

Entertainment

MOXY FRUVOUS: "AWESOME!"



Mike Ford of Moxy Fruvous. (Kevin G. Porter photo)

by Luke Peterson

Over the past week I have had the opportunity to see two Canadian bands who are masters of their art.

Both groups skilfully utilized a wide array of instruments. Both groups had lively Accordion players; and despite the fact that neither group played (putting up with)

the Joneses, the fans, in both cases, went home very happy after over three hours of excellent entertainment for a mere fifteen bucks.

While Spirit of the West could probably rock a crowd just about anywhere, Moxy Fruvous were born to perform in a theatre. On Monday the Fruvous dudes combined with opening act Jann Arden to put on the best show I've seen in a very long time.

Arden certainly lived up to David Matheson's previous billing both as a melancholy performer and by providing comic relief between the songs. Telling the audience, whose mean age was probably around sixteen, to, "sit back, relax. I'm gonna do my very best to depress you as much as I can". Arden and her accomplished bassist played for about 35 minutes before leaving the stage to a hearty round of applause.

It would be another 25 minutes before Moxy Fruvous would take to the stage, but the lengthy wait proved to be worth it. They appeared on stage in derby hats and suitcoats and performed a "Bargainville" skit to the roars of approval from the playhouse crowd. The group played all of their best songs from their new album along with many great new ones, their performance was definitely a "grab-bag" of comedy, acappella, skits and great music. The crowd was on its feet when the group launched into its classic "King of Spain" and the audience's overwhelming response, brought the group back on stage for two encores.

The final song of the evening was an acappella version of "The Gulf War Song" which the guys performed without the aid of any instruments.

The four band mates are incredibly versatile both vocally and with their instruments. Props were a big part of the show, from Jean Ghomeshi's arm chair draped with the U.S. flag for "the lazy boy" to the guys' unorthodox use of beer bottles and suitcases as backup instruments. I could rave about the show for years but the bottom line is: The next time Moxy Fruvous are in town do not miss it!

GENRECID

MICHAEL EDWARDS

This month's Label of The Month is Sarah Records which is based in Bristol, England. It was started back in 1988 by two music fans who had been writing a fanzine which was infamous for about fifteen minutes. The philosophy was simple - they were to put out seven inch singles with as many songs as possible on them, and to sell them for as little as possible as not to rip off the 'indie kids'. Now they still put out the seven inch EPs and as if to completely go against the original ideas, they now put out CD singles (but they do cost more so its forgivable) and also albums but the most important thing is they still put things out on vinyl. Hurrah. At the start, the complete roster was made up of groups of sensitive boys with fringes and cardigans who sang songs like "I'm In Love With A Girl Who Doesn't Know I Exist" and other tales of angst. It was all rather wonderful, but the critics felt it a little self-indulgent and Sarah Records found itself labelled as the home of all things sensitive and twee. Yet five years down the line, Sarah Records have released some 80 singles, 20 albums and various other bits and pieces. The critics must be feeling just a little bit silly as Sarah is now an eclectic, not to mention international label with groups from Scotland, Ireland, Australia, America and even England.

Most of the original bands have fallen by the wayside, or gone on to other labels but there is still one band there from the early days - The Orchids, hailing from Glasgow, they have been responsible for some of the most wonderful pop moments of Sarah Records. Mainly a guitar based band, but they do use the occasional sample for effect these days. They released the most criminally ignored album of 1991 and will have a new one out at the beginning of next year. I will confidently predict that it will be one of the best things you will ever hear and will urge you all to buy as soon as it comes out. The other originals such as The Sea Urchins, The Golden and St. Christopher have all moved on but did provide some dear memories before their demises. The band which most closely associated with Sarah was The Field Mice, whom sadly are no longer with us. They defined the 'Sarah sound' for most people, and had a string of successful singles then some equally intriguing mini-albums. Then their first proper album came out which was just a mite disappointing but thankfully they made up for it with their final single 'Missing The Moon'; a bizarre dancey song which received the NME Single Of The Week. Then they broke up. Two days after I saw them in concert too - they were pretty awful, sounding as if they weren't interested any more. I was beginning to think we would never see their like again when... Sarah managed to come out with

some bands which made the music press begin each review with "the exception to the Sarah sound" - the exceptions began to overtake the norm and that is where Sarah is today. Their latest batch of releases are amongst the best ones ever such as The Harvest Ministers which I reviewed last week. So here is a quick overview of what is out there at the moment.

Heavenly are a band with quite a history. Formed from the ashes of the seminal 80's band Tallulah Gosh, the voice of the singer Amelia Fletcher is a bit on the cute side. Except on the latest EPs 'Atta Girl' and 'P.U.N.K. Girl' where she is angry, bitter and not taking anything from anyone. The former is about break up and the best thing they have ever done; the latter is a rather jolly song with enough feedback to keep anyone happy. They have a couple of splendid albums out there too both of which are worth investigating.

Even As We Speak are an Australian band who have released my favourite album of the moment with 'Feral Pop Frenzy'. It has so many different styles of songs on there, and also a healthy sense of humour. From the simplicity of 'Beautiful Day' to the dreaminess of 'Drown', it is simply wonderful. Its hard to get bored of a record which changes direction with every song. Buy it.

East River Pipe are the American representative of Sarah; not actually a band but the moniker of a F.M. Cornog (well, wouldn't you use a pseudonym...?). He sounds somewhere between an old Sarah band Another Sunny Day and something else I can't put my finger on but I definitely wouldn't use the Guns & Roses comparison I have seen in some places. The album is called 'Goodbye California' and it has been winning all round praise. Can't really describe it but it is worth searching out. Have I let you down so far?

Other singles that have come out in the last month include 'From Purity To Purgatory' by Boyracer (wonderful breathy vocals), 'Some Gorgeous Accident' by Blueboy (pure pop) and 'Will I Ever Learn?' by The Sugargliders (who want to put LESS tracks on the CD). Sarah is a label with something for everyone - they put out compilation\$ periodically with the best recent stuff on them and these are probably the best place to start. They also have glorious names such as 'Fountain Island' and 'Temple Cloud'. The new albums will be getting North American distribution by Widely Distributed Records but you can still always get in touch direct (and this way you can get VINYL!!!). Write to Sarah Records, PO Box 691, Bristol, BS99 1FG, ENGLAND and please enclose a IRC. And if you mention my name you will get special treatment (or they may just ignore you. Sigh. But do send my love to Clare the independent music goddess...)

Schmoozing with Goose Lane:

intrepid Brunswic reporter rubs elbows with authors

by Randall N. Haslett

With computers threatening to take over everything that man used to do for himself, it was refreshing to attend a gala evening dedicated to books. To launch its 1993-94 season, Goose Lane Editions chose the Beaverbrook Art Gallery. Surrounded by huge works of art, (I can never spend too much time admiring Dali's *El Santiago Grande!*) it was the perfect venue for its third season offering.

Last Friday was a combination reception, book signing and theatre. It was well attended by a cross section of book lovers who had the opportunity to hobnob with the authors (Herb Curtis, Rai Berzins, Don Reddick, Sheree Fitch, and Tom Smart) and have their new possessions personally autographed. The launch heralded eight new works by Goose Lane Editions, and Westminster Books had these latest publications for sale. The event was organized by Susanne Alexander, Managing Editor, Laurel Boone, Acquisitions Editor, and Julie Scriver, Art Director and other members of this growing concern. A scrumptious buffet was displayed in the East Gallery upon our arrival, while the West Gallery was the forum for the evening's entertainment.

As we gathered in the West Gallery, Bruce Dennis entered through the crowd dressed in a parka. Although I couldn't make out the song he was singing, I guessed it had to be one of the *Songs of Labrador* compiled by Tim Borlase. This was followed by a quick and sincere welcome from Susanne Alexander. Then the real fun began, as

actors gave readings from several of the books.

Prof. Bill Bauer became "Boston Mason", the main character of Don Reddick's *Dawson City Seven*, a true fictionalization of the upstart Dawson City Nuggets 1905 challenge against the Ottawa Senators for Lord Stanley's Cup. As "Boston" stood on a white riser amidst hockey paraphernalia, I could see the cold breath flood forth from his nostrils as he streaked down the ice, the steam rising from his sweat-soaked jersey. Who were these blades?

The next vignette was *Adele Hugo: La Miserable* a biography written by Leslie Smith Dow. Theatre UNB's own Dame, Paula Dawson, portrayed the spinster Adele Hugo replete in period costume. The misery was all over her face like a Red Devil tackle, and the pain was in her voice. As she read letters to her family, we became aware of the financial plight of a young lady stranded in Halifax chasing her unrequited love. Ms. Dawson's convincing portrayal of this crazy woman alone and destitute in an unforgiving new world left me saddened.

So a little humour was in order, and that is exactly what we got from Herb Curtis' *The Lone Angler*. The setting was a country general store up back on the Miramichi. The "good ole boys" were portrayed by Lance Ceaser, Eric Hill, Jeff Wheaton, and Rod Wilkie, all of Theatre UNB. They were so into character that I didn't recognize them until they spoke. Their voluminous hair was stuffed up under those typical trademark New Brunswick ball caps! Man,

they were really convincing. And the audience loved it. Mr. Curtis has another best seller on his hands, and the boys have got one more feather in their ball caps!

Sheree Fitch is better known for her children's books, and now she has her very own book of adult poetry, *In This House Are Many Women*. She read three of her poems and she put her whole tiny body into it. Barely pausing to let the material sink in, she spun from "Civil Servant" to "Garbage Man" to "Madonna" like a video screen in fast-forward. There is no subliminal message here; these are everyday things personalized by Ms. Fitch. It was not surprising that following her dynamic dissertation, she was hotly pursued by eager autograph seekers.

The last offering was *Cerberus* by Rai Berzins, a collection of bizarre stories. The reading was given by a newcomer, Ernie Bauer. I don't know if he has any formal training, but he gave a seasoned performance. His voice was strong and carried well, with just the right amount of emphasis. He should consider gracing Fredericton stages again.

As for the last word, the direction and coordination behind the scenes was ably done by Greg Doran. Where does he find the time to do all these productions? An enjoyable evening for certain; I indulged in the spirits and the spirit of the night. If you missed the launch, the next one's in a year's time. In the meantime, check out the books; they make a great Christmas treat. Hint hint.