

# ARTS

## The Clue works to build up strong musical reputation in Chapel Hill

By **LYNDA WOLF**  
Special to the Tar Heel

Approximately 50 people sat on the front lawn drinking beer and listening to The Clue playing on the front porch of a band member's house. The cymbal's volume rose to a peak and abruptly ended.

"We hope ya'll enjoyed the show and remember that we'll be playing this Thursday night at Harrison's," said David Brown, drummer and manager for the pop-rock band The Clue.

The spotlights were turned off and The Clue members began to walk off the stage to greet the audience. Brown wandered around making sure he greeted everyone.

Brown, a senior percussion major at UNC, is taking a break from the books this summer to devote his attention to The Clue.

His interest in music began in the fourth grade when he played the snare drum in the school band. This interest has continued into college.

His first experience in a band began with the John Santa band in August 1982. He auditioned and was hired on the spot. Besides playing the drums, Brown played keyboards, sang, arranged music and helped work on an album.

Because Santa's music was not appealing to a large group of people, the band had financial problems, Brown said.

"Not only did the band have financial problems, the band had personality problems. It got to the point where I knew if I wanted things done the right way I would have to do them myself. So I quit the Santa band."

His friend, Julie Plunkett, said Brown is the type of person who will not settle for second best. He will practice for hours on end until everything is just right.

Because he is a perfectionist, Brown said he often gets discouraged when things do not go well. He said good makes you want to strive for better even if you create tension in the process. "Tension is good for a band as long as it is not an unhealthy tension as it was in Santa."

He said he's always wanted to manage a band. "I wanted something that I could mastermind and develop into something big."

With band members Mike Tew, Jean Marshall, Scott Stowe and Les Britt, he said he feels the band has the talent to make it. However, it takes more than talent to make it around here—it takes a new sound.

Jean Marshall, lead vocalist for The Clue, said she tries to come across as someone who's tough and has lived through a lot.

With a high soprano voice, Marshall is finding it hard to change her tone to produce a

sound that is rougher, louder and which doesn't carry verbrata.

Yet it's her voice, along with the band's different musical backgrounds and capabilities, that gives The Clue the new sound it needs to stand out.

People don't want to hear what everybody else plays. When you give them something different your chances of making it are better," Brown said.

The Clue plays a lot of Top 40 pop and rock but Brown said he plans on using original material by band members once they have built up a reputation.

Brown said he knows that a band's chances of making it are slim.

"Because you are not well known, clubs don't want to take a chance on you. Many clubs want references from other clubs and proof of a large following. These problems get you down easily and you must remember to be patient."

Brown said patience is an elusive quality in a new band. "You want things now. You want the new instruments, or that road job or that club spot, and you have to keep reminding yourself that it all takes time," Brown said.

"The band's name The Clue is a cross between The Clash and The Who," Brown said. "We chose that name because it represented a joint effort. I want the band to be able to discuss problems together and come up with a joint solution. I want the band to feel like they can contribute whenever they feel like it is appropriate."

"That was one of the things I could not do in Santa. My opinion was not considered even when in the end we would do something very similar to what I suggested."

Plunkett said Brown is a good manager because he has the necessary qualities: determination, dedication, talent and a good ear for music.

Stowe, bass guitarist for Clue, said "David knows when a piece of music needs to be changed. He doesn't try to tell us how to play our instruments and for that we respect him."

Plunkett said "David critiques the band to make the band sound better. At times David does tend to be more of a dictator than he thinks and does a lot more decision making than he is willing to admit."

The Clue member's dedication to the band and its music has made long hours of practice pay off when a job such as Harrison's is contracted.

Ron Oldham, bartender and band coordinator for Harrison's, said The Clue was a big success. "Everyone liked their music and the crowd was exceptionally large for a Thursday



Tar Heel/Lori Thomas

**David Brown, drummer and manager of The Clue**  
... trying to create a different kind of sound

night."

Oldham said Harrison's plans on using bands more often and would invite The Clue to play again.

"I plan to go as far as I possibly can with

The Clue," Brown says, "The Clue can make it—maybe not with the same members and maybe not doing the same things, but The Clue can survive."

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