

Tracks

A column

The Spike-Drivers

1967

Sept. 25, 1967

Dear Fifth Estaters,

The Spike-Drivers almost became America's first folk martyrs while doing an innocent gig in Burlington, Vt. The club manager freaked out and demanded we stop playing this "Psyduillik" music, because it irritated a few of his beer-swilling regulars. He craved our last year's soft pap rock sound. When we told him it was impossible to go backwards, he plied the local gorilla movement with free beer to get them to harass us and goad us into quitting the gig so he wouldn't have to pay us.

Instead, as things got weirder and curiouser, we summoned the cops to get us out alive. So with a little bit of help from our friends we moved all our gear out amid a frightening din of catcalls, obscenities, boos, hisses, and rebel yells. True to the stereotype of provincial life, within 24 hours the whole area was gossiping about what had gone on at the Red Dog.

This engendered an amount of backlash against the manager and he allowed us to finish the week. In addition, he guaranteed the safety of our bodies and equipment. However, when it came time to pay us, he melodramatically said, "I hear from the grapevine that 'they' are out to get you. Don't show your faces in Burlington again." A real honkie.

What should have been our second week at the Red Dog, we spent on a friend's farm outside of town breathing ganja-sweet air. Eating home-grown scoffables, and climbing silent mountains with dilated pupils. Being so high up makes you forget there is any down, But down we came:

From Vermont we drove to Death City. And to further complicate Manhattan Karma, we had the pleasure of driving an 11,000 pound, 60 passenger school bus through all that insanity.

In New York we played a benefit for the Student Mobilization Committee and a guest set at Steve Paul's scene.

New York immediately poisoned us. Penniless and suffocating and worse yet, unable to rehearse, we vegetated and waited for fullness.

The only good thing that happened was attending a meeting of an organization called Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.). The group is made up of engineers and artists and provides a forum to exchange creative ideas. The meeting we attended was on Holograms—magic three dimensional laser photographs. E.A.T. puts out a newsletter describing artistic applications of recent technological developments.

This Friday and Saturday we are playing anti-war concerts in Philadelphia. (Meanwhile, we find that we are being advertised as playing at the Grande along with the MC 5. Sorry, but nobody told us.)

From Philly we go to Montreal for two weeks of foreign intrigues. While abroad we will be putting together our show which will be seen in Detroit on Oct. 17. This will feature our own integrated light show and the use of a violin and cello on several numbers. Also many new arrangements, including an oratorio and a blues raga. This will be our last public performance in the Detroit area for a while, so we hope all our friends will attend.

Love,

The Spike Drivers

fifth Estate

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