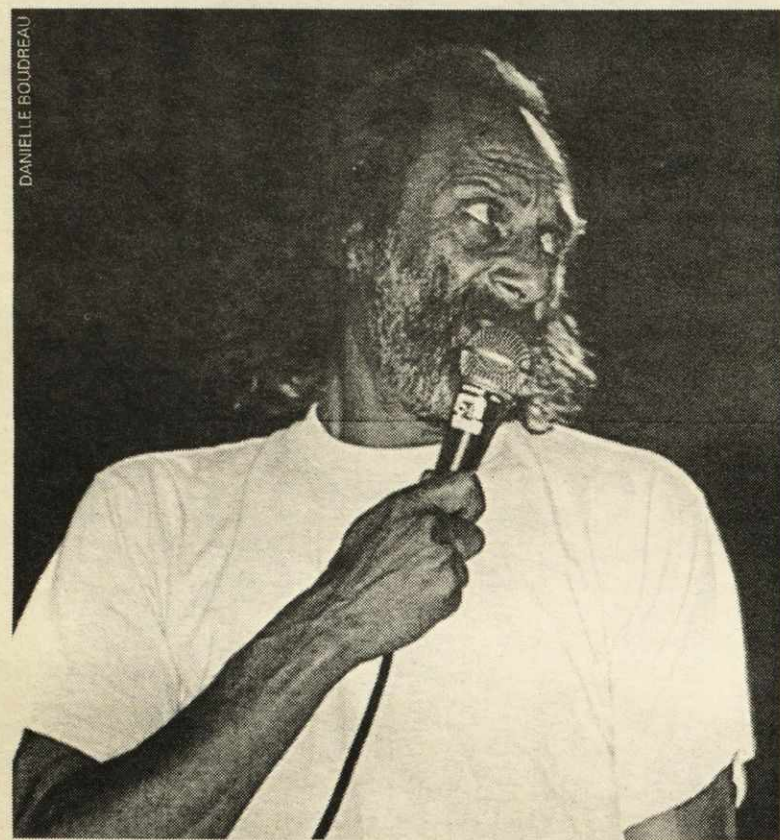


1996 Kumbaya Festival — On the Road



The few and the enthused

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

This year, for the first time, the Kumbaya Festival went on the road, and Tuesday night it hit Halifax in style. Unfortunately, only an estimated 160 people came out to support it.

Among the talented artists on hand were Tom Cochrane and Bass Is Base.

The tour kicked off last Thursday in a live broadcast from Muchmusic, and in three weeks will hit 17 Canadian cities. The Festival was started in 1993 by Toronto musician Molly Johnson. All proceeds from the show go to people living with AIDS nationally.

Opening the Halifax concert were Cookie and Jimmy Rankin of the Rankin Family. They sang some new and old Rankin's tunes and finished off with some Hank Williams, Sr. in honour of his

birthday.

Up next was Kumbaya veteran Tom Cochrane. Cochrane has been involved in the Kumbaya festival since its very beginning, and was excited about seeing it evolve into a tour. He was particularly keen about the tour visiting university campuses to bring the message to students.

"Universities are where it has to start," said Cochrane. "They're the cornerstone of spreading information. We're preaching to the converted — I hope!" As a special guest, Cochrane played a short but impressive set to a very enthusiastic crowd.

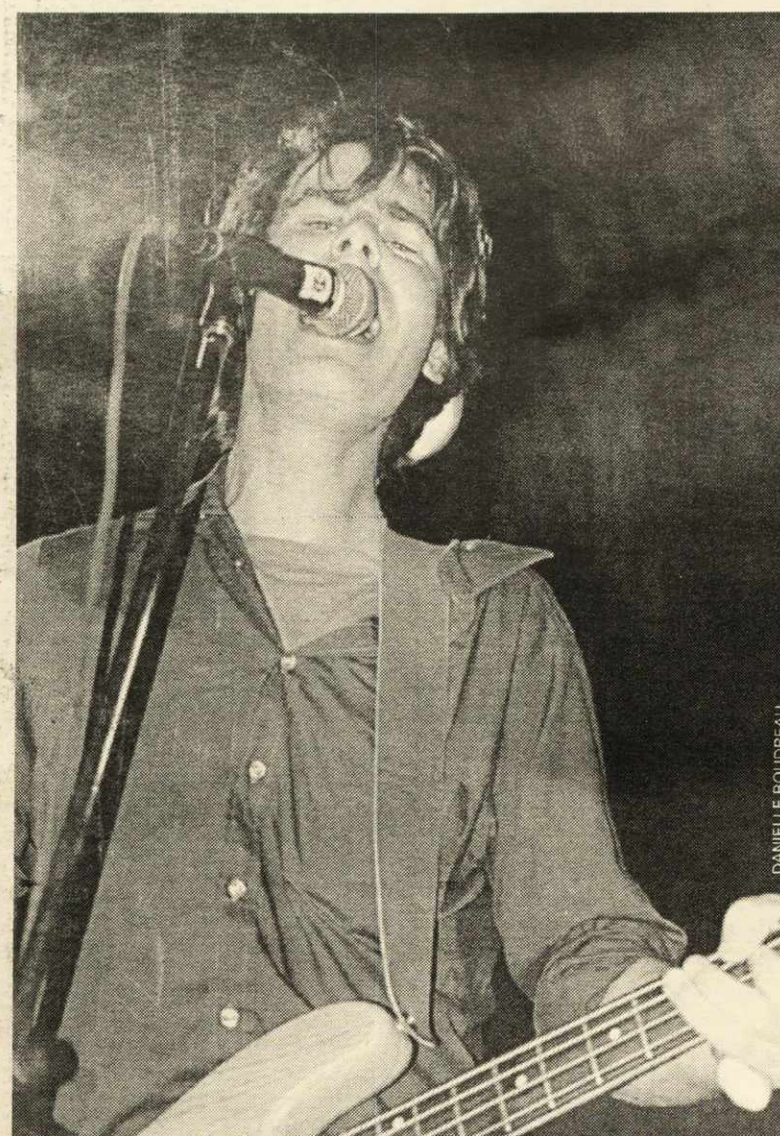
One of the night's biggest surprises came next in Damhnait Doyle of St. John's, Newfoundland. She was all but lost among the bigger names, yet managed to all but steal the show. She was the first act to re-

ally rock the place, as the two previous ones were rather mellow. Between amazing songs and strange analogies, she managed to get her message across: "Wear a condom!"

Following Doyle was Bass Is Base, one of Canada's best R&B acts. Beginning last Friday and going until September 21, Bass Is Base will be doing five shows for the Kumbaya tour. Other commitments kept them from participating last year, so they were glad to have the chance to do so much for the cause in '96. Also, by request, Mystic treated us to some freestyle rap.

Now, to all of you out there who left the concert after Bass Is Base (about 90% of the concertgoers), I'd like to inform you that you missed a good finale. Halifax's Superfriends came on to close the show, and along with playing their own material, they also shared the stage with some special guests. Ontario folksinger Bob Snider travelled from Pictou to sing with them, and for the final song they were joined by Michael O'Neil of The Inbreds and Bass Is Base's Chin.

In short, it was an enjoyable night of music for an incredible cause. I only hope the small attendance was due to Wednesday morning tests and not apathy. Maybe if the Kumbaya tour comes back next year, they'll get even more support.



Among the performers who came in support of persons living with AIDS across Canada were (counter-clockwise from left): Bob Snider, Bass is Base, a wigged Damhnait Doyle, Tom Cochrane and Superfriend Charles Austin.



Risky Sex

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

There are currently 400 known cases of HIV-positive people in Nova Scotia. That on its own ought to be enough to make you be extra careful when engaging in any high risk activity.

What many people don't realize, points out AIDS NS representative Kirsten Schmidt, is that there are suspected to be four to five thousand HIV-positive cases in the province. The scary part is not over yet. Many of these unknown cases are believed to be in people of university age who contracted the virus in their teens or early twenties. Many AIDS stereotypes still exist and too many people believe they have no need to be tested because they aren't gay or are too young. AIDS doesn't discriminate — we do.

In a conversation before the Kumbaya concert Tuesday night, Damhnait Doyle commented: "Everybody knows about AIDS. Everybody knows how you can get AIDS. But not everybody is using a condom. Even if only 5% or 15% of the population isn't practicing safe sex, that's still 15% who can proliferate the disease." It cannot be stressed enough to use a condom every time you have sex.

It's also important to be aware, though, that there is no such thing as "safe sex". Even the almighty condom has a failure rate of 3-

12% (AIDS NS). Pretty scary when you take into account those four to five thousand unknown cases of HIV, isn't it?

So, what can we do to help protect ourselves from the threat of AIDS? We seem to be left with two choices:

1) Make sure that both you and your partner are safe (i.e. not HIV positive). If you have any reason to suspect you may have put yourself at risk in the past, the Planned Parenthood Clinic on Quinpool Road is the metro-area centre for anonymous testing. Sure, it's scary — but it could save a life.

2) Abstain from sex. Please don't laugh, I'm serious. Think about it for a minute: Are a few minutes of pleasure worth a lifetime of regret? Abstinence is not just for the religious or those who "can't get it anyway." It is becoming a popular choice in today's world of risky sex. Whether you're waiting for marriage, stability, or true love doesn't really matter. It's up to you.

AIDS is a disease that is invading our society, and that can be at times both frightening and overwhelming. Try to remember, however, that it can be controlled if we use common sense. If you have any further questions about AIDS, the local AIDS hotline is 425-2437.



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