

John Allan steppin' lightly

by Tom Clahane

Just a few words on my man from Cape Breton, John Allan, and his concert at the Cohn on the second and third nights of September.

Charmin' and steppin lightly he stole (as he so often does) the hearts and souls of his audience. His stories and songs covered a wealth of material, ranging from traditional instrumentals and more contemporary ballads to his own compositions. Toes were tapping from the first notes of the night, a medley of traditional fiddle tunes, and were still tapping two and a half hours later when John Allan finished the final encore with a verse of "Lord of the Dance."

It was Robbie MacNeil's last night as a permanent member of John Allan's show, and he performed a short set of his own compositions which were very well received. If his career as a soloist maintains the high level of quality apparent during this set we shall indeed look forward to his future career as a writer-performer.

John Allan also brought another special guest in the person of Winston "Scotty" MacKenzie, a fabulous Cape Breton fiddler. A duet of Reels quickly became a solo when John Allan's feet took off instead of his fingers, and he exhibited the intricacies of dancing a la Cape Bretonne.

John Allan also sang some favourites from John Prine and Tom Paxton, and a recently composed talking blues number about "Another World" that left the women in stitches and the men somewhat baffled.

Without a doubt, though, the most powerful piece of the evening was his rendition of the old

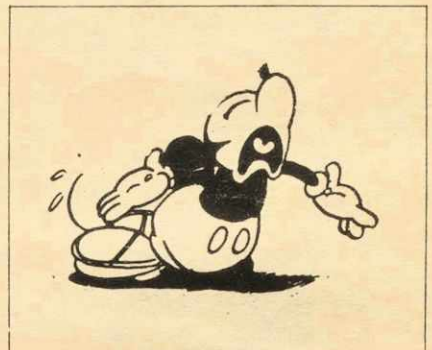


Cape Breton's own John Allan Cameron pleased the audience at the Rebecca Cohn with his songs and stories that come from the heart of the people.

Australian folk song, "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda," a haunting anti-war ballad that left most of the audience near tears.

The music, the concert, but more than these — the man, John Allan Cameron, managed to transcend boundaries that keep people apart, to appeal on a larger scope to young and old, traditional and contemporary, and to produce what can truly be called the best of both worlds. His rapport with the audience is an art in itself. The standing ovation was a foregone conclusion before the second set.

Much of the material can be obtained on the new album, "Weddings, Wakes, and Other Things," which because of its unique sound and cohesiveness as an album, makes it a welcome and refreshing addition to any collection.



The Dalhousie Student Union would like to thank Bob Rosebrugh former President of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students, for the fine work done over the summer. Best of luck teaching in Toronto!

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