

Radio Renaissance Man

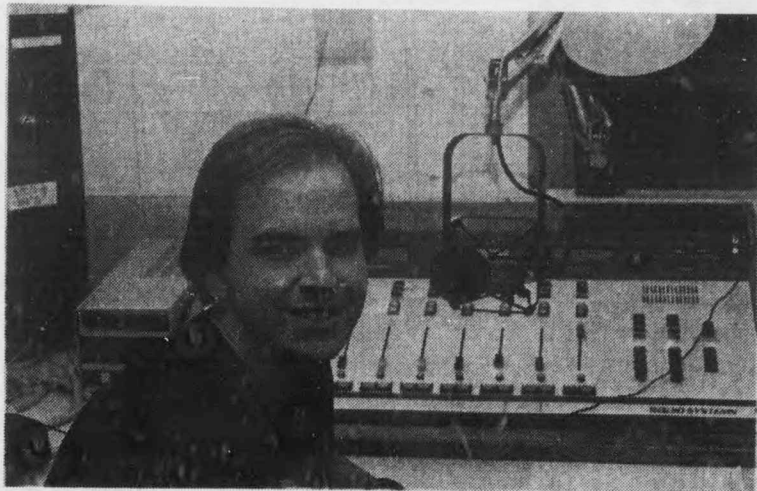
by Peter J. Cullen
Brunswickan Entertainment

The old quote states, 'The play is the thing.' But film, and especially radio, also hold precedence for former UNB grad student, Steve MacIsaac.

Currently living in Halifax, MacIsaac presented a seminar on theatre and film reviewing recently at Dalhousie's university newspaper conference. More importantly, he also occupies the position of Program Manager for Dal's massive CKDU campus radio station. After gaining on-air experience as an undergrad at St. FX, he also developed a deeper understanding of film and theatre from his time at UNB. With such a passion for the arts, MacIsaac was extremely disappointed upon moving to Halifax two years ago.

"I thought the theatre community needed to be better," he simply stated. So through writing reviews for *The Coast*, an independent newspaper, MacIsaac quickly associated his name with the city's entertainment events. Coupled with his days of experience at CHSR in Fredericton, MacIsaac eventually vaulted to the position of Program Director for Dal's campus radio in May of 1995. "I'm responsible for every transmission," he explained, summarizing his role at CKDU. "We're on the air 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. I've got to make sure that there's someone on the air at all times ... [and] I coordinate efforts such as shifts, contests and fill-ins."

However, MacIsaac never really expected to be in the position he



Steve MacIsaac at the helm of CKDU Photo Warren Watson

currently occupies. "I didn't realize I'd ever be paid [for radio] ... This was really just a matter of timing." Regardless, his enthusiasm for music seemed to steer him in that direction long before his enrolment at St. FX's CFXU station. During his younger days, MacIsaac took it upon himself to promote smaller stature bands by trying to interest others in the indie scene. "I made really great mix tapes for friends because I wanted to turn them onto the stuff ... I guess getting into radio and the like progressed since I discovered music that's off the beaten path."

Working at CFXU from 1988-1992, MacIsaac achieved the role of Station Manager, but at the same time also absorbed several films through a course offered by St. FX. This undoubtedly aided him as a playwright while at UNB. "I wrote a couple of plays [at UNB], and when I did my MA my final thesis was actually a script for a full length play," he said. Two

of his plays - '90% Proximity' and 'Drinking Gasoline' - captured the interest of several university students at the time they were presented. MacIsaac also toiled with Stage Left in Fredericton, as well as initiating his own company, Will Act For Food.

Although MacIsaac seems prepared for the near future, he remains uncertain of what lies ahead after CKDU. "I've no idea what the future holds for me. I don't have any desire to move into Top 40, as it's a dying breed ... I play pretty personal stuff, and with someone telling me what to play I wouldn't have that freedom anymore," he said.

While classic rock may not hold his interest, there is little doubt that MacIsaac will pursue a continued career in the field of radio. "I've spent eight years doing this stuff, but not straight. There would be a couple of months where I wouldn't do anything and I always really missed it. It's in my blood."

PROTRACTING THE ANGLES

by PETER J.

Hi, my name is Peter and I'm an Arts student.

No, this isn't a meeting of 'Artsies Anonymous.' But as is the case with members of focus groups, I have a serious problem. Although my dilemma doesn't deal with alcohol abuse or foot fetishes, it's still a threat to my reputation - or so it appears. See, I really do not deem Arts to be such a horrible flaw in my character; however, the 'confession' of my selected faculty is always met with resounding laughter. But what else am I qualified to do besides Arts?

I would not make a good Scientist. Back in grade 10 chemistry class, while everyone else was discovering mundane things like the molarity of greenish-yellow chemicals, I was attempting exciting experiments such as 'Will It Burn?' and 'How Much Smoke Can Be Created from Hair on a Bunsen Burner?' Coincidentally, my Physics wasn't much better. The teacher frowned on my recurrent mishaps with my math kit, as several puncture wounds led to many blood loss related fainting spells. (Compasses look harmless, but they're tools of the devil, I tell you!) I don't think I ever did find the 'on' button for that TI-82 calculator, either. Needless to say, Science was ruled out.

I would not make a good Engineer. Technology class required the construction of a popsicle stick bridge. Not only did it collapse before any weight was placed on it, but my teacher berated me and claimed that any constructions I created would result in numerous deaths. I thought he was being overly dramatic until I built that ill-fated birdhouse...

I would not make a good Businessperson. During Entrepreneurship class in high school, I had to develop a business plan for my own fictional company. After days and days of mind numbing labour and number crunching, my music store was expected to rake in a profit of \$200,000 in its first two years. Just before I took off for the initial bank loan to unleash my brilliant entrepreneurial skills upon society, my teacher showed me my problem with integers. Apparently my negative signs were forgotten during the final calculations. I won't discuss the amount of the actual 'profit.'

So aside from Arts, what else am I qualified to do? Actually, why is there a bias against Arts students in the first place? If it weren't for us there would be no television shows or movies or music. There would be no newspapers written to convey the latest stock market occurrences, or sociologists to determine the problems facing today's world, or psychologists to discuss horrid nightmares in which all scientific formulae are discovered to be incorrect.

Who would teach the children? English and History prove beneficial before jumping into Education. Who would run our country? Political Science seems sort of relevant. And who would stand on the street corner, voicing the wisdom of Aristotle and the plight of Socrates? Well, okay, but Philosophy is good for other things too. Quite simply, without Arts everyone would live in a world of formulas, business plans, and a lot of damned bridges.

Despite the naysayers, Arts has proven itself worthwhile and effective in the real world, and - if nothing else - practical. And we Arts students know it. So we'll take your abuse with good humour, you Science/Engineering/Business-type people; we know you need us, so we're remaining faithful to our program of preference. After all, if it weren't for Arts students, the Phys Ed people would have to bear the brunt of all the jokes...

creative arts series

by Kirsten McKenzie
Brunswickan Entertainment

Sunday evening, I attended a UNB/STU Creative Arts Series concert. The program consisted of pianos and percussion, which proved to be an interesting combination. Memorial Hall, with its dark wood and soft lighting, provided the perfect atmosphere for an evening of culture.

Among the four performers were two pianists, Richard Boulanger (Université de Moncton (UdeM) music teacher) and John Hansen (member of Acadia University's school of music), and two percussionists, Michel Deschenes (teacher at the UdeM and founding member of El & Ke2, a percussion ensemble) and Jean Surette (member of El & Ke2).

Between them, they performed four pieces. The pianists began with Gabriel Faure's 'Dolly Suite For Four Hands', which was played on a single piano. The music is a very entertaining mixture of simple melodies and rhythms that were a perfect beginning to the show. The second piece, Darius Milhaud's 'Scaramouche', was played on two pianos. The program notes describe it far more eloquently than I could, as an "unashamed evocation of the world of Paris cafés [with] its easy melodies and rhythmic exuberance."

The highlight of the evening was the marimbas. The marimba originated in

Africa but was popularized and modified in Central America, and consists of a set of graduated wooden bars (similar to a xylophone).

The piece was Paul Smabdeck's Rhythm Song for two percussionists, and I can only describe the performance as mesmerizing. The lights were dimmed to a soft red, the perfect atmosphere for the New Age type music. Each percussionist held four mallets, amazingly moving each one individually. The effect was riveting. From beginning to end I was on the edge of my seat. I only wish more than one piece had been performed.

After the intermission, the four performers teamed up for Bela Bartok's Sonata for two pianos and percussion. Although it was played well, I'm afraid Bartok's music is a little too chaotic for my untrained ear. It is an assault on the senses, described by Canadian poet Livesay as a "mad intensity." I realize this is the desired effect, but I found it quite difficult to listen to. Bartok's music is an acquired taste, and in his defense most of the audience seemed to appreciate the piece more than I did!

The performance was a perfect length. Long enough to experience and savour a diverse musical selection, yet not so long as to dull the senses or outlast my attention span. Overall, the concert was well worth braving the elements for. I will be keeping my eye open for future UNB/STU productions.

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