

Urban Edge

by Jeff Cobb
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Maybe it's just me, but when I hear a band's music described as 'pop' my head fills with pictures of the Bay City Rollers and I tend to want to run the other way. Most of the music channels are now so overloaded with glitzy, image-oriented pop bands that one more might make the TV set explode. That is why it is refreshing to hear a band like Urban Edge and see image and glitz take a back seat to solid musical talent.

Urban Edge is a four-piece band from Winston-Salem, NC, comprised of Tom Shaw on lead guitar, Jerry Chapman on bass guitar, Jason Buss on keyboards and Jerry Finley on drums. As their promotional material reads, all members share in the "voicing of melodic opinions."

The band's repertoire consists

primarily of original tunes best described as progressive pop with a noticeable British invasion influence. In 1987, Urban Edge released their first tape, *Bottom of the Stairs*. Recently, they were included on "Turtle Soup," a compilation of new regional music produced by Turtle Tapes in North Carolina. They have also recorded three songs at Mitch Easter's Drive-In Studio and, according to Shaw, the band hopes to have an EP out by Christmas.

Urban Edge's live show is powerful and musically exciting, and the band has gained a reputation for displaying a sense of humor on stage. Shaw's guitar riffs are sharp and catchy and his solos reflect skillful, melodic construction. Chapman's bass playing reveals considerable skill without over-complicating the beat. Finley's arrangements and fills go way beyond the 4/4 proficiency of the typical pop band. Buss provides a mellow infusion of sound to polish the sharp edge of Shaw's guitar and the rhythm section.

"Day Glo Dreams," off the Turtle Tapes compilation, has been cited as a potential commercial success for the band. My personal pick is "Tuesday's Garden" off of *Bottom of the Stairs*.

"Lies" and "Something on My Mind," both recorded more recently than the other selections mentioned, are also excellent listening material.

If pressed to pick the area on which the band needs to work, I would have to say that their lyrics can sometimes come across as superficial cliché ("Day Glo Dreams," for example). A shortcoming such as this could keep the band from being taken seriously. Nevertheless, the musical ability is there and it is well worth keeping an eye out for these guys. Urban Edge has played all over the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee, and they have performed with the Romantics, Let's Active, and Guadalcanal Diary, among others. Get a hold of their tapes or, better yet, catch one of their live shows. These guys are a shot in the arm for the pop music scene. AMJ

Crossword Answers

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Chapman, Shaw, Finley, Buss: Urban Edge

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