

As someone who habitually avoids using the words "Saturday" and "morning" in the same sentence, I will admit to a fairly groggy disposition as I climbed into a cab. "Where to this morning big guy?" My cheery, "It's ten O'clock dear, I think I'll go to bed" driver's voice wades stridently and purposefully through the three-foot muck that is my slowly recuperating awareness (I really don't mind people who feel the need to be pleasant, but "big guy" has got to be one of the top three most irritating non-specific titles existent in all of Western, English-speaking society). "Bottom end of Carleton Street." The plink of the turn signal is accompanied by what felt like, but probably wasn't, an uncalled-for jolt that sent a sloop of scalding coffee from my enviro-mug sailing to my bare leg. I realized how long a night it had been as I watched the coffee rivulet slip slowly down my knee, my brain vaguely registering intense and heavily localized pain. "You look a little rough this morning big guy" (this cabbie is starting to become, even for someone as burnt-out as I am, relatively annoying). "Long weekend" I mumble. Some of what is left of my civility gives me a sharp elbow and suggests that I attempt to be sociable. "And a late night" I say, immediately realizing the implications, given my appearance and age, that will inevitably lead to the standard Maritime Saturday morning exchange involving levels of intoxication on the previous evening. As I slump further into the red plush of the K-car, preparing myself for this cliché exchange, and mulling over the possibilities of simply lying about the fact that I was not hung over (in order to avoid long explanations of just why I was so beat up looking), the cabbie surprises me. "What the hell was going on last night anyway?" (I always like talking to cab drivers because they talk out of the sides of their mouths, giving generalized sidelong glances and never look at you directly, and eye contact whenever I am tired or lazy enough to actually take a cab is inevitably gruesome). Don't you know?" I say. "It's the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival."

Well good heavens. The "City of Stately Apathy" gave us all a good kick in the head this past weekend as it slowly rolled over in its musty bed. The Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival had all the elements of a real, honest-to-goodness downtown happening. People actually got off their tired, sorry butts and came out to find out what the commotion was about. I'm speechless.

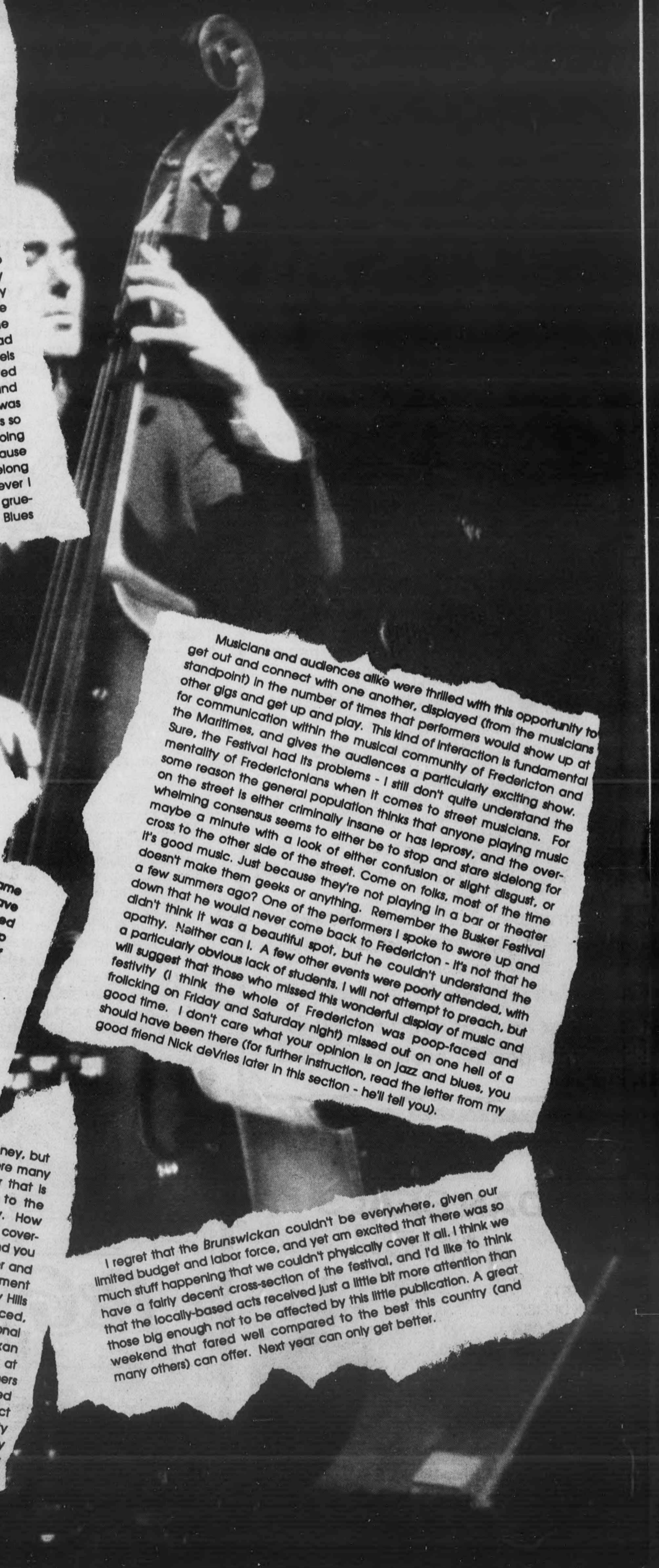
I think part of my enthusiasm for the weekend as a whole came from someone in whom I long ago lost any minute faith I may have once had - Mother Nature. What a glorious fall weekend, delivered to our doorsteps complete with dazzling sunshine and a sky so deep and so blue only New Brunswick in September can deliver. The chill of the evenings was offset by the warmth inside the bars and clubs where a certain kind of magic happened that I have never seen in Fredericton. Forgive me, I'm starting to sound like Ann Ingram.

On this note, I will break from my normal tradition of leaving other publications alone (I feel that any press in Fredericton is welcome and necessary), and say a few, albeit hopefully important, words about the abominable coverage given to the Festival by the *Daily Gleaner*. I appreciate Ann Ingram's efforts, and find Sara Kennedy's reviews to be both intelligent and informative. However, it was disgusting to me that a group of hard-working people, who put

sweat and blood into a festival not for personal glory or money, but for the good of a city they simply would not give up on where many have, would be so dismally shoved aside by a newspaper that is theoretically supposed to serve this city. It is fair neither to the organizers nor the participants nor the performers nor the city. How much effort would it be for the *Gleaner* to get even bad photo coverage of at least one of the events? It was a whole damn weekend you slob. What, did the Canada Cup cut into all your photographer and writers work time? Why do you think you have an entertainment section? For stupid press releases on the latest fashions in Beverly Hills and who's sleeping with who in the world of over-produced, capitalist-sponsored tripe? Two reviews and one lousy promotional picture of Holly Cole. THPBTHHTHHHH!!! One of the Brunswickan photographers even saw (and talked to) a *Gleaner* photographer at the Downtown Blues Band show, and said he saw other photographers at various venues. I may be young and exceptionally inexperienced at this entertainment business, but I have always had the distinct impression that the visual part of a live happening is at very least fifty percent of the presentation, in both performance and review. I really don't feel I am out of line on this one. I stand appalled, and heavily disheartened. Get your act together.

I regret that the Brunswickan couldn't be everywhere, given our limited budget and labor force, and yet am excited that there was so much stuff happening that we couldn't physically cover it all. I think we have a fairly decent cross-section of the festival, and I'd like to think that the locally-based acts received just a little bit more attention than those big enough not to be affected by this little publication. A great weekend that fared well compared to the best this country (and many others) can offer. Next year can only get better.

Musicians and audiences alike were thrilled with this opportunity to get out and connect with one another, displayed (from the musicians standpoint) in the number of times that performers would show up at other gigs and get up and play. This kind of interaction is fundamental for communication within the musical community of Fredericton and the Maritimes, and gives the audiences a particularly exciting show. Sure, the Festival had its problems - I still don't quite understand the mentality of Frederictonians when it comes to street musicians. For some reason the general population thinks that anyone playing music on the street is either criminally insane or has leprosy, and the overwhelming consensus seems to either be to stop and stare sidelong for maybe a minute with a look of either confusion or slight disgust, or cross to the other side of the street. Come on folks, most of the time it's good music. Just because they're not playing in a bar or theater doesn't make them geeks or anything. Remember the Busker Festival a few summers ago? One of the performers I spoke to swore up and down that he would never come back to Fredericton - it's not that he didn't think it was a beautiful spot, but he couldn't understand the apathy. Neither can I. A few other events were poorly attended, with a particularly obvious lack of students. I will not attempt to preach, but will suggest that those who missed this wonderful display of music and festivity (I think the whole of Fredericton was poop-faced and frolicking on Friday and Saturday night) missed out on one hell of a good time. I don't care what your opinion is on jazz and blues, you should have been there (for further instruction, read the letter from my good friend Nick deVries later in this section - he'll tell you).



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