

ROCK BANDS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

By Jonathan Smith
Reporter

With their second appearance at The Wave this school year, Popjoy brought their professional and catchy show to UPEI last Saturday night. The London, Ontario-based group were greeted with a small but very enthusiastic crowd, which made the evening all that more interesting as it did its best to get into the show. The band successfully played off this, creating an energy that otherwise may have gone missing. Save for a short break, the band played a good and lengthy, albeit somewhat schizophrenic, set with a variety of covers and original

songs. Easily recognizable from the over-abundance of posters that were posted across the campus, the group were obviously welcome faces and most likely will be again in the future.

Vocalist and guitarist Sarah Smith was very charismatic given her limited space, encouraging the crowd to get involved and doing everything from jumping up and down to leading the audience through several little in-games. Bassist Shawn Smith kept a steady rhythm throughout the room, and drummer Day-lo pounded out the beats and provided the always fun get-a-clear-picture-of-the-drummer-way-in-the-

back challenge. Lead guitarist Mike used an interesting mixture of effects to produce a crisp and echoing lead that soared over the rhythms. The band demonstrated an excellent level of professionalism, from their well-mixed sound to their visiting tables throughout The Wave and introducing themselves during the mid-show break. Even when the lyrics were confused on a cover of Bryan Adams' "Summer of '69", they went back and redid the section without missing so much as a beat.

The band's self-proclaimed mission is to play great music, and "bring out the joy". They encourage that people come to the shows and forget about everyday life. Sarah Smith cites Weezer as one of her major influences, and there is certainly an air of total non-seriousness about their music. According to the band, they are always happy to see the response that PEI gives them. The crowds may be small, but they know how to have a good time. And certainly, from the vantage point of standing with the mass huddled up toward the stage, that definitely seems to be true.

However, perhaps it was only the small-size of the venue, but at times it seemed as though they were holding

back. While there were occasions of good wholesome rock, such as a mixture set of various pieces of AC/DC songs and a welcome cover of the classic song "Sweet Child o' Mine", there were several times the opportunity to really let loose and pound out the sound seemed to be missed as the band would pull back and quiet themselves down. Curiously enough, many of the covers seemed to out-rock a lot of their own original material. At

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times there would be an excellent vibe only to have it be brought to a

screaming halt by an abrupt change in sound. There also seemed to be too much of a reliance on mini-sets composed of bits and pieces of well-known songs from the past several years.

Popjoy is a band that has much more growth to go through, and for the group that is a definite plus. The potential is there, and the audience/band chemistry will be a definite asset to their future shows. Working out some more developed covers and figuring out exactly what they want to sound like will help them make a larger splash as well. After some more developing, the quartet from Ontario may be able to deliver their joy with a much stronger yet sweeter punch.

