



Halifax gears up for the highly touted ECMAs

BY KAREN PARKER

This weekend Halifax will turn into one big party. Everyone who's anyone in the East Coast music industry will be here, as the city hosts the tenth annual East Coast Music Awards (ECMAs).

You don't have to be a music industry-type to enjoy all that will be happening around town. With literally hundreds of things going on, music lovers will be in their element.

The East Coast Music Association kicks off their long list of public events with a series of sold-out concerts at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. The shows, which run this Thursday to Saturday, will feature performers such as MacKeel, Lennie Gallant, The Punters, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Barra MacNeils.

On a smaller scale, ECMA-sponsored showcases in genres as varied as rock, country, blues, and roots/traditional will be taking place in many of Halifax's live music venues. With a total of 53 artists, there is sure to be something for everyone.

Not all of the weekend's events are directly sponsored by the ECMA. Several local businesses

are also getting involved. The coffee houses and bars downtown will be jumping with the sound of jazz, pop, and folk music. Even the Cape Breton Store on Barrington is getting in on the act, bringing in many traditional artists — including Ashley MacIsaac — to perform throughout the weekend.

Two Halifax music stores are hosting in-store concerts, running from Thursday to Saturday. HMV on Spring Garden promises appearances by Rawlins Cross, Slainte Mhath, Good Question and Johnny Favourite, among others. Meanwhile, over at the Halifax Shopping Centre, Music World has over a dozen performers scheduled to appear, including Tara MacLean, MacKeel, The Punters, Celtic Connection and a host of other artists.

Also of note is Locofest, a series of concerts at the VIA Rail station. This Wednesday-to-Saturday event offers an alternative to the sold-out Cohn shows, featuring lots of home-grown talent. Appearing at Locofest are: Sandbox, Rawlins Cross, Kilt, the Grace Babies, PF Station and several other artists.

All the weekend's excitement will culminate on Sunday night at



Ashley MacIsaac, shown here with Natalie MacMaster, is slated to perform at the ECMAs on Sunday. (File photo)

the Metro Centre, as the best and brightest of the East Coast scene compete for top honours. For the first time ever, the gala awards show will be broadcast live nationwide on CBC television. It will be hosted by comedian Rick Mercer, one of the stars of "This Hour Has

22 Minutes".

Leading the list of nominees is former Haligonian Sarah McLachlan, who is up for seven ECMAs. Great Big Sea and Laura Smith are not far behind with six nominations each.

Artists slated to perform at the

tenth annual East Coast Music Awards are Sloan, Ashley MacIsaac, Lennie Gallant, Rita MacNeil and Bruce Guthro. Halifax's own Johnny Favourite, who is up for four awards himself, will also hit the stage with his Swing Orchestra.

Tyson set to get his ass kicked at Wrestlemania 14

BY PHIL "THE DARTMOUTH DEMON" LEWIS

Mike Tyson's next opponent may be his toughest yet, as he is set to face the WWF's "Stone Cold" Steve Austin.

Tyson appeared on WWF's *Monday Night Raw* to promote his involvement in *Wrestlemania 14*. *Wrestlemania* has typically been the WWF's biggest pay-per-view extravaganza of the year and has often featured guest appearances by the rich and famous. Guests who have appeared at past *Wrestlemania*'s range from Pamela Lee to Cyndi Lauper. This year the WWF hopes to top themselves with the appearance of Tyson, as well as a rumoured appearance by Toni Braxton to sing the national anthem.

This would not be the first time that a high profile athlete has entered the wrestling world for a limited time. In the WCW, Dennis Rodman (known then as "Rod the Bod") was involved in a tag team match with Hulk Hogan (now Hollyhock Hogan). There was also the now-legendary match between Rowdy Roddy Piper and Mr. T. It is a chance for both the athlete as well as the wrestling world to get some needed publicity. These athletes do not come cheap though, as Tyson is expected to make \$2-million for three appearances, including *Wrestlemania*.

In light of the ear biting incident involving Evander Holyfield, Tyson is obviously trying to score some

positive publicity. On the other hand, Tyson should realize that the WWF does not exactly have the greatest image right now.

In a recent article in the *New York Post*, Wallace Matthews wrote, "...by throwing in with the WWF, an outlaw organization of negative redeeming value that is rife with drug abuse, fosters the worst racial stereotypes and glorifies gang violence, Tyson will be among his peers."

As much as Tyson may need the WWF, the WWF needs him even more.

In September of 1997 the WWF told superstar Bret Hart to look at his options from their competitor, WCW. The reasons Vince McMahon gave for this were financial. McMahon is facing a war against the WCW, which is funded by media mogul Ted Turner. Rather than using the \$1 million freed up by Hart's contract to import some new talent, it appears that McMahon has opted for the "quick fix."

It has been reported by Micasa Wrestling, a reliable website, that McMahon contacted the Nevada Boxing Commission as early as November. Tyson would not agree to anything until the boxing commission stated that any involvement with the WWF would not interfere with his possible return to the boxing world.

In January, McMahon stated that negotiations were taking place between Don King and himself. The following Sunday during the *Royal Rumble*, Tyson was shown in a skybox rooting for his favourite superstars, Shawn

Michaels and Steve Austin. The world was watching the next night on RAW for the big announcement detailing his entrance in the wrestling world. At the tail end of the show, McMahon came out and introduced Tyson. Almost on cue, the "Rattlesnake", Steve Austin, came to the ring and the crowd went wild.

"Stone Cold" then said to Tyson, "I respect what you've done in the boxing ring, but when you step in this ring, you're messing with 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin, and that's something you don't do. Let me make it short and sweet. What I'm telling you is I want a piece of Mike Tyson's ass!"

The interview turned into a shoving match that was carried on the major news networks across the world. Initially it was believed that Tyson would merely officiate the Michaels vs. Austin match at *Wrestlemania*. However, due to the heat he is drawing, the prospect of a match between Austin and Tyson is being looked into.

Tyson has been reported as saying he would like to do a Boxer vs Wrestler type match. However, the Nevada Boxing Commission has stated that they would support his involvement so long as he did not enter the ring with boxing gloves.

At the rate of Steve Austin's popularity, it is unlikely that he would lose a match with Tyson if it did take place. Austin's merchandise is currently selling at a higher volume than Hogan's sales at the peak of "Hulkamania". It is also unlikely that Tyson would be willing to lose a match to a pro wrestler. Therefore, it really doesn't seem too likely for the two "baddest men on the

planet" to lock up. It is likely that Tyson will remain the ref for the Austin vs. Michaels match and get himself involved in some other way.

This would disappoint most fans

because, if the match did take place, it would sure be a slobberknocker. If anybody deserves a "Stone Cold Stunner", it's Mike Tyson.

**MARKET STREET
JAZZ CAFE**

MORE THAN JUST JAZZ

THURSDAY - St-FX Septet- the jazz pros from St-FX brings us a night of traditional jazz

FRIDAY - Salsa Picante-latin american rythm

SATURDAY - CKDU Fundraising Broadcast with Knifey Moloko featuring Monetta James; guests DJ Stinkin' Rich & african percussion band Ragelapege

SUNDAY - ECMA Sign-off bash with special guests

MONDAY - Open-Mic Night (Reble, Pearson & PJ)

TUESDAY - Lounge Lizard Night

WEDNESDAY - Comedy Night

Specials on Every Night

Open until 3am January 29 to February 1
Corner of Market & George Streets
492-CAFE