



THIS IS THE 69TH PARALLEL: From left to right, Stu Freeman, drummer; John O'Malley, bass; Tom Gallant, guitar; and Rick Hancox, harmonica, guitar and singer. Members of the group are all from St. Dunstan's.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: THE 69th PARALLEL

By KEN HODGE

The best band in this province plays the blues, and they call themselves the 69th Parallel. All of them are sophomores at Saint Dunstan's University this year, and that explains the number in the name. I spent a cold Monday night in Tom Gallant's apartment with the 69th Parallel, trying to find out who they are and what they are doing. Some of the interview had to be cut because I couldn't write fast enough to get all of what they were saying. But in what I did get, I've tried to keep some of both the content and spontaneity of the original interview.

There are four of the 69th Parallel, Rick Hancox is a poet who also sings, plays harmonica and guitar; Tom Gallant is a poet who also sings and plays guitar, he's the lead guitarist; John O'Malley is a poet who also plays bass and does impersonations of Joan Baez; and Stu Freeman is a drummer who also plays drums.

The interview went like this:

Q. What is your favourite breakfast food?

Tom: Banana splits.

Rick: Toasted serviette, with mustard.

Stu: Broken drumsticks.

John: Puffed rice.

Tom: He's a prude.

Q. What do you think about today's pop music?

Rick: I don't like "Coming Home Soldier."

John: Will somebody please tell me what "Summer Wine" is?

Rick: I do like the electronic trend.

Tom: I like the new stuff they're playing on the guitars. Which is what the bluesmen were doing twenty years ago. Groups like the Spoonful are fantastic. I like the experimenting the Beatles are doing. "Revolver" is the best LP in pop music right now.

Stu: I would say, things are looking up.

Tom: I like Durante's fourth symphony in Z-flat minor.

Rick: I broke up with a girl because she liked "Hanky Panky". I hope somebody knows that "Hanky Panky" is a song.

Q. You mentioned the electronic trend in music. What is it?

Rick: The electronic trend in music is when the Beach Boys invested \$60,000 in "Good Vibrations", which is a good sound, but a bad song.

Tom: Their woofers were woofing and their tweeters were tweeting. Somebody stole my amplifier, and it had my best shoes in it, too.

Rick: What kind of interviewer are you, anyway?

(Rick picked up Tom's guitar, and there was an impromptu rehearsal of "Born in Chicago", trying to find an even better way of playing it.)

Q. What kind of band are you, anyway?

Rick & Tom: Urban blues.

Q. Why are you playing the blues?

John: The blues is a compromise. There has to be both sound and communication. There is a profound simplicity in the music and a simple profundity in the words.

Tom: What?

Stu: Eh?

Rick: Oh, yeah... I'll tell you why I like the blues. You're not tied down to anything. You don't have to imitate anybody. You can let go.

Q. What is Urban blues?

Rick: It's a combination of the introspection and lyrics of the old, country blues, mixed with the frustration and the driving beat of the city.

Tom: When the negroes moved up from the South, they had to change their music. It's the poetry of their race.

John: It adds a note of personalism to an impersonal environment.

Q. Why are so many young white guys playing it, and no young negroes?

Tom: The urban blues comes from negroes that moved up from the South. The young negro people think it's below their dignity, it's "Uncle Tom".

Rick: Yeah, yeah... Negroes have been constantly moving from the South, bringing their blues to the big city, and it passed on to the white singers in the city. The white bands added their technology, and the result is the contemporary white urban blues band.

Q. Do you think the blues is a valid art medium for the white musician?

Tom: Take the song "C.C. Rider". When I sing it, I identify with the negroes who cry for the help of the white freedom rider. Everyone has been suppressed. You have to scream honest, or the people will know. That's not a valid reason, but it doesn't matter. Blues is a personal thing.

John: Blues is a feeling. I don't think pure blues is a valid medium for the white man, but big city blues is.

Rick: All blues has been influenced by the negro.

Tom: But there are white slum dwellers, too.

(The band broke into a discussion of the recent CBC-TV production of the blues on the programme "Festival", in which the great bluesmen like Muddy Waters, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, Otis Rush, Willie Dixon and Memphis

Slam, discussed the same question.)

Tom: Big Joe Williams said, "Everybody's got the blues."

Rick: All through history, people have had the blues. The negroes invented the word, but... (here, Rick broke a coffee table)... we must forget their immense musical and lyrical influence.

Tom: They invented the form. **Q. Stu, you're the newest to the blues. What difficulties do you find in playing it?**

Stu: Everybody has the blues, but some of the rhythms are more complex than they would seem. It's a matter of exposure to these rhythms. You can see them in the development of the early rock and roll bands.

(The band started doing impersonations of various prominent popular singers singing, "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain.")

Q. What are your plans for your future in music?

Stu: I just like being involved in music. I don't care what kind of music it is.

Rick: I'd just like to keep practising and get better, so that I can do it for a summer job.

John: I'd like to learn more about the blues.

Tom: I'd like to be as good a guitar player as Mike Bloomfield, of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. I want to be in the band Rick plays with in the summer.

Now that the blues is becoming increasingly popular, as indicated by the number of blues bands that are being heard on the hit parade, and by the fact that another Island band that plays some blues finds them to be their most requested songs, we are lucky to have a band like the 69th Parallel at S.D.U. The 69th Parallel is a totally blues band, and they believe in their music to the extent of total involvement. They put a lot of sweat into their rehearsals and a lot of sweat into their performances. I wish more people could hear them. And it won't be long before more people will. As Stu said, "things are looking up."



HONEST TO GOD

WITH REV. JAMES KELLY

"Happy New Year, one and all!" There now: at the earliest opportunity we've said it in print, and we mean it very sincerely. But, even if we didn't mean it, we would probably have no choice but to say it; convention rules sternly on these matters. Just as we'd be supposed to get out my long mailing list and mail every friend a Christmas card (didn't mail any, by the way, in case anyone is feeling disappointed). To add to the long ritual of the "togetherness club" (beside belonging to the "right" clubs, getting to the "in" cocktail parties, and reading the best-selling books) there is further indicated for all Canadians this year a mood of deep patriotism, complete with an imperative program to express it: in effect, not merely neighbourliness with the 20 million Canadians of today, but even with the last 100 years of them! And finally, to purge out, forsooth, any last stubborn vestiges of individualism, today we begin the big ecumenical drive, a week of prayer for church unity!!! O togetherness—whatever be our personal inclination or conviction—we submit completely to thine inviolable rule!

It does seem a bit much, granted, when depicted as above. But is there not something to be said in favour of all the togetherness? -- and we mean, moreover, something more substantial than the warm glow of the heart, the comforting but fleeting euphoria of the hale, hand-shaking throng. We think there is.

Togetherness merely for the sake of togetherness -- with no reference to whether or not we want to be together, or belong together, or come together with mutual respect and honest desire for the deepest good of each other -- such togetherness is a mere delusion, carrying with it the latent wound and unhappiness of all delusion. But may we make two points, which we, at least, feel are extremely important: First, togetherness on a very massive scale -- viz. world unity -- is not only a good but, for more, a need of such absolute character in this modern world of nuclear weapons and all pervasive mass media that we must either embrace this togetherness or push our individualism and nationalism to the point where we risk losing the minimal togetherness needed to constitute one individual (viz. a fairly dependable bond between each individual's limbs and his torso, upon which bond nuclear weapons are said to have an unsettling effect.) Second: unity is so much a part of the very design of the Creator, that it stands revealed finally as at once the indispensable condition for full human development and the best mea-

sure of a man's nobility, i.e. his ability to rise above self.

But, one asks, what of a man's conscience? Can't people be saved in any religion which they're honestly convinced is the true one and which they faithfully practise? Without a doubt. Indeed, there is the very reason why the rules laid down by Vatican II for ecumenical dialogue stress honesty as a fundamental. Compromise on truth will never produce genuine, lasting happiness. Even ardent love of peace does not justify denying truths or honest beliefs. Charity is a bond and a force which can carry us on together towards God even while we are still divided.

But there can be no doubt about the ultimate cure placed upon division. In his last conversation with his apostles Christ prayed "that they all may be one"; AND the reason Christ gave is perhaps even more important... "so that the world may believe that thou (Father) has sent me." In short, the achievement of this unity is the seal, the proof of the Divine Mission.

Christians, and Christians alone, have the adequate formula for world unity. That unity is probably our deepest need. This week let us all pray very hard and do something practical towards achieving achieving this unity. We're trying for a public dialogue between Christians sometime before next Wednesday. Watch the bulletin boards.

Alumni Assoc. to Sponsor Laval Choir

The Laval University Choir will appear on February 4, 1967 at 8:30 at the Charlottetown Confederation Center. Their performance is being sponsored by the S.D.U. Alumni Association for the benefit of the students of Saint Dunstan's. Admission will be at a reduced rate of \$1.00 for the students, to help defray the expenses for the use of the Center.

Today the choir is a mature musical group, under the direction of Miss Chantal Masson, and has expanded their repertoire to include realms deeply associated with today's more modern conception of folk-music, on an international level.

The choir now has a membership of 135 Laval University students, all male, who are living proof of the achievements which college students may obtain.

Evidence of the distinction this group has attained, it's excellence and general public appeal, is the fact that Laval University Choir has been chosen to give the two opening concerts on April 29, 1967 at the Expo theatre in Montreal. They have appeared on television, at International Choral Festivals, and are now anticipating a visit to Europe in the 1968 season.

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