

Way-Jay kicks off concert season



REVIEW

By Paul Dorsey

Intermittent snow, unusual timing and a \$7 ticket price did little if anything to discourage attendance at Sunday afternoon's rock concert in the Way-Jay Club in Norval, where more than 800 fans sat with mixed reactions through back-to-back sets by Toronto's Battered Wives and Goddo.

The concert, underway at 3 p.m. and over by 6, was the first in a new series of rock-oriented productions being staged by the Way-Jay. Dates are already set for shows by Streetheart with Wireless and for British Columbian folk-singer Valdy. Plans are being finalized to bring Teaze, Max Webster (a return visit for a band that drew 1,200 on its first date) and Long John Baldry, and internationally-known performers like Dan Hill, Murray McLaughlan and Burton Cummings are reportedly interested.

There were, predictably enough, no feminists picketing the Way-Jay last weekend when the Battered Wives came to town to warm up Goddo's audience. Women's libbers protested the band's name choice and accused them of trivializing the problem of wife beating when the Battered Wives shared the bill with England's newest superstar, Elvis Costello, at Toronto's O'Keefe Centre and later in Montreal.

The band's initial reaction to the picketers was to drop the

word Battered from their name and appear as The Wives but that didn't last long and, as it turned out, nobody really cared, although Rolling Stone magazine recently mentioned in passing that the Wives are now Battered again.

These days, the Battered Wives, who emerged on the Toronto pub rock circuit at about the same time their immediate ideological predecessors, the Viletones, Teenage Head and one or two others, were getting bored with the so-called New Wave scene, are allegedly booked for a repeat performance with Costello, this time touring the U.S. instead of Canada.

If this is true, then it serves to verify what Way-Jay co-manager Pete Robertson had to say Sunday about the spacious club becoming a launching pad of sorts for bands about to embark on tours. According to Mr. Robertson, a number of "name" acts are intrigued by the idea of playing the Way-Jay because it gives them an opportunity to try out their tour material and does not conflict with any upcoming dates at the larger Toronto halls.

The Way-Jay's ability to accommodate modern rock technology, at least the audio portion, was demonstrated Sunday by Goddo, a long-established bar band with two albums to its credit and another on the way. Goddo filters its



Battered Wives lead singer Toby Swan was suitably obnoxious toward his audience of 800 at the Way-Jay Club Sunday for a veteran pub rocker who appeared on the local rock scene shortly after the emergence of Toronto's so-called punk rock movement. The much-publicized Battered Wives warmed up the crowd for headliners Goddo.

(Herald photo by Tony Panacci)

sound with phasers and other devices to effect a fuller, almost studio-quality reproduction. The acoustics in the Way-Jay's circular hall did the

sound justice.

Anyone who made book before the show on speculation that the Battered Wives, with their recent media blitz, could

steal Goddo's thunder took a bath. Using the rock trio format established by Cream, Goddo pulled off the kind of pervasive, full sound that en-

ables Canadian rock and roll trinitities like Rush and Triumph to headline concerts in hockey arenas around the world.

Goddo rarely wandered from the heavy metal formula also used by those same headliners. The single exception to their stream of fast-paced, tightly-knit neo-rock 'n' roll tunes was the band's hit single, Under My Hat, a slower, moody piece with jazz-flavored vocals.

More strongly-rooted in the rock of the 1960's, the Battered Wives rely heavily, too heavily, on a variety of performance devices that originally gave the so-called punk rock movement a great deal of publicity.

The fact that the Battered Wives enjoy verbally abusing their audiences while whipping their tunes into a frantic froth of fast-paced power demonstrates at least some allegiance on their part to the punk flag, but the band itself has rejected all suggestions that there is a link. After all, the band's musical tightness and on-stage visual polish testifies to the fact that at least two of its members can claim prior involvement with much-respected rockers in their native England. The lead guitarist, in fact, once played with Jeff Beck.

The Wives performed a firm cross-section of their music, much of it included on their only album thus far. Songs like Uganda Stomp, I Want It All and I Think I'm Going to Pass Out underlined some of the band's interests and affect-

ions, as did a passing invocation of the late Rev. Jim Jones.

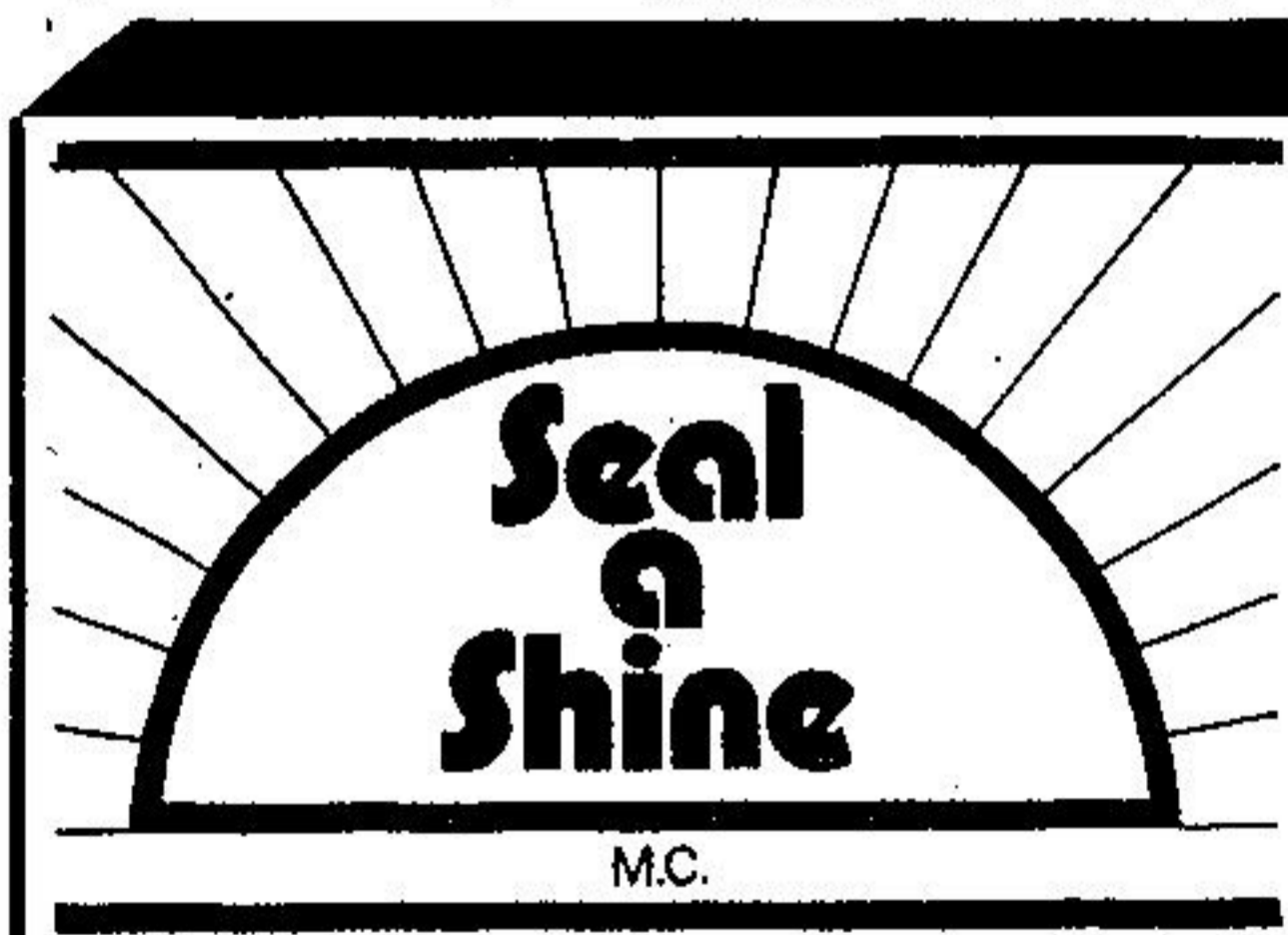
AUDIENCE REACTION

It is noteworthy that members of both the Battered Wives and Goddo commented on the poor audience reaction during the course of the show. Impassive spectators must be expected, one might assume, for concerts held on Sunday afternoons (who knows how many of these fresh-faced young fans had just come from church?) in unlicensed quarters.

Another possible reason for the relative quietude of the audience was suggested by a fan who complained about being searched as she entered the building. With police standing by, Way-Jay employees scanned coats and purses of ticket-holders lined up at the entrance and managed to confiscate a modest assortment of bottles and wineskins. The bands might like to know, the fans pointed out that many members of their audience were understandably turned off by the light security.

The timing factor added an extra problem in the form of mediocre lighting. Daylight pouring in the windows to either side of the stage cut back on the effect of colored lighting from banks of lamps set up for the show.

Pete Robertson predicted that the afternoon, unlicensed concert situation will continue through the next few concerts in the current series but a more orthodox approach could be forthcoming. The various band's booking prices, the availability of a liquor licence for such events and the business security, as well as the physical security, of the Way-Jay Club must all be considered.



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