

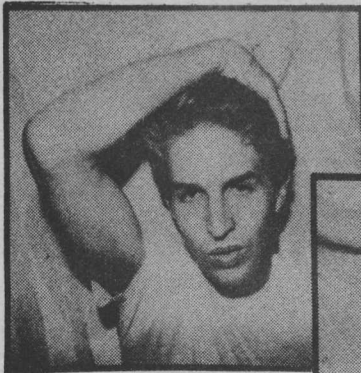
# the dream syndicate

Dear Reader: Well the Dream Syndicate! Your hardly working reporter first encountered them on a cold Monday night at the Midd Club in Manhattan (New York City or cus). The Midd Club is a real hole; atmospheric-ly on a level with Finders and about as big as the New Wave. But the big difference, you see, is that its in New York City and so, its important. The DeeJay wore a beret. He was gay or fashionably affected it. The club crowd wore studiously bored expressions and seemed to be apologizing that anything could have motivated them enough to bother to come out and see this new band from L. A.

You see, what did get them out was a great debut album by the Dream Syndicate. Its on Slash Records (many peoples' coolest rec label) and it sounds somewhat like the Velvet Underground. The lyrical content is real dreamy and romantic, sometimes wistful and melancholy, always intelligent and sincere. The could be compared to the Doors except that they stand apart enough from any similarities to render them quite um, well, unique.

They got onstage LATE, a NYC tradition. Carl, the guitar player looks like one of the Black Flag surf-punk-hippies. Kendra (bass) sort of looks like Kim Novak in clamdiggers. The drummer, Don, looks like a normal modern fellow, but the real fun Syndicator is Steve Wynn the singer-songwriter (w/Kendra) and rythm-guitar player of the group. This guy reminds one of the pre-war Jimmy Stewart character; "Mr. Smith Joins a Rock-and-Roll Band". AS soon as they reached the front of the stage, one wag in the audience announced, "The Velvet Syndicate ... The Dream Underground," trying to get a reaction. Steve (Jimmy Stewart) Wynn just grinned and laughed and said, "Hey, th - this is great".

They began their show with three minutes of warm, controled feedback. Carl, the lead guitar-player, alternates feedback with single-note lines that sometimes clash and sometimes propel the music. He has a cheap Harmony guitar with a whammy-bar that he tortures constantly the entire lenth of the show. Steve (Mr. Smith) sings "Just like Lou Reed" and much more. Kendra half-skanks without pause and, in general, Steve, Kendra and Don hold down a constantly swaying and swinging rythm from



which Carl takes off on feedback-drenched excursions.

The Concerte (french for "concert-of-much-importance) has sort of a tragic, romantic feel to it and one gets the impression that love is, yes, real and worth all the emotional turbulence that is part of love when its great. The depth-of-feeling that is generated by the Syndicate's words and music raise questions and observations about ones' own love-life. The band poses a sort of goal by describing love that is so real that it makes one envious and reflective on ones' own best moments. The audience was attentive throughout and passionately applauded their exit.



Yer reporter had to go see them in Boston then the following Saturday. Their manager, as good and intelligent a fella as you'll ever meet let yers trooly into the show for nothing (gimme perks over money any day) and introduced me to the band. They are real nice and friendly and real thrilled to be rock touring. They are quite the hippest thing on the new rock circuit and are happy to be doing college radio interviews and chats. They tell one DeeJay that the original purpose of the band was to play "Get Yer Ya-Yas Out" from start to finish then tell another something completely different. They are fresh and real happy people.

Well, the Rat was packed with about three hundred people and God forgive the opening band, a heady combination of narcissism, arrogance, ineptitude and jaded vision. Oh, so jaded! (at 19). Off them, and on Dream Syndicate. The crowd was so excited to see the Syndicators that people stood (and danced) on the tables. I don't think half of the crowd saw any more than five minutes. They were murderous! Drifting, swirling guitar figure played erotically (is that possible?) over the melodic offerings of Steve (Jimmy S.) and the rythm section who are really pumping tonight. The crowd, though fully half can't see a thing, dance and sweat and whoop throughout. Its a real bloodletting. Everyone leaves completely sated. The sweat crusts up on three hundred bodies as they emerge from the Boston club into the cold night air. Is it possible to hope everyone has someone to make love with on this night? cuz god if there ever was a night perfect for it . . .

So anyway, back to New York, at Folk City four days later, the Dream Syndicate play to a packed, nervous, fingernail-biting crowd. An ignorant ass of a writer for the Village Voice opines that they do "choice" covers so the audience in this oh-so-literate city shout for cover songs. The Syndicate are as always happy, so they oblige the "Voices" with covers. The sound system is weak and the crowd seems judgmental so during "All Along the Watchtower" Yers trooly split, not that the band was bad, but "All Along the Watchtower"? Oh well.

Charlie Pickett