



The light show was a big hit during the Kick Axe performance recently at the Nag's Head in Markham. Above right, Bassist Victor Longen clowns, while above left, lead singer George Cristian performs. — Jennifer Dempsey

Kick Axe is more personal

By JENNIFER DEMPSEY
Kick Axe threw open its hard rock image recently revealing the characters behind the instruments. Their performance at the Nag's Head North Nov. 28 was more personal than usual for a rock band.

Kick Axe was very well aware of the crowd, and more than once, George Cristian looked as if he couldn't believe that the crowd liked the band. There was a lot of eye contact, and the band singled out the audience by winking and pointing.

The evening included some very melodic tunes with a strong rhythm section, complemented by some great guitar riffs by Larry Gilstrom.

Compared with many other hard-rock groups I've heard, the voices of lead vocalist George Cristian, (who studied jazz vocalization at the Conservatory of Music in Milwaukee for two years), and the other band members blended very well together.

The lighting show was dramatic — on Brian Gilstrom's drums especially, with the arrangement on an upward angle.

The light show created depth to the stage, and the lights moved in time with the drum beat. The light show is the sole responsibility of the light technician — the band gives him very few guidelines. A job well done.

Their sets are truly 'aerobic rock' — there is constant movement, (George is always moving around the stage), and you know when a song is about to finish because the band members make use of hand movements, swooping dives and kicks.

George sang 'We Still Remember from the group's latest album with sincerity. Welcome to the Club was accompanied by the audience.

Although they didn't play 'With a Little Help from My Friends,' Victor Langen, the bassist, talked about it between sets.

"We did 'With a Little Help from My Friends' as a lark. We were finishing recording early one morning and began kicking the song around in practice. The producer said, 'Why don't we record this?' so we gathered some of our friends and recorded it as an afterthought. It was strange how the radio people picked that song. We never expected it."

About their name
"Being basically rebellious in nature, we wanted something that would really displease high school principals," said Victor. Kick Axe actually means kick, as in the beat, and axe, (a slang word) for guitar. The name actually got us all the more gigs because students said, "The principal hates them, let's get them."

A perspective on goals
"When you're a kid in high school, your goal is to play the school gymnasium. The next goal you set is to play in the local bar. As you get older, your scope of the world gets larger, and you eventually decide you want to play Moscow — your goals change," Victor noted.

Although the band comes originally from Regina, Saskatchewan, all four members now live in Vancouver, British Columbia, where their fan club was recently moved.

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