

Everything you wanted to know about music

...and then some

by Scott Neily

April has been and will be a busy month in Metro as far as live music is concerned. I don't know how the summer is shaping up, but I'm hoping that if April is any indication, the next few months will be terrific.

Stevie Ray Vaughan, the great Texas blues guitarist, played on the 5th at the Metro Center to an enthusiastic in spirit but disappointing in numbers crowd of 4700. The two hours Stevie played were performed with the usual incredible virtuosity he is famous for. While he did have some technical problems with his guitars, broken strings being the least of the screw-ups, he once again demonstrated his talent by hardly missing a beat. The musical highlight of the night was his encore performance, but his speech about the dangers of drug and alcohol addiction also received a surprisingly positive response. Are people actually starting to realize how terrible drugs really are, or were the ones who cheered that night simply caught up in the exhilaration of the moment?

The 6th of April saw the arrival of Basic English at the Pub Flamingo. Originally from Halifax, the band, consisting of Tim Armour on guitar and lead vocals, John Davis on guitar and backing vocals, Roger Whyte on drums, and Sean Ryan on bass

and backing vocals, has a sound that is highly reminiscent of R.E.M. and the Georgia Satellites. Although they have been around in different forms for the last 10 years, it has only been in the past few that they have actually gained any recognition. The band won two awards in 1987, the Q-107 Homegrown contest and a CASBY for best non-recording group, and have since gone on to record their first single and video, "Images of Love".

The jazz-beatnik-funk-rap band The Shuffledemons followed Basic English's performance at the Pub with shows on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of April. Another Toronto band, they have become reasonably well-known through their hits "Spadina Bus" and "Get Outa My House, Roach", their totally weird style of clothing, and their eclectic but excellent style of saxophone playing.

Classical guitarist Liona Boyd no doubt caused the Demons to lose a few audience members when she performed at the Cohn on the 8th with Symphony Nova Scotia. The performance of Liona with the Symphony was well done overall. However, it was unfortunate that she did not play with the orchestra throughout the whole show.

Long known for her virtuoso classical guitar playing, Liona released an album in 1986, *Persona*, that marked the beginning

of period of expansion for her. The album showcased a New Age-pop sound for the most part, but it also featured her collaborating on what were essentially basic rock tracks with guitarists David Gilmour of Pink Floyd fame and Eric Clapton. Although she began to move into pop music with the *Romantic Guitar* television LP she admits that the album was not an example of her most advanced work. "Romantic Guitar is not a virtuoso record. I found the album *Persona* more challenging, more creative. I'm proud of that one and I will be continuing to do more in that style."

Gilmour and Clapton are not the only rock heavyweights she has worked with. Alex Leifson from Rush and Rik Emmett from Triumph have also worked with "the first lady of the guitar". Recently, Liona performed a pop-rock song with Alex and Rik called "The Hands of Man", a tune she had written for the Olympics. The song is on a compilation album called *The Big Picture — A Dream on the Horizon* that unfortunately has had poor distribution. However, she is confident that it will eventually reappear somewhere else.

Along with touring, she plans to spend more time writing music, especially pop music. "It would be sad to be limited to one particular style," she says. "When working with my band, I tend to write more pop-style pieces. I do write some purely classical pieces, though." Other plans she has include publishing some of her arrangements and music, releasing a classical album called *Encore* which will be out in about six months, more touring, more pop albums, and eventually an autobiography.

Burton Cummings performed over at the Crazy Horse on the weekend. From reliable reports, it seems the former lead singer of the Guess Who is still doing fine.

Taj Mahal performed last night at the Cohn. A blues artist primarily, he also plays anything from rock to country with a style that is definitely in the same class as Stevie Ray Vaughan.

FM, the band with Nash the Slash (who popularized facial bandages), is back in town at the Crazy Horse from the 14th to the 16th. Also in town on the same dates and just across the harbour at the Misty Moon is former April Wine member Brian Greenway. Both are touring to support albums, FM for *Tonight* and Greenway for his self-titled debut.



Guitar is not a virtuoso record

John Hiatt will be appearing this weekend on the 15th and 16th at Pub Flamingo. A bluesy kind of rocker, he should provide a great show for all.

Also this weekend, specifically Saturday the 16th, is the Q-104 benefit "Rockin' at the Royal" at the World Trade and Convention Centre to help the United Way in their fight against child abuse. The event will feature such notables as Chalk Circle, Zappacosta, and Metro's own F-Tones. Full bar service and a large dance floor will be provided, but capacity is limited to 1600 with tables for 900. Also in the line of entertainment is the Q's benefit auction in which celebrity novelties will be auctioned off. The party starts at 7:30 p.m. and will run until 1:00 a.m. Tickets are \$20 a per-

son and are available at the door and at the Metro Centre Box Office.

Last but not least, April will show the return of the Jitters to Metro. Appearing April 28th to the 30th at the Crazy Horse, the Jitters have just returned from a European tour, where they opened for Heart. Their album is now available across the Pond and they have high hopes that it will do proportionally as well over there as it did here.

There are a lot of other bands and performers coming to Metro in April, more than can be mentioned in one article. Hopefully, as many people as possible will get to see as many bands as possible. After all, Halifax and Dartmouth have one of the highest ratios of bars to people in Canada

Theatre oppression

by Heather Hueston

Native land claims on stage. Boring? Not in the collage of performance, participation and ritual that two West Coast native bands assembled with the help of a regional theatre company.

The Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Tribal council is currently involved in a major court battle with the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada over their people's rights of jurisdiction and ownership of their traditional lands - ownership which has never been legally relinquished. The results of this court case will set worldwide precedent for the settlement of indigenous people's claims in former European colonies.

The show will tour Canada and makes its national tour premiere in Halifax tomorrow. Its province-wide tour of British Columbia last fall drew an audience of 10,000.

Publicity for the play, called *NO'XYA' (Our Footprints)*, is being handled by a local native support group. Hannah Cowen, spokesperson for Nova Scotians in Solidarity with Native Peoples, says the group offers its resources to whatever issue natives want to promote. "The main thing is that we don't

decide what to educate people on," says Cowen. "That comes from the groups themselves."

So far, they've tackled American problems of the Navajo and Hopi, low level flight testing over Innu land in Labrador, and most recently the impact of Bill C51 on native women and communities. The reallocation of native rights to women who have married whites, or even to natives who become university graduates and professionals, is not going smoothly, says Cowen. As well, the group is involved in local MicMac land claims.

Self-government and land disputes are a higher profile problem on the Pacific coast, but the play addresses not only the settlement claims of the BC natives who wrote it, but urges a more holistic way of looking at the land.

The style is one borrowed from the "theatre of oppression" developed in South America in the 60s. This theatre uses "strong visual images" and audience participation.

NO'XYA' (Our Footprints) is at the Tower Road School, Friday, April 15 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$6/\$8 at OXFAM/Deveric.

