

*Bands*

# Average guys can rock 'n' roll, too

By JENNY LIVINGSTON  
Assistant Omnibus Editor

The anticipation of the nightclub crowd is met with four guys on stage and a single question:  
Is that the band?

The Popes sure don't look like one. In a field of long-hairs, no-hairs, leather and tie-dye, these guys are pure American apple pie. Some bands are sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll; The Popes look more like milk, cookies and baseball.

And rock 'n' roll.  
As tame as they look in their sneakers and button-downs, The Popes are not to be underestimated. Under their average-guy exteriors, the foursome is as clever, creative and idiosyncratic as any of the stranger-looking bands.

The Popes came together about two years ago in Chapel Hill when guitarist John Elderkin and singer/guitarist Steve Ruppenthal enlisted bassist Henry Pharr. They were all students at the University and acquaintances from their high school

days in Charlotte. They also had a drummer who has since been replaced by UNC student Marcus Jones.

When Jones joined the band four months ago, they changed their name from The Blantons, named after a close friend of the band, to The Popes, after you-know-who. They had decided they needed something more distinctive.

"People kept saying: 'Oh, like The Connells, right?'" Elderkin said. "We didn't want to be compared with them forever."

But their new name has spawned its own share of identity problems — they often have been mistaken for the Scottish band The Pogues. At a recent gig, a confused spectator asked why they weren't wearing their kilts.

They may be as collegiate as The Connells and as Anglo-Saxon as The Pogues, but they have a sound of their own. Imagine The Jam transplanted from England in the early '70s to America in the late '80s and you've about got it.

"We were all so young and impressionable during that time," Elderkin said. "We're really into the integrity of bands like The Jam and The Clash."

Like The Jam, their music is both innocent and edgy. But The Popes do more than regurgitate old styles — their Jam-era flavor is mixed with a healthy dose of modernism plus influences from nearly all points on the musical spectrum. Ruppenthal likes the pop hardcore Husker Du, Pharr prefers modern funk and blues and Jones is the band's main country and western man.

The result of this strange brew is a sweet blend of danceable rhythms and infectious lyrics. Their post-punk modern pop music is as original and unaffected as their all-American faces.

"So many bands take themselves so seriously," Pharr said. "But we're not ashamed to call ourselves a pop band."

They shouldn't be. The Popes' lack of pretension has gained them a following in the Triangle. Chapel Hill's WXYC airs two of their songs.



DTH/Matt Plyler

The Popes will be performing at Cat's Cradle Friday night

"Marilyn" and "Don't Expect." Cat's Cradle chose them to open for the blockbuster Royal Crescent Mob concert. And they recently played to a full house at Raleigh's Fallout Shelter when they opened for Soul Train.

The band is getting more and more attention, and it seems likely to

continue. Unlike many college bands who drop their music as soon as they get "real jobs," The Popes are in for the long run, which they hope will include a "Funny Hat Tour" and an album.

It could happen. Because even if they don't look like it, yes, they are the band.

## Week's Fare

### TODAY

**11 Stormy Weather** will be shown at 8 p.m. at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

**Mourning Becomes Electra** will be performed by PlayMakers Repertory Company through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m., and Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 p.m. (weeknight performances will be spread over two evenings) at Paul Green Theatre. Call 962-1121 for ticket information.

**The Madwoman of Chollot** will be performed by students at Chapel Hill High School through Saturday at 8 p.m. in Chapel Hill High School Cultural Arts Building. Call 967-0578 for ticket information.

**Phyllis Thompson** will read from her poems at 4 p.m. in 224 Greenlaw.

**Ludlow Fair, Auto-Erotic Misadventure, and The Partition** will be performed by Actors' Co-op through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at the ArtsCenter. Call 929-2787 for ticket information.

**The Woolgatherer** will be performed by Manbites Dog Theater Company through Saturday at 8:15 p.m. at Manbites Dog Theater in Durham. Call 286-2890 for ticket information.

**Sexual Perversity in Chicago** will be performed by Kamikaze Theatre Company through Sunday at 10 p.m. at Theatre in the Park at N.C. State. Call 755-6936 for ticket information.

**The Rimers of Eldritch** will be performed by Thompson Theatre through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Tuesday and Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Thompson Theatre at N.C. State. Call 737-2405 for ticket information.

**Visit to a Far Planet** is the current show at the Morehead Planetarium. Call 962-1237 for more information.

**Greg and Kathy Gelb and Paul Montgomery** will perform at 6 p.m. at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

**New Potato Caboose** will perform at Under the Street in Durham. Call 286-2647 for more information.

**Jazzmin** will perform at Magdalena's La Terraza. Call 967-3277 for more information.

**Claim Stakers and The Popes** will perform at 10 p.m. at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

### FRIDAY

**12 The Witches of Eastwick** will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m., and **Taxi Driver** will be shown at midnight in Union Auditorium. Call 962-2285 for ticket information.

**Allegro non Troppo** will be shown at 7 and 9:15 p.m. at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh. Call 833-1935 for ticket information.

**Ragtime and Rhapsodies: American Music in North Carolina** will be performed by Jacquelyn Culpepper and John Ferguson at 3 p.m. at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

**Even Educated Fleas Do It!** will be performed by Durham Theatre Guild through Saturday at 8 and 10:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the Carolina Theatre in Durham. Call 688-9725 for ticket information.

**The Tempest** will be performed by Raleigh Little Theatre through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Wednesday at 8 p.m. at Pogue Street Theatre in Raleigh. Call 821-3111 for ticket information.

**Piedmont Hecats** will perform at 8 p.m. at Ninth Street Bakery in Durham. Call 286-0303 for more information.

**Broken English** will perform at Magdalena's La Terraza. Call 967-3277 for more information.

**Boney Maroney** will perform at Under the Street in Durham. Call 286-2647 for more information.

**David Olney** will perform at the Cave. Call 968-9308 for more information.

**Scrapyard** will perform at 10 p.m. at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

### SATURDAY

**13 You Can't Take It With You** will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in Union Auditorium.

**Joyce Grear**, storyteller, will perform at 11 a.m. at the ArtsCenter. Call 929-2787 for ticket information.

**Jesse and the Bandit Queen** will be performed by Raleigh Ensemble Players at 8:15 p.m. at Sertoma Arts Center in Raleigh. Call 782-7583 for ticket information.

**Mass Appeal** will be performed by Asolo State Theater, at 8 p.m. in Stewart Theatre at N.C. State. Call

737-3104 for ticket information.

**Yes** will perform at 8 p.m. at the Smith Center.

**Mango Jam and Rebecca and the Hi-Tones** will perform at 8 p.m. at the American Legion Hall. Call 942-6851 for ticket information.

**North Carolina Symphony** will perform at 8 p.m. in Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh. Call 733-9536 for ticket information.

**Jane Hawkins**, pianist, and **Jane Hamborsky**, clarinetist, will perform at 8:15 p.m. in Nelson Music Room at Duke.

**Woodworks** will perform at 8 p.m. at Ninth Street Bakery. Call 286-0303 for more information.

**The Accelerators** will perform at Under the Street in Durham. Call 286-2647 for more information.

**Taz Halloween and Elvis Bustelo** will perform at 9:30 p.m. at Skylight Exchange. Call 933-5550 for more information.

**Bill Lyerly Band** will perform at Magdalena's La Terraza. Call 929-2787 for more information.

**Blue-Note Special** will perform at the Cave. Call 968-9308 for more information.

**Mary on the Dash** will perform at 10 p.m. at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

### SUNDAY

**14 A Place in the Sun** will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in Union Auditorium.

**Bloxi Blues** will be performed by the Lab Theatre through Monday at 4 and 8 p.m. and Tuesday at 5 p.m. in the basement of Graham Memorial Hall.

**Donald Oehler**, clarinetist, **Terry LaGarde**, soprano, and **Jane Whang**, pianist, will perform at 4 p.m. in Hill Hall Auditorium.

**Camerata Musica of the DDR** will perform at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Call 962-1449 for ticket information.

**William Porter**, organist, will perform at 5 p.m. in Duke Chapel.

**Beaux Arts Trio** will perform at 8 p.m. in Stewart Theatre at N.C. State. Call 737-2452 for ticket information.

**Eve Cornelious** will perform at 7:30 p.m. at ArtsCenter. Call 929-2787 for ticket information.

The Pixies will perform at 10 p.m. at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

Magdalena's La Terraza. Call 967-3277 for more information.

### TUESDAY

**16 Marlene** will be shown at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in Union Auditorium.

**Penelope Jensen**, soprano, and **Michael Zenge**, pianist, will perform at 8 p.m. in Hill Hall Auditorium.

**North Carolina State Symphonic Band** will perform at 8 p.m. in Stewart Theatre at N.C. State.

**Michael Kelsh** and **Lisa Tucheck** will perform at the Cave. Call 968-9308 for more information.

**Wild Seeds** will perform at 10 p.m. at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

### WEDNESDAY

**17 Cats** will be performed by North Carolina Theatre in Raleigh. Call 755-6060 for ticket information.

**Bob Margolin** will perform at the Cave. Call 968-9308 for more information.

**Swamp Cats** will perform at

### MOVIES

**Varsity I—Dark Eyes** starts Friday at 2, 4:30, 7 and 9:30.

**Varsity II—Broadcast News** at 2, 4:30, 7 and 9:30.

**Varsity Lateshows—Broadcast News and Dark Eyes** Friday and Saturday at 11:45.

**Plaza I—Dirty Dancing** at 2:40, 4:45, 7:05 and 9:10 ends today.

**Ironweed** at 2:45, 5:30 and 9.

**Plaza II—The Last Emperor** at 3:15 and 7:30 today; starting Friday at 3:05 and 7:20.

**Plaza III—Good Morning Vietnam** at 2:25, 4:40, 7 and 9:30.

**Carolina Blue—Moonstruck** at 7:15 and 9:30; weekend matinees at 1:15, 3:15 and 5:15.

**Carolina White—The Serpent and the Rainbow** starts Friday at 7 and 9:15; weekend matinees at 1, 3 and 5.

Compiled by Elizabeth Ellen, arts editor

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