

# Moxy Fruvous

## band promises a bargain of a show...

by Luke Peterson

According to traditional lore, they met on a school trip to a pig-calling contest in Flesherton, Ontario. While none of them succeeded in copping the big prize, their collective efforts were sufficient to garner the prestigious "Most Promising Pig Caller" award. As fate would have it, the objects of their vocal efforts were a pair of swine with the unlikely names of "Moxy" and of course, her good friend, "Fruvous".

As the four Toronto schoolmates began to get acquainted, they discovered a common love for both music and theatrics. When they finally came together in 1990, as a foursome busking for money on Bloor Street, there was little doubt what moniker they would choose to adopt.

Opting to busk a cappella to avoid lugging around instruments, David Matheson, Jean Ghomeshi, Murray Foster and Michael Ford, all drew upon their strong musical and theatrical backgrounds to create an eclectic mix of "rap, folk, soca, impromptu theatrics, comedy, political satire, bad choreography, the occasional dirge and a lot of shouting." Thriving upon their ability to attract crowds and attention, it wasn't long before a CBC

Radio Executive "discovered" them. Soon Moxy Fruvous were penning satirical, humorous songs to be played on a variety of CBC programs including Peter Gzowski's *Morningside* and *The Journal*. Early in 1992 the band released a six-song cassette, which included the infamous "Green Eggs and Ham"; the release would covet the #1 position on the Canadian Independent charts for over a year. By this point, their busking days were merely a fond memory and Moxy Fruvous found themselves opening for prominent performers like Bob Dylan and Bryan Adams.

1993 marked the release of the band's debut album *Bargainville* and the launch of a 50 date Canadian tour. The off the wall quartet, and special guest Jann Arden, are slated to perform in Fredericton at the Playhouse on Monday November 15th.

After a week long session of telephone tag with Warner Bothers, an over the phone interview was attained with band member David Matheson. When asked why students should come out to see Moxy Fruvous perform, the friendly Accordionist, Bassist, Guitarist, was quick to reply, "because our show is over two hours of good entertainment, from the music side, to the comic side, to the satirical side. It's a good

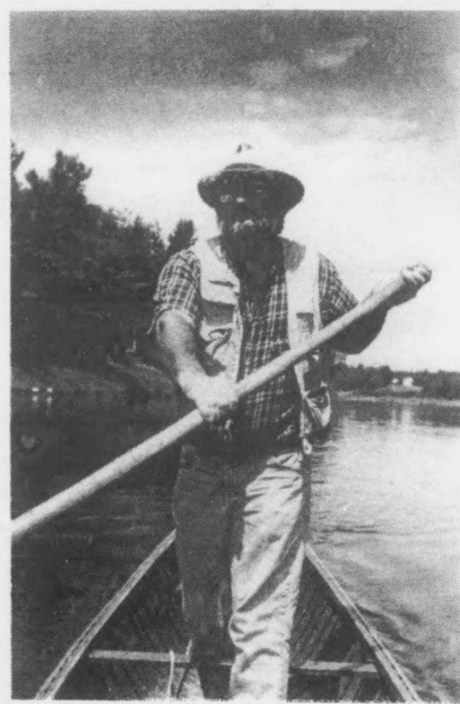
grab-bag. A good way to spend money".

Monday's show marks the band's second performance here in Fredericton. The first being an ill-fated set in the Social Club last year, which Matheson termed as "a real bummer of a gig for us!" when asked if an auditorium-type venue, such as the Playhouse, is preferable to performing in a noisy bar, Matheson was quick to acknowledge that the band's show is better suited to the quite confines of a theater, "Sure its fun every so often to play in a bar, but as far as making your show a good show and having people understanding and enjoying it with us, it definitely works better in a theater."

Jann Arden is scheduled to open for Moxy Fruvous on Monday and Matheson considers her music to be a great contrast to what he and his fellow bandmates offer. "Jann has really touching and strong, emotional music. Her songs tend to the serious side and the dark side, but everything she says in between songs is extremely funny."

Reserve tickets for Moxy Fruvous/Jann Arden can be purchased at the Playhouse Box Office.

### Book Review



Herb Curtis  
*The Lone Angler*  
(Goose Lane Editions)

I can remember reading *The Americans are Coming* a few years ago and thinking that no one captures the spirit of the Miramichi better than Herb. His newest book, *The Lone Angler*, continues in that tradition. There is no doubt that Curtis is a storyteller extraordinaire. There is always a sense that the man is sitting right there with you, telling the story as you turn each page. Perhaps that is why it is not surprising to find some of the novel choppy and quick, as a story teller may be when he wants to get to a good part, afraid that his audience may be getting bored.

There is, however, very little which is boring about *The Lone Angler*. While Palidin Ramsey and his brother Dryfly are older, they still remain the central figures in the novel and are as humorous as they were in *The Americans are Coming*.

Many will find the *Lone Angler* to be a quick and easy read. Like myself, Miramichiers will probably enjoy the book immensely because it talks of times which, for the most part, are lost forever, yet it deals with characters and experienced that are still alive today. The beauty of *The Lone Angler* is that, aside from Palidin, most of the characters in the book are very ordinary. They are ordinary people facing the problems of everyday life. A young Dryfly struggles with his love for a woman who he thinks will never marry him and decides he has to go visit her in Connecticut. Sally attempts to take her first steps as a baby and become frustrated when she is not given enough attention. And Bert Todder, the village bachelor, deals with an ever-growing awareness that he is alone in the world.

Curtis creates most of his characters with great care and even the less significant characters play very impor-

tant roles in the novel. Interestingly enough, Curtis stereotypes those characters which the reader will not like, such as the General Manager, James Lowery who has no time for the dreams and hopes of a young man like Palidin.

Palidin, for the most part, is in a separate story throughout the novel. Thus, he novel switches back and forth between what is happening in Brennan Siding to the adventures of Palidin in Texas. These breaks are smoothly constructed and many times Curtis makes very interesting parallels between the two stories. Yet the humour remains in both stories and Palidin's experience in Texas are as

humorous as Dryfly's in Brennan Siding and Connecticut. After finally finding Brandy Burgess, the man he wishes to sell his fishing secret to, Palidin has to cope with Burgess' nutty cowboy games and a mule that insists on walking backwards.

The reader is exposed to a lot of philosophy in *The Lone Angler*. There is a lot of talk about how humankind treats the world. There is a lot of talk about how people deal with loneliness and regret. There is a continuing discussion on the spirit and the human body. And there is even a bit of talk about feminism. None of these discussions are ever resolved in the novel and sometimes more confusion is created out of these discussion. Yet what the reader discovers is that in their own perverse way, the people of Brennan Siding are very stable and are at peace with themselves. There is a stability found in the conviction that around them are the spirits of those who have died and there is a stability found in the notion that the mighty Dungarvon river which flows past the little settlement of Brennan Siding helps each individual to maintain an essential unity with her/himself, the universe and God. Curtis vividly illustrates this unity at the end of the story in one of the best paragraphs of the entire novel. *The Lone Angler* is a novel which observes and reports on ordinary life. It does not attempt to explain many of the things it observes about life, but it does scratch some surfaces. While many readers will not be deeply moved by the book, there are some good moments, and in the words of Brennan Siding's Dryfly, the novel is the "very best."

-Allan Carter

Herb Curtis, along with the other authors, editors and publishers of Goose Lane Editions, will be celebrating the launching of Goose Lane's new fall releases at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery tonight at 8pm.

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