

## CASS'S CORNER



### Heaven . . . is the Home of Our Hearts

I was excited. It was Friday, August 7, and Hamilton was hosting the 40th anniversary of its annual Festival of Friends celebration.

Yes, I had attended in the past, fortunate enough to see such musical groups and other acts as Great Britain's 'Squeeze.' One year it was punk prodigy Marky Ramone. My dear wife and I, one year, saw Steven Page, formerly of Barenaked Ladies note.

One year had Motley Crue's Vince Neil performing and Burlington's Finger Eleven have provided the entertainment. too.

The full roster of showmen/performers is enough to warrant a museum and something along these lines is available for viewing at each year's Festival.

This year was equally nostalgic for me. I had known for several weeks that two favourite bands of mine from my high school years would be festival attractions, this year. These groups were Montreal's 'Men Without Hats' ('Safety Dance' and 'Pop Goes the World') and Psychedelic Furs, from London, England's capital city (Love My Way; Heartbreak Beat; Heaven; Pretty in Pink).



Sadly, my wife did not wish to join me for the shows, feeling, perhaps, that music is best enjoyed "in its proper time and setting." My high school and other adolescent memories are never far from my mind, however. I WAS GOING BACK TO GRADE TEN, gosh darn it!

I was beyond elated when dear Rachael agreed to attend the concerts,

with me. It is nice to know, or to believe, anyway, that somebody else, too, holds these days of past in as high of regard as I.

Not wishing to belabour things so mundane any longer, I shall move straight ahead, to my bus ride to Jackson Square. This is where Rachael had agreed to meet me (thank goodness I had expressed an affection for and knowledge of the music of Spandau Ballet; these lads comprise her favourite band and I enjoy singing their songs, word for word, whilst in her company).

As the bus approached the outside steps at our downtown mall, i was pleased to see my concert attendee and her patient and anxious face. My bus had arrived fifteen minutes late, but my good and fellow music aficionado was still there, waiting.

A new bus transported us to the fairgrounds, in Ancaster, where the annual celebration is now held. We appreciated the convenience that public transit provided.

We also appreciated the glee, the unabashed excitement, that both of us felt, knowing we would soon be transported to the past, to listen to and be witness to these performances of yore.

Before we found our place in the audience, we browsed the T-shirt selection available, for each band we would be seeing.

Immediately thereafter, however, we turned to face the band, and we listened. Oh, how we listened.

In all honesty, Men Without Hats were best known for only a couple of songs, and as 'Pop Goes the World' began, so did our excitement elevate. The band closed with their biggest hit, 'Safety Dance' and there was no way to avoid feeling the wave of emotion coursing through the entire audience, as this favourite tune progressed.



Regardless of how a number of you may feel, now, about the high school years we enjoyed 'so many years ago,' these are often very important years in the A.B.I. community. These are the days of our youth that we remember, often such innocent and care-free days. Nothing could go wrong when our records were spinning. Nothing could go wrong, period, as far as we were concerned, right?

Not long after the close of the first performance, we made our way nearer the stage, in order to view the Psychedelic Furs.



Again, excitement welled in me, as the time approached for them to begin playing. THESE were the days. THIS was the musical group I was so excited to see perform!

The commencement of the Furs' show seemed overly delayed, as far as the audience was concerned, but then they began.

And they played . . .

The first notes of 'Heaven' echoed, and we were reminded that "Heaven. . . is the home of our hearts. . ." I grow teary-eyed, even now, recounting the waves of emotion that their performances brought on.

Ghost in You, Heartbreak Beat, Pretty in Pink. . . Dumb Waiters, Alice's House. . . the list of songs continued, as did the joy being exuded by the Furs.

Eventually, of course, the show came to a close. Yes, there were two or three songs played as encores, following the concert, but I think the band's playing all night would, likely, have been welcomed.

I so enjoyed these concerts and I feel that my companion felt similarly, even if not equally about the shows, certainly about the friendship we have cultivated, a friendship like so many of us feel, with so many others, when we leave the clubhouse, following our meetings.

**Heaven. . . it really IS the home of our hearts . . .**