

Oooh, That Smell by John K. Bradley of the Dynamic Consouls

The Hey Baby Days featured a set of smells that I associate with the parties we played. Each venue had its own unique odors and all of the aromatic occurrences were not present at every outing. You seldom whiffed alcohol at a high school sponsored event, but it was ubiquitous in the frat houses. The Consouls spent a lot of time in the party rooms of fraternities at the Universities in NC, SC and Georgia, and those smells are burned into my nervous system.

Arriving to set up, the room might be redolent with the spaghetti and garlic bread recently offered for that big football weekend feed. This smell would linger, but would soon be replaced by other even more powerful scents.

The equipment we employed had its own distinct olfactory emanations. The amplifiers, at least the old tube amps that we utilized, gave off an acrid, electrical smell. This was not a strong stimulus, but unmistakable, and for me, unforgettable.

Of course, if there was no sweat – you weren't playin' like you should. The band sweated and so did the crowd. Fortunately, it was a fresh sweat odor and did not smell like an old locker room. However, by mid-party your nose could certainly detect that there were people in the room.

Tobacco smoke formed a haze at the ceiling and mingled with the sharp aroma of sloshed beer and mixed drinks. After an hour or so, the breath of the revelers would add its potency to the waves of aroma from spilled potables.

The Dynamic Consouls performed at Clemson University - it was not a frat party for a change, but a dance in a large venue. It was The Consouls' appearance with the Esquires (*Get on Up*). The affair was what they used to call semi-formal. The guys wore coats and ties and the ladies party dresses. This was an officially alcohol-free, school sponsored, classy soiree - probably for Homecoming weekend. The band had set up on a stage that was elevated about four feet over the dance floor. The show was going over like every band wants - there was a thick clump of partygoers immediately in front of the bandstand. This group was directing its attention to the band and not just dancing to the music, as was the larger mass of Tigers behind them. The front row group was moving alright, swaying and bouncing to the beat, but their gaze was directed to the players. That's what all bands hope for; they relish the attention.

Did I mention party dresses? One coed in the front row easily caught my attention. From my elevated vantage point I could not help but notice that her party frock had a daringly low neck line. This marvelous young woman was equipped to make that scooped neckline proud. The overall scenic wonder was enhanced by the fact she was jukin' and bouncing like crazy. Ever the disciplined musician; I found I could keep time with the music by observing those rhythmically undulating globes. Given my rapt attention it was not surprising that I noted something shiny, metallic nested in the embrace of that

magnificent cleavage. I perceived it as a pendant suspended from a neck chain. I was mistaken. As The Consouls cranked it out, her fervent boppin' increased. Suddenly, the flask of whiskey (I had mistaken the gold colored cap for jewelry) flew from her bosom's soft embrace and smashed on the floor. She was mortified and beat a hasty retreat. This left me to finish the set without my glorious human metronome, and with the strong smell of wasted whiskey invading my nostrils.

So, the Hey Baby Days smelled. The various rooms themselves, the equipment, sweat, alcohol and tobacco smoke all added to the odiferous miasma. And topping the fragrance cocktail was the ever present, almost cloying scent of British Sterling mixed with an over-application of Chanel #5. It was wonderful, intoxicating and unforgettable! What a sweet, magical time it was!