

photo Ray Ciguere

Why is James Cotton smiling? So would you if you could wail like him.

Bands good, audience fair

Persuasions,
James Cotton Band
SUB Theatre

review by Jens Andersen

Copy is raining down on the desk like manna from heaven, so this will be short. In a nutshell, both bands were fine.

I'm lukewarm about rhythm and blues, and a capella singing tires me quickly, but the Persuasions were irresistible - bouncing around the stage, belting out quirky and unearthly harmonies, and inviting the audience onstage to be trained in the fine art of doo-wopping and shoo-doot-shoo-be-dooing.

The James Cotton Blues Band shone too, with last-night-in-Canada enthusiasm bolstering tightly disciplined musicianship. The band's guitar whiz was especially noteworthy.

The only blemish on the uniform wonderfulness of the evening, besides a couple of mediocre slow blues numbers by the Cotton band, was the tepid audience. True enough, they were appreciative of

the music being served up, and they could be counted on to clap along when called upon, but with the exception of a few dancers in the balcony, there was no ecstatic release, no real surrender to the music. Both bands failed to draw the audience into choruses despite herculean attempts, until a final convulsive effort by both bands got everyone singing on the last song.

And - would you believe it - no one seemed to know the words to "Let the Good Times Roll." I suggest that the English department begin a crash program to ram them into students' heads. After all, the Persuasions may be coming back for the Edmonton Folk Festival this summer, and it would be terrible to have our noses rubbed in our cultural backwardness again.

An excellent version of the song can be found on Nilsson Schmilsson and a heavy-industrial one, suitable for engineers, is to be had on Slade Alive, to mention just two of many possible sources.

Theatre Francais One-man act?

Elizabeth Bourget's play *Bernadette et Juliette* is now playing at the French Theatre auditorium 8406 - 91 St. Edmonton, March 20, 21 and 22, at 8:00 p.m. Faculte Saint-Jean's Marc Moquin spoke to her and obtained the following interview:

Moquin: Elizabeth Bourget, could you talk to us about your training as a playwright since 1976?

Bourget: Well, in 1976, after finally deciding that theatre was for me, I went to l'Ecole Nationale du Theatre in Montreal and studied under Jean-Claude Germain. In 1976, the playwriting section had just opened and I was the only person in that section. By 1979, my last year there, we were 4 in that section. I must certainly say that I helped pioneer that playwriting section. Now, the section is working well. The Ecole is not planning on expanding enrolment in the section since the market can't absorb more than 4 writers every 3 or 4 years.

Moquin: Your plays talk about what, exactly?

Bourget: My plays center on the life of present day young people in Quebec. I like to bring out the day-to-day stuff, and make the statement that Quebec's young people are falling asleep and losing the old militant grasp on things that the 60's and 70's produced. *Bernadette et Juliette* is that, a statement saying "Wake up, people, things are going bad again."

Moquin: Why do you think things are "going bad again" with Quebec's young people?

Bourget: From the early 60's to the victory of the Parti Quebecois, Quebec had been fighting for the improvement of Quebec society. That battle took a lot of effort and stamina. What young people don't realize now is that the battle is over but the war is still on.

Moquin: Are the people in *Bernadette et Juliette* fictitious?

Bourget: No, they are real people. They are not carbon copies of people I know but they are a collage of personalities blended into characters. They are made from people I meet and talk to every day.

Moquin: What's the theatrical atmosphere in Montreal at the present time?

Bourget: Well, 10 - 15 years ago, we were making the statement: "We are Quebecois." We wanted to be accepted by the outside world as Quebecois, not as Canadians. Now we know who we are, we know we are Quebecois. Our plays now talk more about the day to day events and problems facing society in Quebec. *Bernadette et Juliette* was the beginning of a series of plays with that idea.

Moquin: Is Quebecois theatre only trying to make statements?

Bourget: Oh no! It's also asking many questions. Questions about values, because values in Quebec's society are undergoing and have undergone change.

Moquin: *Le Theatre Francais d'Edmonton* is putting on your *Bernadette et Juliette*. Are you satisfied with the way Mr. Bokor has directed the play?

Bourget: (laughs) Well, not really. Mr. Bokor has a rather different approach to theatre than I do. He doesn't believe in the collective contribution to directing. He sees himself as the sole interpreter of the script. His actors must conform to his conception of the script. That is not theatre to me. That is not what theatre directing is either.

Theatre is initially a creative contribution to the interpretation of the script, then a co-operative role creation by the actors and the director. Then the director can get in with the final word and put the finishing touches to things. Mr. Bokor takes the script and dictates his interpretation to his actors.

Moquin: What are your impressions of the Theatre Francais d'Edmonton?

Bourget: Well, this theatre has definitely its place in the francophone milieu in Alberta. There are certainly French-Canadians in Edmonton capable of doing things with the T.F.E. But it seems Mr. Bokor has somehow cut out the collective spirit that is crucial to the success of a community theatre. If this cut is left to fester, it may very well kill this potentially very dynamic theatre.

Moquin: Elizabeth Bourget, thank you.

aboutroundaboutround

by Michael Skeet

Ian Dury and the Blockheads
Laughter
Stiff-Epic JE 36998

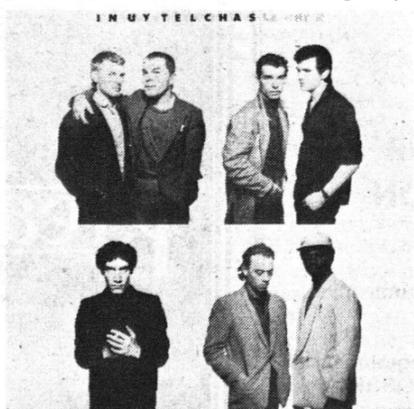
That mysterious maniac, that delightfully dotty dolt, Ian Dury, is back after an absence of several years, with a characteristic album - characteristic in the sense that he'll lull you along with a rollicking beat and 'eccentric' (to say the least) lyrics - and then poke you one, in the eye. It's a moot point whether Dury is a musical anarchist or an iconoclast, or an anarchistic iconoclast or... the point is, he's a breath of fresh air in a year that has seen plenty of seriousness, lots of gloom and doom, and an overwhelming amount of meaningless pap.

That Dury is musically secure is an understatement, given the rich variety of rhythms that are in evidence on *Laughter*. Stiff Records was one of the 'New Wave' pioneers, and Dury was always the Stiff artist most influenced by disco (which provided, after all, the compost in which the new rock 'n roll was nurtured). This album is incredibly rhythmic without being boringly repetitious, the difference being provided by the lunatic lyrics that pervade songs such as *Yes and No (Paula)*, *Dance of the Crackpots*, and *Take Your Elbow Out of the Soup, You're sitting on the Chicken*. The whole album, in fact, is a bi zarre fusion of disco, rock'n roll and Monty Python's Flying Circus.

There are no songs on the album which stand out in the manner of Dury's classic 12-inch single *Reasons to be Cheerful (Part III)* - this may well be a relief. Several songs do call attention to themselves, though: his tribute to feminism emerges as the rollicking,

tongue-in-cheek *Superman's Big Sister* (with an arrangement courtesy of Ray Conniff, it seems) and a fine example of his approach to the art of lyrics is his railroad anthropomorphism, *Over the Points*.

A song against alcohol abuse, *Uncoolohol*, achieves an anthem-like quality.



And this brings us naturally enough to the album's final tune, *Fucking Ada*, (quaintly printed up on the jacket as *Fucking Ada* - think they've fooled anybody?). This is not a song about gross indulgence in certain physical activity; rather, the title seems to refer to a slang expression, the English equivalent of our 'fuckin' eh!' The somber, introspective mood of the verse contrasts wonderfully with the exuberant rebelliousness of the chorus (a bunch of guys shouting 'fuckin' Ada!' over and over) - this is social commentary every bit as relevant as anything the Clash has done.

I hope Ian Dury never changes. In a song about a megalomaniac prototypical

pop-star, Dury sings, "I'm up to me armpits in self-esteem." I'd like to think Dury is fond enough of his role as court jester to keep that particular song from ever becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Chas Jankel
Chas Jankel
(A&M SP 9053)

Try to imagine a cross between Hagood Hardy and the Bee Gees. What you've just come up with, you poor sot, is Chas Jankel's self-titled first album.

Jankel is the former musical director for Ian Dury and the Blockheads (it's more or less obvious now where Dury's disco influence comes from), and it seems he's got Saturday Night Fever and wants to do a really first-class disco album. Personally, I'm of the opinion that those two terms

are mutually exclusive, but wot-the-hell,archie, says I, let's give the kid a chance.

The album's centerpiece is the opening cut: *Ai No Corrida*, nine-plus minutes of it, and prey to every evil that can befall disco music - it's overlong, repetitive, and lyrically silly. All that, and it still can't hold a candle to what comes next, the Hagood Hardy-esque *Peace at Last*. And I thought people had given up on saccharine.

In search of *Peace at Last*, I think we'll let ol' Chas hustle off into the sunset (or strobe-light?), with the suggestion that maybe he should stick to writing the arrangements, and leave the writing and recording to others. Either that, or come up with a new concept for his next album. NEXT WEEK: A knife in the head! Huh? WHAT?

Arts

QUIZ



- 1) What are the complete lyrics to the Bonzo Dog Band's parody of "Rule Britannia?"
- 2) What Nobel-Prize-winning novel ends with a real estate agent discovering his son in bed with the girl next door?
- 3) During the first-night performance of this symphony a Viennese in the gallery yelled, "I'd give another kreutzer if the damned thing would stop?" What symphony?
- 4) What is the duck joke in Doodle's Weaver's brutal parody of "Eleanor Rigby?"
- 5) In what Italian classic does a sex-starved monk seduce a naively religious girl by telling her that sexual intercourse

- is the holy act of "putting the devil into hell?"
- 6) Who said, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel?"
 - 7) Who said, "Sunday school is the first refuge of the scoundrel?"
 - 8) In 1950 the Columbia University Press Bulletin *The Pleasures of Publishing* did a survey of readers to determine the most boring classic every written. Which book won? What author came in twice in the top 15?
 - 9) Why did Bach have twenty children?
 - 10) Which of the above questions has a wrong answer?
- answers under Jerry Lewis.