

# ON STAGE

## Bands hook fans with boisterous pop

### The Popes

with Satellite Boyfriend

Friday, Sept. 29, 10:30 p.m.  
Cat's Cradle

Tickets \$7

On Friday, Sept. 29, two of the area's best pop bands, The Popes and Satellite Boyfriend, will be performing together at the Cat's Cradle. Anyone who appreciates quality songwriting full of memorable hooks, musicians who are more concerned with their music than their image, and live shows where preten- sion is absent and dancing isn't ta- boo — don't miss this show!

The Popes are a four-man combo comprised of Steve Rupenthal (guitar, vocals), John Elderkin (guitar, vocals), Henry Pharr (bass, backing vocals) and Jim Rumley (drums, broken cymbals).

The band has been on the scene for a little over two years, having come together soon after Rupenthal and Elderkin began jamming as a duo during their senior year at UNC. Bassist Pharr left the group he was with at the time so he could work with the two talented, easy-going guitarists/songwriters. Though Rumley has only been with the band for a few months, he's the drummer they've been looking for all along.

When asked to cite major influences on his songwriting, Elderkin didn't offer any specific names and said his tastes had changed a lot since the band's early days. Rupenthal replied to the same question in typically understated fashion, saying "most of the British guys," i.e. the

### DOUG EDMUNDS

### concert

usual list of geniuses like Lennon, McCartney, Davies, Townshend. Song arrangements usually are a group effort. The group's sound seems to be headed toward a sophisticated pop rock not unlike late-sixties period Who or Village Green period Kinks. But don't mistake these guys for just another '60s retro band, because their material is refreshingly original and above cheap imitation.

The Popes have toured up and down the East Coast in support of last year's 6-song EP, *Hi, We're The Popes*, a wonderful batch of melodic pop that received critical raves. The band was pleased with the record but extremely frustrated by its lack of distribution. Next time they hope to overcome this problem by signing a recording contract with a well-dis- tributed independent label.

In October, the band will meet with representatives from Incas Rec- ords — the New Haven-based label responsible for early offerings by Miracle Legion, Dumptruck and Spi- ral Jetty — to discuss a possible sign- ing. Elderkin calls this process "highly frustrating" due to endless legalities, flaky A+R men and the elusive luck factor.

The group is looking forward to traveling north for shows in Boston and New York, but the members agree that releasing a full-length record is their top priority for the months ahead. Beyond that, they are hesi- tant to predict the future. The Popes say they're happy to be playing with Satellite Boyfriend, a band they all respect and like, at the club owned



'Hi! We're The Popes.' And they're at the Cradle this Friday.

by the man they like to call "the fifth Pope." The group says, with a collective grin, that owner Frank Heath often barbecues with the band and takes them to Durham Bulls games.

Satellite Boyfriend has been craft- ing boisterous pop rock since early 1986, when lead singer/guitarist Phil Collins was still commuting from Chapel Hill to Burlington for weekly practices. Guitarist Sam Dennis, bas- sist Andy Ware and drummer John David Eliason have since relocated to Raleigh, while Collins remains in Chapel Hill.

In the beginning Collins handled most of the songwriting, but recently it has become a collective effort. He said self-effacingly that writing songs used to be easy for him when creat- ing melodies for "Louie, Louie" type chord progressions still seemed fresh and exciting.

Now the whole band pitches in to help craft songs which, Collins ad- mitted, are still pretty clear in their musical heritage. Like any intelligent musician, he hates to label his band's sound, but he mentioned that Sate- lite Boyfriend has been compared to the Who, the Knack, the Replac- ements and even "Neil Young meets the Partridge Family."

The most exciting thing happen- ing for the band right now is the imminent release of its first LP, *Yes, Ma'am*. The group is putting out both albums and CDs on its own Stew Records, (named in honor of an old friend), and is glad to have finally packaged three years worth of record- ings for commercial sale. Some of the material was recorded locally,

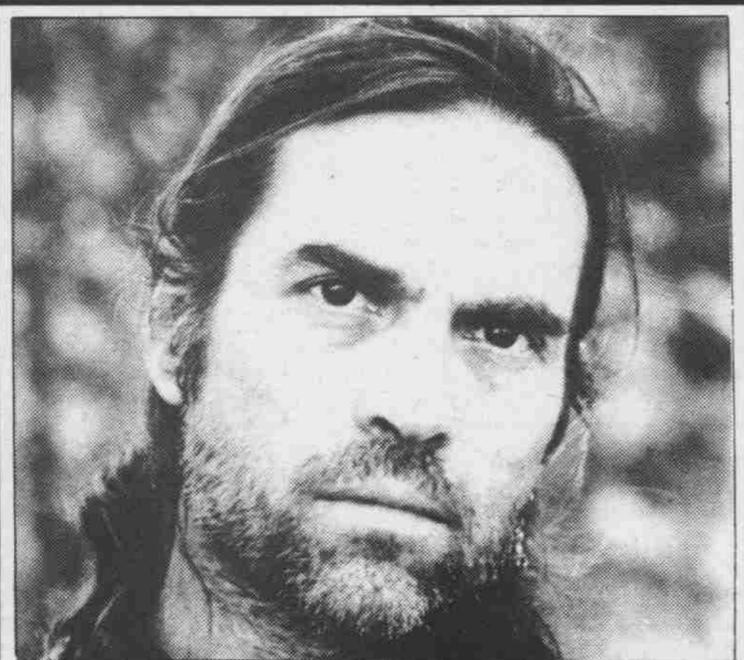
some in Raleigh, and a few songs were done with Mitch Easter at his Drive-In studio in Winston-Salem.

Collins says he expects the record to be somewhat uneven-sounding due to the various studios and producers involved. But he's happy with the mixture of material, calling it "our greatest hits without the hits."

Collins says the group's biggest priority in the next six months is paying debts that releasing the LP has created. Black Park Records in Raleigh is helping with promotion and management, so the members of Satellite Boyfriend won't have to

handle all the cards themselves. The band plans on doing a bit more tour- ing to support the record, and Collins hopes to send out copies to college radio stations around the country.

The friendly, unpretentious lead singer is philosophical about the fu- ture of pop music and Satellite Boyfriend's role in it. He sees the form getting more and more homoge- nous, increasingly derivative but admits that he's at a loss for finding totally new ways to present pop rock. Still, his outlook remains optimistic as he eagerly awaits the next big revolu- tion in rock'n'roll.



Eric Andersen, folksinger extraordinaire and composer of "Thirsty Boots," the anthem of the Freedom Riders, will be making a lone North Carolina appearance 10 p.m Monday night at the Cat's Cradle. Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door. They can be purchased from School Kids Records or Record Bar.

ADVERTISE in  
**OMNIBUS**  
**CAT'S CRADLE**

206 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill  
Call 967-9053

9/28 Thursday  
Cindy Lee Berryhill  
9/29 Friday  
The Popes & Satellite Boyfriend  
9/30 Saturday  
Johnny Quest  
10/1 Sunday  
The ITALS (Jamaican reggae)  
10/2 Monday  
Eric Anderson  
10/3 Tuesday  
Brickbat, The Insurgence  
Sticks and Stones  
10/5 Thursday  
Royal Crescent Mob  
Advance tickets available  
18 & over admitted

THE  
CHAPEL HILL/CARRBORO  
FARMERS' MARKET

Saturdays 7 am-12 noon  
Roberson St., Carrboro  
Tuesdays 7-11 am  
Cedar Falls Park, Weaver  
Dairy Rd., Chapel Hill

On sale will be vegetables in season, tomatoes, summer squash, garden rocket arugula, organic vegetables, fresh baked goods, gourmet food, goat cheese, eggs, herb vinegars, honey, jams, jellies, pickles, bedding plants, garden art, and other crafts. As always all products are locally grown and made by participating vendors. So visit the Farmers' Market to buy or browse. Bring a friend or meet a new one.

RAIN OR SHINE  
Open 'til December 16  
Some items not available on Tuesday.