

Duck Soup (the Group) Plays at Duck Soup (the Club)

DUCK SOUP and **SWEET FREEDOM**. Rock. At Duck Soup, Huntingdon Pike and County Line rd. in Southampton. Through Sunday.

By **MATT DAMSKER**
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THAT'S RIGHT, last night found Duck Soup, the band, appearing at Duck Soup, the coffeehouse. No relation other than a nominal one and, nominally speaking, no coffee either. It seems Thursday night business at the Soup isn't cooking — maybe 20 people

on hand, by my estimate — so last night's menu had been whittled to certain essentials, and coffee wasn't among them.

Bands have a way of rising to such bleak occasions, and usually they'll go a bit out of their way for a sparse audience. Sweet Freedom for example, worked conscientiously and professionally through their opening set — they're an area group still searching for a break and probably not used to crowd anyway — proving, to

isfaction, that they're serious about what they do and talented enough to aspire beyond it.

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FREEDOM WORKS in conventional forms of boogie-blues-and-country-fed rock, projecting tightly and uncompetitively from two electric guitars, bass and drums. They jam tastefully and with presence, hold a decent hand of original, melodic vehicles and should be great for dancing. As it turns out, the members hold day jobs that range

from carpentry to highway engineering, but they sound like full-time musicians.

Duck Soup (the band) is very much a full-time organization — Philly's own — and they build more complex structures upon their rock foundations, but the tone remains light and the songs are primarily satirical, mixing some Frank Zappa absurd-cynicism with Soup's own droll sophistication. They know what they're doing.

LED by keyboardist and primary composer Richard Grossman, who brings solid jazz and progressive awareness to the broth, Soup boasts an interesting gallery: Guitarist Jim Hayne is a flashy, attractive, snake-fingered musician who tears out "ze crazee lick" with facility and abandon; James Pabarue lends a moorish intensity to things with his dark features and weighty presence (he is one large fellow) while his lead vocals are disciplined and well-formed.

Rounded out by a notable rhythm section of Bill Koepnick's drums and Bill Hayward's bass, Duck Soup has its moments. There's a number called "The No Soap-No Dope Blues", which Anita O'Day once recorded; a strong entry in the rock anthem sweepstakes — "Ship of Fools", and "Big Shoes," a brief but ambitious concoction. Duck Soup deserves a larger audience. For that matter, so does Sweet Freedom and Duck Soup, the sometimes-coffeehouse.