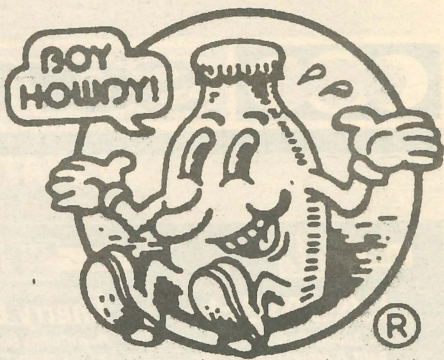


Dispatches

ports from the front lines



Phil Oats

We all love music and we like to read about it, too. Just about every paper in town covers music. Some bright bulb once said writing about music is like dancing about painting (or something like that - er, Phil, that's architecture, Ed. note) and I know what they mean, it's hard to describe something you can't see but it's a challenge to try. With such a challenge why is so much music writing so damn boring?

Ah, but there was a time when rock was young and so many paths remained uncharted as was the journalism surrounding it. Those days being the hang-loose era it was reflected in the journalism which like the music was experimental and often fucked with formula or threw it out the window all together. A record review could be a short story that didn't even mention the music but in there was a gist of the album. There also weren't as many records so there was room to roam, and people had more of an attention span and didn't lose interest in in-depth prognoses. Today music journalism is largely insipid pandering to the industry it feeds off of and cranked out by the ton in dozens of publications, barely rewrites of company supplied bios with some actual quotes by the artists peppered in there to deem them substantial. Dull and lifeless, formulaic features that are really just a bunch of information. Why not when writing about something as entertaining and creative as music does not more of the reporting try to reflect in the writing the creativity colour and wonder that draws us to the music in the first place. If a piece is just information by rote then it's just text book. The music we like, when it's good, is out there, stretching and breaking boundaries and so should be the writing about it. Is not rock and roll supposed to be about rebellion and taking chances? Then shouldn't the journalism of it do the same?

Not too long ago I was introduced to a rock writer for a weekly publication here in town and he said "Oh yeah, I've read your stuff. Don't understand it..." So what's so hard to understand? I guess for him if it isn't easy to read and digest bite-sized bits of info that doesn't make one have to think too much he's lost. Yet I take it as a compliment. It would come as no surprise that any music that was a bit wacked, free-form, and fucked with formula would be lost on him too. *Creem* magazine was the last really good bastion of rock writing and since its demise in the late '80s all we have is the same old text book information drivel. It's not fun, it's rarely funny and here comes the biggie: it's not entertaining. And what is reading about entertainment if it's not entertaining itself?

Last week I picked up a 'zine at *Scratch Records* called *The Cimarron Weekend* that caught my eye because it had the *Creem* logo on the cover. Inside is an interview with one of *Creem's* best writers Robot A. Hull that includes a reprint of his review of Gong's album *Expresso* where the whole thing is written around the premise that both sides of the actual record were blank (even tho it wasn't). He obviously hadn't even listened to the thing but man it's damn fun to read. The last four words of the piece are "...but shit if I know." The rest of the mag is in the *Creem* tradition of being witty, intelligent a good lark, and most importantly entertaining. There's a five-page feature on early '70s southern cock rockers Black Oak Arkansas wherein the author admits to actually owning only one of their records but keeps us laughing with an overview based on impressions of album covers or stories from people who had weird encounters with members of the band. Stuff like this makes everything else seem so dry and bogus. There's also a hoot of a feature about albums with covers that tried to fool the buyer into thinking the music was as intense as the cover. When was the last time you read a review in our local papers that ended with something like "The record company probably had to bury this album in a potato sack of cocaine to get radio programmers to even think about airplay."

Naw, they're all too busy being coddled by and kowtowing to the record companies. Heaven forbid they get cut off the list and denied their freebies. We're being fed watered-down pablum as an excuse for music journalism. Worst of all we accept this as the standard. So if you find most music writing on the racks and in the papers about town boring, and maybe you didn't even realize how boring it is because you're so used to the lameness of it all, head on down and snag a copy of *The Cimarron Weekend* (or write PO Box 820206 Memphis TN 38182) and see how much fun rock reading can be and what you've been missing.

TERMINAL CITY HOT BOX



S... (pinātas of celebs) a Celebrity Party to benefit the innocent excellent idea, people! More good karma definitely needed lost Ken Kegan, and the Voice of Treason Extreme Prance ser and Trevor White. Sat Aug 29 @ Studio 16 (1551 W. Monahan).

an hour! Crazy. Con- how, it was fun, andameleon where we the Mo' Funk Col- hem, newfound lack- selves out of the apart- dl But we found some and piled three into a over to a pretty stylin' y bypassing that road he two 'bitches' piled assenger seat (seatbelt ootsa familiar faces out, scoping out the , swallowing liquid y inhaling (though if elements of Trench- gh some loose and

laidback ska highly appropriate to the casual, fun, decidedly unfrenetic atmosphere and vibe, even joined by **Hard Rubber Orchestra** leader/trumpeter **John Korsrud** for a bit which sounded promising, but unfortunate sound problems derailed that little expedition. Damn. Otherwise, nice joint. Cool place, too. Bravo, **Curtis** and gang. When's the next bash?

Quit yer moanin... Okay.
Was going to bemoan the lack of current possible jazz-related outings - people are away, it's summer, everyone's too busy sitting under a shady tree, yada yada yada - but then got a call from my friendly neighbourhood **Trav** telling me of upcoming pleasures in the form of the **New Orchestra Workshop (NOW) Presents** series (one gig each in Sept, Oct and Nov) at **La Quena** starting Saturday, September 19, as well as the **Taking Wings Series** happening at the **Sugar Refinery** the week of September 10 (not coincidentally the same weekend as **Music Waste '98**, but also as part of that pared-down, but ever-growing fest - yahooooo!). The NOW series will see the **Tony Wilson Group**, **Travis Baker Trio**, **Mark Nodwell Quintet**, **Surface Tension** and saxophonist/nice guy extraordinaire **Coat Cooke/Clyde Reed** (bass) as a duo. The Taking Wing Series will include **Surface Tension**, **Travis-Baker Trio**, **Broken Record Chamber**, **Reflector**, **Dyke/Monroe/Baird** and the **Mark Nodwell Quintet**. Then, of course, there's all the upcoming **Coastal Jazz & Blues Society** presentations to look forward to. Not to mention the usual supper clubby tidbits at places like **O'Doul's** and the **Blue Note** as well as the likes of the **Mojo Room** - at least a few nights a week of sweet relief from the banality we know as life (I know, I know, it's not that bad, it's just that jazz is, well, better.) Wanna know more details? Turn to the **Encapsulated City** portion of your *Terminal City* and our handy dandy **168 Hours Guide** and rummage away for the upcoming delights of which you may sample as much as you like. I know I'm there. Yum. And don't worry if you forget, I'll be here to remind you.



sonar

66 WATER ST VANCOUVER

AUG THUR 27

LAUNCH

w/ Sandra Collins
hard & progressive house
w/ Andy B [Room 2]

AUG FRI 28

phar-yde Presents...
Cherry Bombs

DownTempoJazzFunk
w/ residents Czech & Spun.K
\$7 door after 10pm

AUG SAT 29

BASSIX & NORDIC TRAX presents
FEVER

Fine House Music
w/ T-Bone & Luke
Room 2: Dana D
\$7 after 10

SEPT WED 02

GRANDE

The Hip-Hop, The R&B,
The Reggae. G.Man & Rizk
present the city's biggest jam.
\$5 @ door

COMING SOON...

- Phil Asher (9/12)
- NinjaTune (9/15)
- Mark Farina (9/19)
- DJ Diz (10/03)
- ...and more

SEPT SAT 05

CROSS-SECTION Records

@ FEVER. Mike Huckaby (Det.)
& Chris Simmonds (UK) drop
their patented funky-house
stylings alongside residents
T.Bone, Luke & Dana D (room2).
\$8 doors 9pm

SEPT TUE 06

Studio K7 & Levi's SilverTab present
SMITH & MIGHTY/MORE ROCKERS

Original drum'n'bassers from
Bristol supporting their
DJ Kicks release.
Adv \$9 - call for ticket info

Club: 683.6695 Office: 683.6527

Sound system by: Turbosound Visual styling by: URBAN

The Column

303 Columbia St.
Gastown 683-3757

FRI AUG 28 **FUELED BY PAN**

SAT AUG 29 **HISSY FITS**

THU SEP 03 **BY PRODU**

FRI SEP 04 **STRONG LIKE TRACTOR SIX**

SAT SEP 05 **FRANCO LIVIDS**

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The GATE

Canada's Premiere Swing Dance Club

SWING DANCE
Lessons 6 Nights a WEEK!!
9:00PM - SHARP

Friday August 28 SALSABOR PRESENTS

MARTIN ROMERO LA CLAVE ORCHESTRA

DJ JORGITO B - TOP 40's R&B 80's DISCO

FREE SALSA LESSONS 8PM

Saturday August 29

Juno Award Winning

David Gogo

with guests **Threesixty**

Swing Out

SUNDAYS
VANCOUVER'S ONLY EAST COAST SWING NIGHT
with DJ LESLIE \$\$\$ - Advanced Lindy Hop Lessons
& East Coast Swing Lessons at 9pm

MONDAYS
BIG APPLE MONDAYS
EAST COAST SWING

TUESDAYS
Introducing 'Ceprock' European Swing
with Marty Martini & Jenny Jive Lessons 9 pm, Live Music 10 pm
Ladies get in free before 9pm

WEDNESDAYS
Salsabor Entertainment Presents
NOCHE HAVANA FREE SALSA DANCE LESSONS
SALSA · MERENGUE · CHA CHA
80'S · TOP 40 DISCO \$3 COVER INFO 451-1915

THURSDAYS
Vancover's Premiere Swing Night
DJ LESLIE \$ Spins Your Faves! Tonya & Theo teach swing from 8-9 pm
DANCE CONTESTS · WIN SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS BACK STAGE PASSES & ENTRY

September 4 & 5 **Indy Weekend**

BRICKHOUSE
with Last Year's Second Place Molson Indy Winner: Jimmy Vasser's Older Brother's Band **GROOVE BENDER**
from Seattle

Friday September 11

SMOKIN FROGS

Saturday September 12

Ray Condo and his Ricochets

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