy Newman. It is not fancy and rarely pretends to be, instead relying on energy and feeling.

Nazareth appeared on stage in a cloud of smoke and they proceeded to empty their bag of tricks. Dan McCafferty, center stage, lunged around, screaming the words and smiling happily. The whole band appeared to be having a tremendously good time, constantly laughing at each others' antics.

Peter Agnew, the bassist, demonstrated this quite well. He liked to stand right at the edge of the stage, smiling and pulling faces at the people below him. He would lean down to talk to

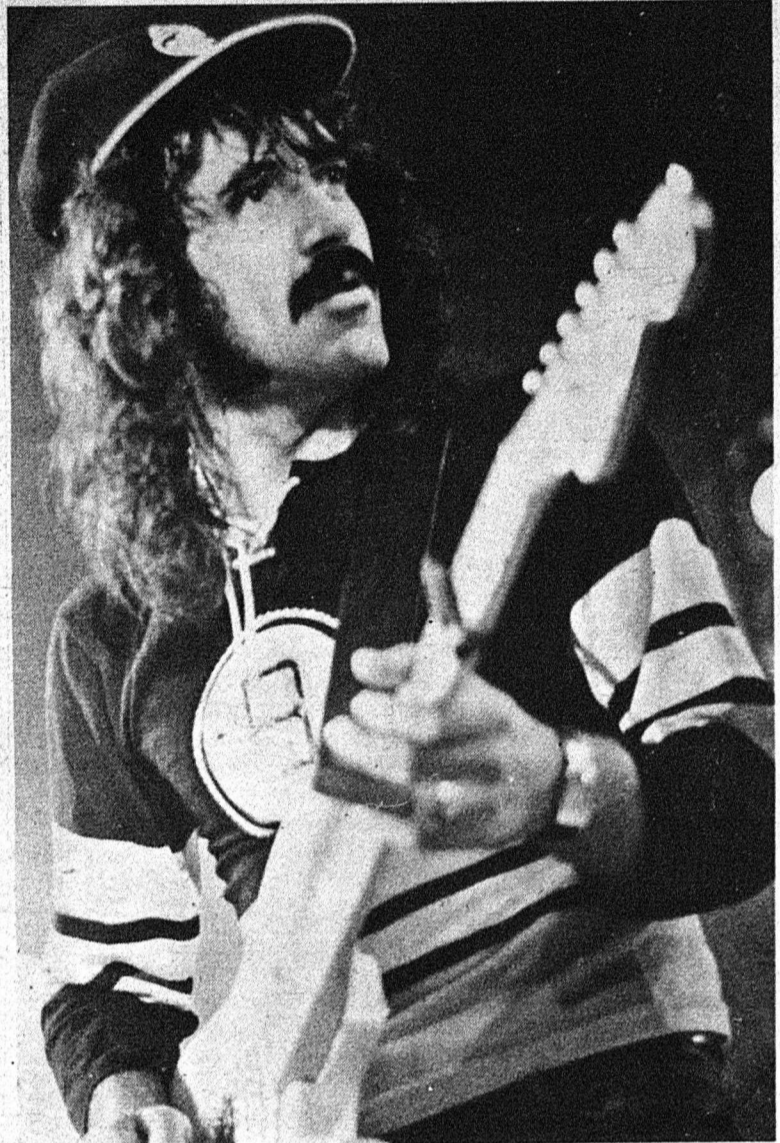


Photo by David Garrett

Though not a great virtuoso, Nazareth's Manuel Charleton displayed a certain competence in last weekend's concert.

them and then leap back to run around the stage a bit, doing his back-up vocals in somebody else's microphone.

Manuel Charleton, looking much like Derek Sanderson in his Boston Bruins sweater, was always ready for his solos the moment it was time and displayed decent competence in their handling. Though not a great guitar virtuoso, he did have the sense not to try something he could not play.

Darrell Sweet, the drummer, largely went unnoticed, but provided a tight basis to the rhythm section.

"Rush" is a Canadian group from down east. They are a heavy metal band whose main influences seem to be Jimi Hendrix and Slade. Their sound consists of a rush of crashing chords interspersed with a lot of fancy guitar licks. Though the guitarist did at times lose the context of the music in his solos, everyone displayed quite a bit of talent.

If "Rush's" popularity continues to grow they could very well be stars soon.

Dave Garrett

### New Kansas album a masterpiece

In the ever-changing world of music the occasional album surfaces that deserves the label of "masterpiece". One such album is *Song for America* by Kansas.

My first experience with Kansas was last spring, when they played back up to Queen. My usual feelings about Queen are unprintable, but Kansas was impressive. Even through the poor sound system their unique style and quality musicianship shone. The six man band from Kansas stuck in my mind.

Finally, *Song for America* came into my hands. On record everything that was lost or garbled in concert comes through crystal clear. Most important is that one can hear the violin perfectly. Kansas features one ace of a violinist, Robbie Steinhardt. He is proving to be one of the finer violinists in the rock idiom, and plays a major role in the Kansas sound. Contributing, as well, are the soaring vocals of keyboardist Steve Walsh. He and Kerry Livgren, guitarist-keyboard wiz, have elevated Kansas to a plateau too few groups reach. They actually know how to use a synthesiser as an instrument and not as a

noisemaker. Their use of both the Moog and ARP synthesisers as well as the ARP Strings (an electronic device that recreates the sound of a string section) is tasteful and well handled.

Not only have the members of Kansas proved themselves as musicians, but their lyrics stand as fine poetry. All of the best features of Kansas are brought together in one song in particular - "Incomudro-Hymn to

the Atman". The writing is superb, the violin, the vocals, the guitars, everything works together to leave the listener with a feeling of satisfaction.

For those who appreciate good music, Kansas is a band well worth investigating. If talent is any gauge, Kansas may be taking the music industry by storm any time now.

David Garrett



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