

ENTERTAINMENT

Winter Carnival concerts highly successful Blue Rodeo, Waltons, and Road Apples rock the Barn

BY KATHRYN BROWN

WHEN THE QUESTION AROSE IN ONE of our X-Press meetings as to who would be interested in covering Winter Carnival Barn Events (translated:concerts), I jumped at the opportunity immediately. I personally love any chance at all to see quality live entertainment-- and bop, party and have a good time. I figured since I was going to everything anyway, why not cover it for the paper?

So with the decision made and the "official mission" added to my game plan, I attended all three concerts held at the Barn.

What a party! I had the best time!

Wednesday night Blue Rodeo started things cooking early with an incredible concert. The band is chock-full of strong talent and driving energy, which explains their standing as one of Canada's top bands. The crowd of about four hundred moshed, bopped, and danced to the music and cheered their approval. Several times security had to move the crowd back as the people near the front were getting too close to the stage. From my perch, balanced on a very small ledge at the very back of the third floor, I could see absolutely nada, nothing, zilch... it certainly sucks to be dry sometimes!

Oh well...Blue Rodeo was called back twice

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for encores. The performance wrapped up at 12:30 am and I high-tailed it home to study for Bio...oops.

My enthusiasm sagged ever so slightly on Friday night, though. I got to the Barn early to get seat and see all of the opening act, but no one was there! The opening act started about 9:45 pm and the Waltons performed at 11:00 pm. Although the turnout was disappointing, the Waltons played an awesome concert. It takes an incredible band to make someone who had wanted to go home want to stay all night. They certainly won me back with their unique style and excellent performance. The crowd had a great time and danced all night. I had the fortunate opportunity of talking with the band before the show. They were really accommodating to talk to, and I was impressed with their dedication to music. This band has a real depth in its approach to music

that seems to be lacking in other groups. The musical background of the band members was extremely varied, ranging from classical Royal Conservatory training to learning mostly by ear. Their musical influences were every bit as diverse-- from music teachers to XTC, Billy Joel and the Beatles. The concert wrapped up at about 12:45 am, and though I was flying solo for the evening I had a great time.



Then there was Saturday. I had anticipated an incredible time and the concert far surpassed anything I could have imagined. It was definitely the highlight of the three concerts. Full marks for the opening act, the Rheostatics. They were really good and played a strong variety of music. I had only one complaint about the whole evening-- the time between the acts was long, boring and monotonous. Tapes could have been played to fill the time; however, when the Road Apples took the stage before a sellout crowd of four hundred and seventy-five, the Barn went crazy. As Kent Driscoll so eloquently stated, "It's a fucking madhouse and I hope we are insured!" For once I must admit I was happy to be dry. I had a great view of the band and the moshing and knew if I had been down below I would have been crushed in the mosh. There was lots of moshing, slam dancing

and body swimming. At least one small fight broke out, but the bar staff dealt with it promptly and efficiently.

What impressed me the most was how much the Road Apples sounded like the Tragically Hip. I think it is so much harder to play music by a well-established and very popular band because the expectations of the crowd are higher. This band played their music with integrity, meeting the challenge and then some. They certainly brought down the house. Saturday night was a party that was too big to miss! The band played on to well after 1:00 am and the crowd roared their approval.

A little aside for all those who may or may not be interested: I have heard through the rumour mill that attempts are being made to have the Road Apples back for the year-end pub...ponder that!

Scott MacDonald takes a bite out of the Road Apples

I LAUGHED, I CRIED, IT WAS BETTER than CATS. The Road Apples, a Tragically Hip cover band, made the crowd at the Barn on Saturday night believe that they really were the Hip. The Road Apples are one of the best cover bands that I have ever seen, but of course who wouldn't want to listen to the music of Canada's best band? Unlike some other bands that have played the Barn in the past, the Apples came to play for the duration, as they performed all night. I have never seen the Hip play live, but being a fan of their music I would imagine that the Road Apples capture

a lot of the electricity that they generate on stage-- anyone who saw them could tell you that. Sure, you could argue that the Road

reason that anyone came out to see them. I know that I wouldn't have bothered going to see them do any of their own stuff.

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Apples have no individuality, that they are just a bunch of Hip-wannabe's, but who wouldn't want to be the Hip? Still, the basic point is that they are a Hip cover band, and that's the only

The large crowd that was at the Barn enjoyed the show very much, even those who were caught up slam-dancing in the large Mosh pit which took up most of the dance floor

room. The screaming throng of people there thoroughly enjoyed the songs played: everything from "New Orleans is Sinking" and "38 Years Old" from the Hip's Up to Here album, to "Wheat Kings" and "Courage" from the newest Hip delivery, Fully Completely. In fact, the largest cheers of the night came when the opening chords of "Wheat Kings" sounded out on the Barn floor. This was one of the best concerts that I have ever been to, at the Barn or otherwise. Hopefully, the Road Apples will grace PEI with their presence again in the near future.