

Alan Bisport

Arrogance steps up

Evidently somebody thought it would be a big deal. After all, there were—a local band finally getting the bigger exposure of Memorial Hall, playing in front of hordes of responsive people. O.K. It happened, sort of.

Arrogance played to a half-filled hall last Friday night. The crowd applauded appreciatively before and after every song, and the group even got an encore. Was there ever any doubt. When you play in front of loyal fans, you can't lose. Can you?

You can talk about the sound system, the songs, the crowd response or whatever you want, but it all boils down to whether you like their music or not. Some nights they are off, and some nights they are on. Either way, it's the music that decides it.

How profound, you say? Well, if a big reviewer in the sky were to listen to them outside of Chapel Hill and were to describe their sound, he/she would say that they lie somewhere between Shawn Phillips and the Grateful Dead, with a touch of Steve Stills thrown in. And then they'd leave them alone.

The concert went smoothly, alternating between acoustic guitar-type songs and "Southern-flavored folk-rock" (as the press release says). More importantly, Arrogance made the audience feel like they were

appreciated, being the farthest thing from what their name suggests. Their songs tend to start out slow and build into blitzes of lyrics and chord strumming, the piano keeping the flow moving forward until the song suddenly gets quiet again. Unseen forces seem to get hold of their longer songs and turn them into semi-rockers. They weren't playing to the cameras, either. If anything, the whirring cameras and clicking photographers seemed to disturb their spontaneity.

But, no matter. They should bask in the glory while they have the chance. It is so rarely that local talent gets a fair shake exposure-wise.

Arrogance is a college cultural enigma. They play and sound better in small clubs, but many folks in small clubs just want the band to provide a backdrop for heavier happenings. Playing one-night stands and second-billings endlessly, Arrogance has honed their sound down like a broken-in pipe. But for what? Minimal acceptance, if anything. No matter how unappreciative or obnoxious an audience, there will always be applause. It must get very frustrating deciding whether it's worth it all.

Most bands in a college town are willing to

play old favorites and endless variations on uptempo Chuck Berry riffs. First, it's a lot of fun pretending to be the people whose material you are playing. Second, the money can be very good, especially if you know a lot of requests.

But, Arrogance has chosen the harder route. They live and die by their own music. No middle ground. Before listening to their music, like it or not, a person should keep that in mind. A great deal of respect goes with that.

Give Us a Break, their first album, received some attention in the Carolinas. Still, it didn't sell in great numbers, and they probably got next to nothing for the efforts (Record companies have a way of dictating policy to new talent—"new blood," they call it). But, a new album is on its way, so maybe Arrogance will have to "pay their dues" for awhile before that great break comes, if it ever will.

Until that time, they will be eternally branded "local talent." Look at James Taylor. No, on second thought, don't look at James Taylor. On third thought, maybe Arrogance just likes playing music.



Staff photo by Tom Randolph

WUNC-TV filmed the Arrogance concert Friday night for future broadcast.

Blind for life but not helpless

by David Perry
Feature Writer

Arnold Schmidt would like the chance to lead a normal life. He needs no pity. He simply needs understanding.

Blind for all of his 19 years, he has easily adapted to this handicap. But another, almost insurmountable handicap remains—the stereotypes of the blind as being abnormal and helpless.

"I guess a lot of people think we are helpless beings... that just exist," Schmidt said recently, relaxing in his darkened dorm room as he half-listened to Joni Mitchell's "Court and Spark."

"I've honestly got the opinion that most people are scared of me," he said.

"They are afraid I'm going to run them down or hit them with my cane."

Approximately half of the 16 visually handicapped students at UNC are completely blind. They represent one of the smallest, least-accepted minorities on campus.

"I think I can be as normal as I'm given the opportunity," the slender, bushy haired Wilmington native said. "I can't do anything if I'm not given the chance."

Unfortunately, most people don't give him that chance. The Outing Club didn't want him to go camping with them ("I guess they were just scared").

Students constantly hold doors open for him and offer to lead him around. But Schmidt, like many blind students, has by necessity become independent.

"I'm not so helpless as most people think," he said. "I'd die if I knew I was going to be lead around for the rest of my life."

Walking to and from classes poses no special problems for Schmidt once he learns a route and the hazards that it might present.

"After you've gone somewhere 50

times, you memorize the place. There are subconscious landmarks: I can tell if I've gone wrong or right."

Studies are a bit more challenging. Schmidt, a freshman psychology major, is taking five courses. He is also taking adaptive physical education but he doesn't like it: "I know by what I'm doing now that I could be in a regular class."

Schmidt uses a variety of study aids to keep up with schoolwork. He has all but three of his textbooks on tape. He takes notes with either a braille recorder, which types the six braille alphabet dots, or a slate and styles, which enables him to punch out the braille characters by hand.

Schmidt is given special consideration by his teachers only on exams, which he is allowed to take home. A reader reads essay exams to him, and he then types out his answers. On multiple choice tests, he tells his reader his answers.

The Department of Student Life aids the blind students in selecting their readers. The N.C. Commission for the Blind pays the reader's fee, \$1.80 per

hour, and the tuition of any in-state blind student. Anyone interested in reading for the blind should contact John Cates at the Department of Student Affairs.

Joni Mitchell had played through both sides. Schmidt got up, strolled over to his Harmon-Kardon HK 1000 cassette stereo and slipped in Carly Simon's "Hot Cakes."

Schmidt has a number of interests, music and tape equipment among them, but "a lot of people think I don't do anything." He owns about \$1,000 worth of sound equipment and 125 albums. His tastes range from classical to hard rock.

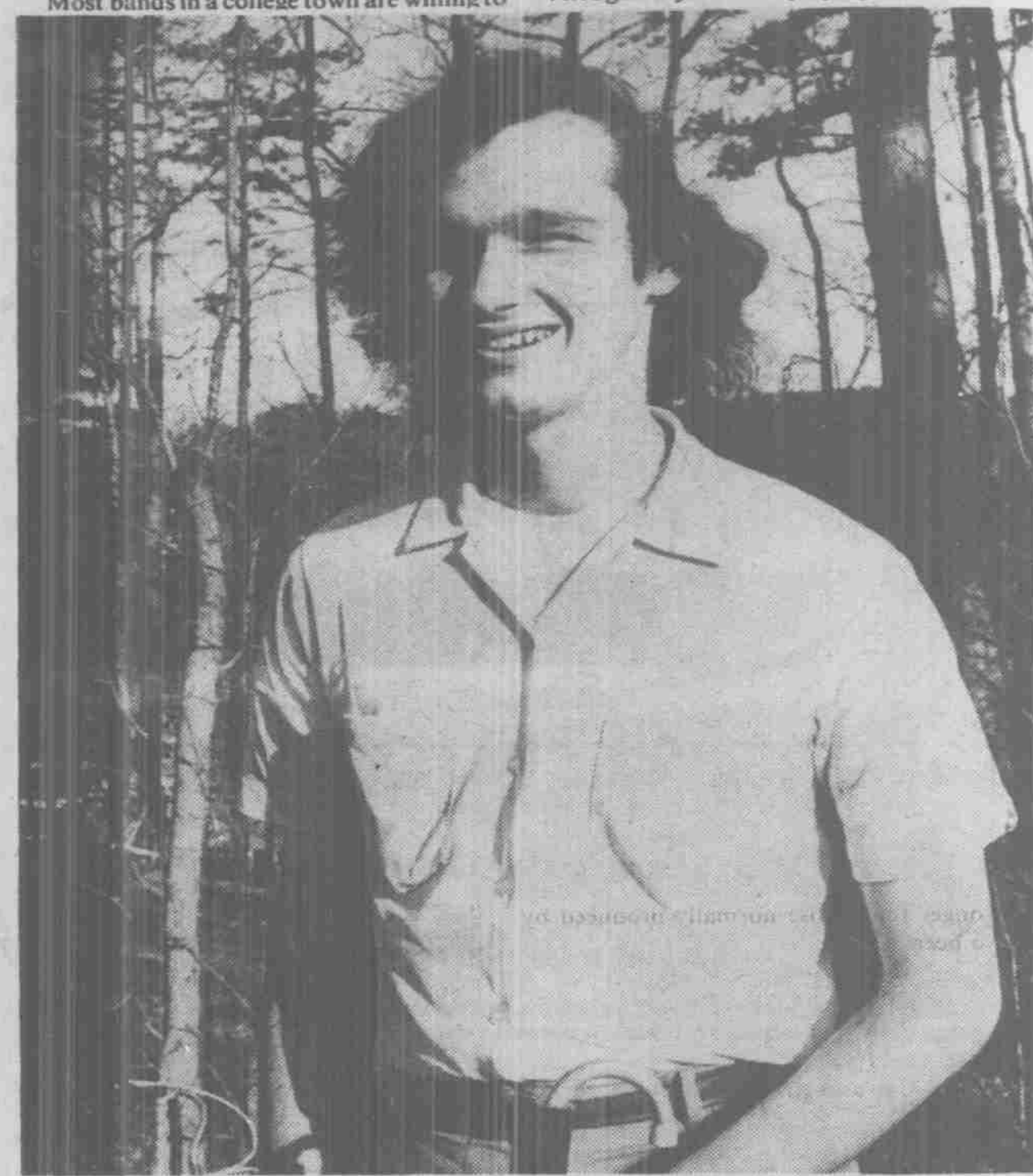
Craftwork, camping, coin-collecting, cars, radio work and politics also interest him. He enjoys the outdoors and is so interested in horticulture that he is considering transferring to N.C. State University.

Schmidt thinks he's made a good adjustment to his blindness. "I've known people that were a lot worse," he said. "I guess maybe I'm average."

Schmidt is hopeful that he can open the eyes of the people around him and convince them that he is not abnormal.

"There's a chance those people will change," he said. "If they do, I'll be happier—we'd both be happier."

"I've got 50 years to live and I'm going to try to make the most of it."



Staff photo by Martha Stevens

Blind student Arnold Schmidt

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