

Dakotah

Band wants regional audience



Photo by Glen Ozonewood

Tuesday's sunshine provided a good setting for outdoor music and Dakotah (l. to r.: Terry Bell, Mike Carney, Willie Elliot, Mike Van Liew) delivered theirs at Lane Community College.

By GLEN OZONWOOD

Oregon has a nationwide reputation as a hip place and Eugene is the focus. The reputation attracts those living slightly askew of the mainstream. It attracts people like Terry Bell and Mike Carney, guitar players for Dakotah.

Carney and Bell grew up in the Midwest and stopped in Santa Cruz for about four years before ending up in Eugene. In their eight years together the two have played a lot of styles of music.

"We were a folk duo when we first came to town," says Carney as he restrings his guitar. "Then we were kind of blue-grassy and country, played country-rock and ended up doing hard rock."

For the past year the music's been from a mixed bag. Bell credits Dakotah's changing style with keeping the band alive.

"Every time someone would come in and see us we were different than the last time. It kept everybody guessing."

Last summer Carney and Bell took a vacation, did some writing, and started their music on a new route. In December, the vacation ended and Dakotah started moving again.

In the new band Mike Van Liew was added on keyboards and

flute, Dennis Senoff and his drum set were asked to join and Willie Elliott, who had played with the band earlier, brought his bass back. Armed with new material and an expanded sound, the band is trying to forge a style with which it feels comfortable.

"It's not coming out yet," admits Carney. "That's why we're trying funk tunes, blues tunes, barber-shop quartet tunes and gospel tunes. We're still playing the field idiom-wise."

Van Liew says it won't be that way forever.

"There is a point where if you stay together long enough you develop your own style. You play a lot of different music and a lot of different sounding tunes but people recognize your style."

On electric pieces the band displays a strong San Francisco influence and while its guitar work is solid, its vocals are weak. As the group picks up speed, it's playing bars. That means music that can be danced to.

"Recording is where we want to end, to move into," says Carney. "But right now we're trying to make a living so we can start recording. Recording is expensive. You gotta have money."

Bars present the band with non-musical challenges.

"We are playing the art of turn-

ing on the crowd," says Carney. "Would the band's music be that different outside the bars?"

"We'd probably still play good, jumping, boogie tunes," predicts Van Liew. "We might play looser, more spontaneous, less up-town, but it would be basically the same."

Dakotah got its start at the Black Forest but would like to become a regional band. The group says Eugene just doesn't have enough clubs.

"We want to center here and move our greedy little fingers everywhere we can," says Carney with a hint of cynicism gained from paying the rent playing music. "This is a hard area to make it in. It's supposed to be so groovy but the local people don't support local musicians."

Dakotah is one of the few local bands able to pay the bills through playing. Carney says the number could be increased simply enough.

"The minute Oregon has a 19-year-old drinking age, musicians in this state will be able to make a decent living. Those extra two years of people in bars would make a real difference."

In the end, Bell and Carney hope their move to Eugene works as they envisioned. The hope is that the reputation is deserved.

Music-cinema (Continued from Page 5B)

people, through portentous narration and editing, that rock'n'roll was finally dead. Although the Stones perform well, the attitude of the film leaves such a bad taste that it's difficult to watch.

Much superior is Jean-Luc Godard's *Sympathy for the Devil*, a Rolling Stones' recording session interspersed with leftist polemic in fictional form. The rock stars are at least treated with respect, though they are as politically used in this film as they are in *Gimme Shelter*. Unlike the Beatles, the Stones were never to appear as a group in a critically and financially successful movie.

Rock'n'roll films, like rock music itself, seemed to go dormant in the early Seventies. More concert documentaries appeared, notably those featuring Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, but they added little new to the catalog of rock movies. Only late in this decade have rock'n'roll films come into their own, and this time they are doing it with a vengeance.

Inspired by the success of *American Graffiti*, not itself a musical but a film which used a constant soundtrack of Fifties' hits, producers scrambled for proper Oregon Daily Emerald

ties that would recreate the golden age of rock'n'roll.

First out of the gate was *American Hot Wax*, an interesting revisionist exploitation film in the grand tradition of *The Girl Can't Help It* and *Beach Blanket Bingo*. But a new wrinkle, or rather a newly borrowed one, appears in the fabric of this rock film. Stealing both documentary techniques developed in non-fiction rock movies and biographical notions from Big Band pictures like *The Glenn Miller Story*, director Floyd Mutrux created a fictional musical biopic.

Not surprisingly, the film betrays an allegiance to too many masters and is thus not entirely successful. But it set a trend which will continue as long as we will fork out money to watch carbon copies.

Due in Eugene June 21 is the next installment of the revisionist film biography, *The Buddy Holly Story*. Because Holly was one of the greatest of all rock'n'rollers, and because gifted actor Gary Busey is playing him, this may be the film that will tell us whether the new rock film hybrid will work.

In the wake of *Saturday Night Fever* will come an inevitably les-

ser batch of carbon copies like *TGIF*, another minor movie with a disco theme. And John Travolta himself, perhaps the most exciting young American star, appears soon with the dreaded Olivia Newton-John in *Grease*, which combines the sub-genres of Broadway musical adaptation and rock'n'roll revival picture.

Let us leave the last word for *The Last Waltz*, a filmed record of the Band's farewell concert that opens in Eugene this week. By most accounts it is the ultimate rock concert film, using new technology like the Panaflex camera to take the moviegoer more inside a rock concert than he has ever been. Some critics complain that it is so technically proficient that it is cold. It needs, they complain, the gritty edge of reality that Bob Dylan achieved in the concert footage of his first major effort to combine rock music, rock culture and fiction, *Renaldo and Clara*.

Time, the Band and director Martin Scorsese will tell whether the rock'n'roll film has really reached its peak or whether *The Last Waltz* is merely another bump in the rocky road of pop music movies.

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