

Entertainment

Cowboy Junkies play it safe Band follows debut success with "The Caution Horses"

By Robb Frederick
Entertainment Editor

When the Cowboy Junkies rode onto the music scene in April of 1988, the Canadian band was welcomed with almost unanimous critical acclaim. The Junkies' intimate debut, *The Trinity Session*, brimmed with calculated, subtle expressions of emotion which impressed critics across the country.

The group failed to connect with a sizable audience, however, and never received the public approval it deserved.

The recent release of *The Caution Horses*, the band's follow-up to the impressive *Trinity Session*, will do very little to alter the band's image.

Recorded in the same subdued, almost hypnotic manner, *The Caution Horses* practically mirrors the sound of its predecessor. The Cowboy Junkies have discovered their preferred style, and this second release offers little deviation from that chosen course.

The feel of *The Caution Horses* is established with "Sun Comes Up, It's Tuesday Morning," the disc's opening track.

Acoustic guitars are joined by a wailing harmonica, which provides a slight touch of country music influence.

This melancholy introduction is soon overshadowed by the lyrical mastery of vocalist Margo Timmins. Timmins delivers her effective lines in a hushed monotone, emphasizing the song's content rather than the technique used to present it.

The track brilliantly depicts the despair faced by a woman attempting to cope with life without her male companion.

The song's narrator hints of the feelings of frustration and isolation she is experiencing, but these thoughts are set aside in order to emphasize the positive aspects of her newfound independence.

"I sure do miss the smell of black coffee in the morning / the sound of water splashing all over the bathroom / the kiss that you would give me even though I was sleeping / but I kind of like the

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feel of this extra few feet in my bed," she sings.

This emotionally revealing writing style continues on "Cause Cheap is How I Feel," the disc's next track.

The song deals with guilt and regret, describing the aimless wandering of Timmins' lead character.

Throughout the remainder of *The Caution Horses*, the Junkies continue to demonstrate their skill with well-written ballad.

An almost unrecognizable cover of Neil Young's "Powderfinger" provides a fresh angle for the song, which deals with the instantaneous loss of innocence that accompanies a rise

to arms.

Songs like "Where Are You Tonight?" and "Thirty Summers" restrict the band's instrumentation in order to emphasize the Timmins' gifted writing.

Timmins clearly stands as the central force of the Junkies' presentation style. Her soothing delivery relaxes the listener, and her deliberate lyrics provide honest insight to everyday emotional events.

The Cowboy Junkies also owe much of their success to the less-recognized work of Michael Timmins, the band's guitarist and primary writer. Although Michael (Margo's brother, as is the band's bassist, Peter Timmins) rarely experiments with his writing technique, the style is appropriate for his intent.

The Junkies prioritize the need to revolve around the vocals of Margo Timmins, but the scaled-down accompaniment she is given many times loses the interest of the listener. Unless listened to intently, the songs seem to run together, creating a body of work lacking the moments of musical inspiration which characterize truly classic music.

This setback provides the Junkies' most restricting difficulty. The band needs to alter their style on occasion, to offer another fresh aspect of their musical capabilities.

Until this change is made, the Cowboy Junkies will remain at their present level of success, a group losing its potency while refining its style and ignoring its potential for more versatile musical expression.

UNM cancels concert, cites insurance worries School fears "Slam Dancing" injuries

(CPS)--Administrators at the University of New Mexico, claiming they were concerned slam-dancing students might get hurt, canceled a campus concert just days before a band called Dirty Rotten Imbeciles was scheduled to play.

But students say the safety concerns were just a flimsy excuse to keep students from hosting a punk band.

"They just heard the word 'punk' and got scared," charged Dianna Douglas of the Popular Entertainment Committee, which booked the band. "If they researched the band, they didn't do a very good job. None of the lyrics are offensive."

"We felt like it was a form of censorship," she added.

Dean of Students Gary Golden and Assistant Dean of Students Debbie Morris canceled the band's appearance, telling students that they were concerned about the university's liability. Neither returned phone calls to College Press Service.

UNM's liability concern is valid, an insurance expert says.

"Any time a university sanctions an activity where there is the likelihood of an injury, it might indicate to the insurance company that the university is lax in its loss control," said Ronald Krauss of the New York-based American Insurance

Association.

"However, it is only one very small part of a university's insurance," he added.

"We're most upset that they didn't voice their concerns beforehand. Instead of working with us, they just took charge," Douglas said.

In February, University of Minnesota officials banned "rhythmic dancing"--and any bands that might inspire it--from one of their arenas after a piece of plaster fell from the ceiling during a January B-52's concert.

Douglas noted that at about the same time the Red Hot Chili Peppers--another group which draws slam dancers--performed at the UNM campus, and nobody was injured.

"People who slam dance know what they're doing. There are some injuries, but there are injuries with everything you do. Just look at football," said Douglas, who is a punk rock fan.

"You always get a few scrapes and bruises, that's part of the enjoyment (of slam dancing). But people who slam dance are not there to hurt people," she added.

Rather than cancelling the act completely, the PEC worked with an Albuquerque promoter, Joey Abbin, who arranged to have the band play at an off-campus location. The two acts sold out.

Jazz Quintet to perform in Reed

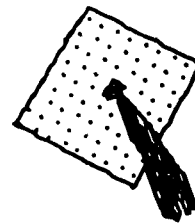


A jazzy ending: The 1989-90 Cultural and Performing Arts Series will close on April 12 at 8:00 p.m. in the Reed Lecture Hall with a performance by the Bert Seager Jazz Quintet.

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