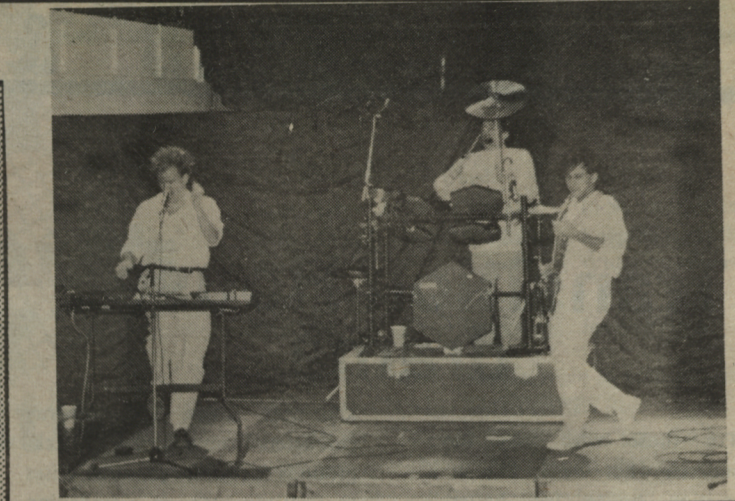


Main Event

Sponsored by the Student Union



Photos: Wheaton



The state of Rock

Glen Boswall

If you were one of the many who stayed away from last week's main event, you missed quite a show. *The Screaming Trees* were a slick entertaining package when they last played on campus and they certainly added a breath of fresh air to the rather stagnant entertainment atmosphere at the Barn this year. Guitarist Bruce Nelson, drummer Steve Coady, and bassist, keyboard player, vocalist and all around handyman, Dave Roberts kept the music flowing and the energy levels high all night.

The Screaming Trees don't tour outside the Maritimes as yet. Feeling it unwise to move out of home territory before getting a recording deal, the band awaits the contract that will get them under way. That may happen sooner

than you think. Bruce Nelson informed me that the band is close to closing a deal with a major record label. "I can't say any names," said Bruce, "but I can tell you that there are a few managers and record labels who are interested."

With about 18 originals to their credit, the *Screaming Trees* have ample material for an L.P. They currently work about ten of these into their show. Don't ask me where it comes from, but some of their music seems to have a Japanese influence — "Wrong Side of Town" being most noticeable. Most of the original staff is good and tends to be on the up tempo side.

The size of the crowd was disappointing, but the band seemed not to notice. The viewers were

treated to the full works. Spazoid Steve Coady hardly sat still long enough to allow the photographer to get any shots. Dave Roberts keeps the laughs coming with a running dialogue with Steve about the weather, current events, hairstyles, armadillos, and small meaningless creatures. This is of course accompanied by loads of on-stage movement in which Bruce Nelson is only too willing to partake. Says Bruce, "What the music industry is all about now is entertainment. We try to put across not only the music but also the show aspect."

Well it's just that aspect that troubles me and perhaps the music too. The *Screaming Trees* have become even more electronic than when I saw them last. I realize that electronics have become an essential part of today's sound

and I have no problems with that. It is however, a trifle annoying to see musicians with their hands in the air more often than on their instruments. Coady has got to be one of the better drummers in the Maritimes so it is somewhat depressing to hear such a substantial part of the drumming come from an electronic drum machine while the one who programmed it only adds in the occasional fill. I don't want to some day hear "... and on the drums, bass and keyboards Mr. Apple Computer and his automatic ensemble!" Bruce Nelson is quite correct in saying that it takes just as much talent to programme the electronics as it does to play the instrument live. The problem is that the audience doesn't get to see that talent translated into action — they only hear it. A live show is supposed

to give you live entertainment. While pre-programming music may allow for energy to be devoted to other things while the show is on, it leaves the audience feeling deprived. Other bands have learned the hard way that an electronic show does not translate well in a live setting. Ultravox, Kraftwerk, Devo, and others found that concert ticket sales weren't keeping up with album sales.

I know the band members have the talent. The songs are good and the show is entertaining. I would like, however, to see that talent displayed live. I can hear recorded music at home. C'mon guys. Let's see more of you playing your instruments. I know you can do it, and you know you can do it, but there is a whole music industry out there that has to be convinced.