

# The New Deal A Big Deal

By Marieve MacGREGOR

Three men, their instruments, and absolutely no rehearsal. This is the phenomenon which constitutes The New Deal, a band that has improved every show they've ever performed.

"The first time we played, we got together, got a bunch of friends out to the Comfort Zone, and just went at it," said Jamie Shields, the keyboard player. "We never make conscious decisions about it, you can't be consciously thinking about it or it doesn't work."

Shields' counterparts are Dan Kurtz and Darren Shearer, who play bass and drums respectively. What is also spectacular about this unpredictable band besides the improv element is that they play techno dance music with their very real instruments. They have a DJ sound

with a live feel, and the risk of error adds an extra layer of excitement to their shows.

"The way we came to be, is that the first show we ever played (in 1999) ended up being recorded, for like, \$4.95...\$4.00 plus tax," continued Shields. "That show was 100% improv. It's gonna last." Ironically, the name is very fitting. Shields says he's never heard of a live-improv-instrumental techno dance band before.

Shields had been friends with Kurtz for 15 years before The New Deal ever took shape. The three guys originate from Toronto, and had played in many bands before discovering their unique style. Their previous band experiences revolved around jazz music, which incorporates a lot of improvisation. "Our style came from what we like to play, what we like to listen to, and I mean, if we like, others will probably like it too, right?"

The band plays straight through the night when on stage, so divvying up the tracks and naming them for the CDs can be difficult. "We didn't want people to be forwarding through ten minutes of set before finding the part they liked," explained Shields. They chose to divide their sets into tracks by obvious shifts in the music, and at first were going to mere-

ly number the tracks, one to whatever, but then they decided track names would be more fun.

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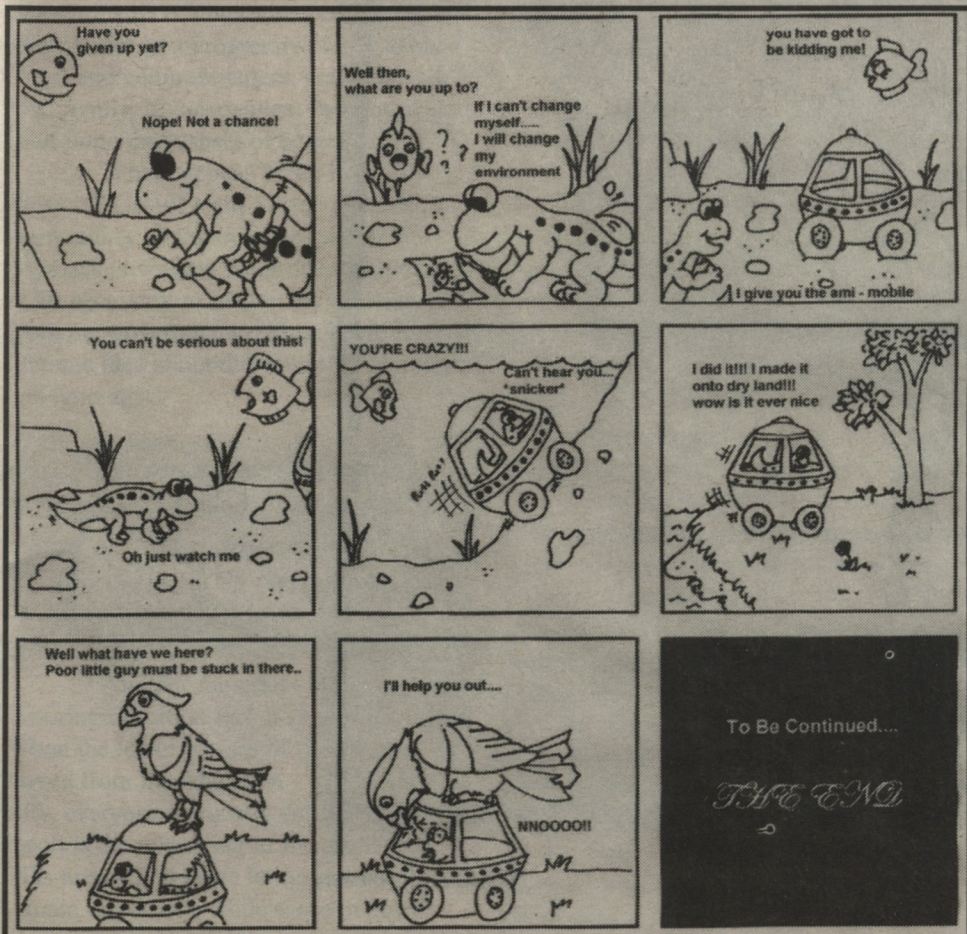
What may puzzle some people is how do the three band members know when they are going to do something new. "We have over 30 hand signals," said Shields. "It's difficult to explain without showing you. But they all mean something, and there are head gestures and facial expressions as well. It's most difficult for Dan since he's on drums, but we work very well together and we're always communicating. In the beginning we would be shouting to each other, and that was awkward."

The band often takes a listen to the audience to see what they want. They play off the mood of their audiences. The music changes levels so it appeals to many different people, "as long as the people dancing and listening have an open mind. Sure we mess up now and then, but that's part of the risk, and they get that."

The high intensity of performing raw gets the boys into a real sweat too. "We use whatever deodorant we happen to have brought with us. Sometimes we just sweat the smell right out of us. You use what you remember to bring. When we're on tour, fresh smells are rare."

And now the age old question: if you could throw up on someone, who would it be? "Well, not the person who sleeps beside me. I think I'd puke on Tom Cruise," answers Shields.

The New Deal will play Myrons on March 19th. You've got to see it to believe it.



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1. Students eligible for a Leadership Award must be full-time students who have satisfied the entrance requirements to the University or who have passed at least eight three-semester hour courses in the previous year of study.
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3. An award may be given to a student participating in University athletic activities, but only if the student demonstrates significant leadership ability through his/her participation.
4. An award may be received once by an individual.
5. Nominations for awards may be made by students, faculty or staff of the University.
6. Recipients for the awards will be chosen by a Committee approved by the President of the University.

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