

SEX, FUN AND ROCK'N'ROLL!

By Jonathan Smith

When the mock rock group GASH was brought to my attention, I really didn't know what to think. The closest comparison to any thing out there I was able to get was that they were supposedly along the same vein of "Spinal Tap". That alone was enough to perk my interest, as I figured at the very least it wouldn't be just an ordinary show. So with such an expectation in mind I set out to interview the Toronto-based group. During my almost hour long discussion with the group, which covered everything from old school rock and roll, the pros and cons of today's music, sex, and whether Charlottetown would accept the group for what it was, it turned out my suspicions were correct. It wasn't just a regular rock show, and to my pleasant surprise it turned out to be more creative, original and entertaining than I could have thought.

One of the first things that GASH cleared up was that the band had never set out to even resemble the popular stars of the mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap" or groups such as the Barenaked Ladies, and didn't consider themselves influenced by such groups. The band was formed in 2001, and at first was composed of lead singer Gash and guitarist Deuce Diamond. Bassist Beauregard Beechcliffe joined later, having been a loyal fan of the group since its first shows. Finally drummer Chuck Schick joined, giving GASH the line-up it has today.

From the get-go, the band wanted to create an act that would not only play quality rock music, but also take a page from



A serious lack of space didn't stop the group from moving around.
Photo by Jonathan Smith

the acts of yesterday and also create an entertaining visual show. Not surprisingly, they cited groups such as KISS, the Ramones, Dokken, and Iron Maiden as major musical and visual influences. They pointed out that one flaw they see with modern music is that the fun has been drained out of it, that a good visual show is lacking in most of today's acts. As for the lyrical content, that is one of their self-proclaimed trademarks as they have set out to bring a sense of humor back to rock and roll.

When asked about the song writing and their lyrical inspiration, their reply was that they wrote about what they all agreed they liked to write about - "Sex". One only has to hear a few songs to realize that nothing about the subject is sacred to the group, and that they've managed to take the most ridiculous themes and turn them into entertaining songs. Highlights include such songs as "I Ate Your Corsage. I Didn't Want To Go To Prom Anyway" and "Anna (Kournikova)", as well as the fabulous parody of 80s power bal-

lads "Michelle". I was informed that one of their messages is that the "banana hammock" is a thing of beauty, and that men should be able to show-off revealing swim wear just as much as women (a point that they were not willing to argue). One of the highlights of the group's performance was definitely the use of absurd metaphors and allegories.

Underneath the immature lyrics and over-the-top innuendo was a strong musical backdrop that was by no means a joke. The group admits their sound is extremely old school, but their point is that they grew up listening to 80s rock and thus it has affect their style. They played a solid show, and the band was quite tight musically as well as literally given the lack of space they had for their active and extremely energetic performance. While actual physical visuals were sparse, it was

the group themselves that provided the spectacle. Their transformation from a laid-back group of musicians to a group of rowdy, horny eighties throwbacks was quite complete, and the personas were quite well developed.

The show was a good length, particular given that they were an opening act. Following the show, the group was extremely pumped with the crowd response. I was told that Charlottetown did indeed seem to "get" their act, and that they would probably come back. If they ever do, and you're looking for a show that allows you to detach from any serious reality and just embrace the absurd for an entertaining evening, then put aside any sensibilities you might have and relive the 80s sound and spectacle with GASH.



If you're going to talk the talk, Gash figures you may as well walk the walk.

Photo by Jonathan Smith