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Despite lousy attendance, PF Station advances their cause

By Ross Williams

Ever gone to hear a band, assuming they'd be just a run of the mill, faceless bunch of cover-tune droids? And then, after about five minutes, had your expectations completely dashed? Well this is the situation I found myself in the night of November 7th when, looking for inexpensive entertainment, I wandered to the Barn to hear a group called PF Station.

Having never heard the group before, my expectations were not particularly high. But, with no word of a lie, PF Station completely blew me away. And although the Barn was obscenely empty that night, the few people who were there walked out with the same impression I did - this Halifax-based band is something special. The best comparison I can make is that it was like listening to a *much* younger version of Pink Floyd.

The four members of the group - vocalist/guitarist Craig Mercer, bassist Mike Macdougall, drummer (and former UPEI student) Kirk Hatcher, and organist/pianist Graeme Hill - displayed a lot of skill and even more promise as they played a tight set of tunes, which consisted almost completely of original songs, most of which were instrumental jams (the individual skills of the musicians, particularly Mercer and Hill, really shone through on these instrumentals) lasting around ten minutes, including an electrified version of the *Star Wars* theme.

Make no mistake, it would be no simple selection of Tragically Hip and Pearl Jam covers from these guys. Drawing on influences as diverse as Deep Purple, Van Halen and the Allman Brothers (and I swear I heard some Angus Young in there), PF Station created sweeping, epic sounds which grabbed the audience and held 'em captive for the entire evening. This was obvious to anyone there, because as few people as there were in attendance that night, nobody left the Barn until the show was through, and *no one* was more interested in their beer than the band.

Some basic information I learned about PF Station: the band has existed for about

four years, with Mercer being the only original member remaining. While currently a four-piece band, the line-up has been somewhat elastic at times, ranging from three to six members. The songs are written by taking grooves the band has come up with, and mixing and matching them until they fit. About half the resulting songs remain as instrumentals, while vocals are worked into the others. The instrumentals are a point of pride for the band, as they feel musical talent has nowhere to hide in such a work (no lyrics to distract the listener), and the song's success is made entirely by how strong the musical skill is. Plainly, judging by audience reaction, they are

succeeding.

Although PF Station has not played outside the Maritimes yet, they are hoping to do so in the near future. The CD they are currently working on, due sometime around the New Year (about thirty songs have been recorded), should help them in that respect. In the meantime, they will continue to play the Maritimes and build their fan base the old fashioned way. And despite the lacklustre attendance at this last show at the Barn, the band hopes to play here again soon. As one who knows what PF Station can do, I encourage that everyone who reads this to check them out next time they play PEI. You won't be disappointed.

