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# Go Haywire!

by Scott Neily

New Year's Eve is generally known in the Western world as Party

Night. Halifax and Dartmouth are no strangers to this tradition, as evidenced by the five hundred-plus patrons that crowded into the Crazy Horse to celebrate the dawning of a new year with Haywire, one of the most successful musical acts ever to come out of the Maritimes.

With several hit singles under their belts, the five members of Haywire (Paul MacAusland, vocals; Marvin Birt, guitars; David Rashed, keyboards; Ronnie Switzer, bass; Sean Kilbride, drums) have broken free of the novelty of being a Maritime act, and are starting to be recognized for the enormous potential contained within the group. Their single "Dance Desire" won a gold award at the World Popular Song Festival '87, and their new



Photo courtesy H.E.A.

Haywire (l to r) Sean Kilbride, Ronnie Switzer, Paul MacAusland, Marvin Birt, David Rashed.

album, *Don't Just Stand There*, has recently gone Platinum in Canada. Their current single, "Black and Blue", is making excellent progress on the charts and a third single will be released soon.

Like a great many bands, Haywire slugged it out in bars and clubs for several years after forming. After winning the Q104 Homegrown Contest in 1984, they recorded a five-song EP, and signed on with Attic Records in

January 1986. Their debut album, *Bad Boys*, was released in August and went gold four months later. For a band to rise to the level of success that Haywire is enjoying, the struggle is usually a long and hard one. However, Sean Kilbride thinks Haywire may have been the exception to that rule. "It hasn't been that hard a struggle. We haven't worked harder than a lot of bands, but we did the same things they did. I think it's hard for Canadians in general to make it in the music business. You can't really explain how one band makes it and one doesn't. It's just a combination of things: a lot of luck, timing, writing good songs, good record company management, people working for you, and stuff like that."

The new album marks a change from the sugar-pop sound found on *Bad Boys*, almost a return to the band's pre-recording days. While older fans may see the difference as a renaissance and new ones as a positive step in a harder direction, the band feels the evolution was unconscious and they have simply matured. "I don't think it was a conscious effort," said Kilbride. "We just grew up a lot in the last year. We got a little tougher in our attitudes and our sound, and it comes off on vinyl that way."

Although some of the group's popularity was derived from the novelty of being a band from PEI, the idea that more Maritime bands will be signed to record deals because of Haywire's success doesn't seem to be happening. "I think if people are going, 'Who's this band from Charlottetown? They've got a platinum album; maybe there's some other talent down there', they may have more of a tendency to listen to what's going on in the Maritimes," said Kilbride. "But more bands aren't going to get signed from here just because we made it. You've got to prove yourself. I think we've opened a few doors, but I haven't seen any other bands being signed. I don't know if that's any indication or not."

With cross-country popularity and a growing, world-wide fan base, Haywire's future seems assured. If they can maintain their success with the philosophy of "writing good tunes", they may prevent PEI from going back to being known only for potato farmers, fiddle music, and a certain red-haired girl.

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