

## Better things to come

by Mark Anderson

The Watchmen played the McInnes Room on Thursday, February 16 as the first part of a two-show trip to the Atlantic provinces. They are in the process of promoting their new album, *In The Trees*. *The Gazette* had a chance to speak with Joey Serlin, the main songwriter and lead guitarist for the group.

*The Watchmen*  
Thursday, February 16  
McInnes Room, SUB

**Gaz:** Where are you guys from? How long have you been around? All that stuff?

**J.S.:** We're from Winnipeg. The band's been around since about '89. Ken (Tizzard) joined about a year ago, when our original bass player left.

**Gaz:** From your press release, I read that you recently signed with MCA.

I know a lot of musicians who are hovering around that area, looking to get into something bigger. What can you say about your transition?

**J.S.:** For us it was really gradual. We signed with an independent label, Sumo Productions, for our first album and it did respectably well. Then we eventually signed to a major, so it was never an overnight success, never too overwhelming. We started out building up fans in Winnipeg, and then as we became popu-

lar, began touring around west, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and eventually B.C. At some point we decided that it would be important to go to Toronto, since that's where most of the industry is. We rented out really shitty apartment-type hotels, and stayed there for a couple of months at a time, sleeping on floors and trying to get key people to come down and see us.

**Gaz:** Sounds like a long haul, but it seems to be paying off. I listened to your cd today and I liked a lot of the songs. I wondered what you might say about musical influences. I noticed myself a similarity in vocal styles between your lead singer (Danny Greaves) and Gord from the Tragically Hip. I hope this doesn't piss you off.

**J.S.:** I've heard that before. The Hip are a great band so I wouldn't take that as an insult. As far as influences go, I don't know. I just listen to a lot of music and I don't try to directly/purposely channel it into our music. If it ends up there, it's subconscious. I have a very eclectic taste in music: as a guitarist I would be influenced by certain people, as a songwriter I would be influenced by others. I've heard people say "So what do you sound like?" (pause) I don't know. (laughs) I read music reviews occasionally out of curiosity, but a review, for me, would never be the determining factor for anything.

**Gaz:** One thing I find among a lot

of forming bands is that they have trouble finding someone to sing; first getting the guts to do it is tough and then it seems like it's hard to find someone with real ability.

**J.S.:** I really think that there is a common thread among a lot of successful bands: an enigmatic singer, a good frontman. Someone with confidence or a unique voice.

**Gaz:** You guys are now a well-known "Canadian band." What other Canadian bands do you like?

**J.S.:** I like the new Sloan. I love Neil Young, although I don't know if most people would call him Canadian.

**Gaz:** What can you say about the harmonica in your music? Listening to your cd. I found some of the harp work quite innovative compared to the way most bands seem to use it.

**J.S.:** I think that the harmonica is a big part of our sound. You can solo it, and it can take the place of a rhythm guitar at other times. It really breaks down barriers when you play live. I mean, we're not doing a Blues Traveller thing up there, but it is important.

The Watchmen played a high energy show. The music was, from my perspective, quite good, original and tight. "All Uncovered," their current hit, was a true pleasure to hear live and this, and some previously unplayed songs from a forthcoming album, shows that The Watchmen are good now, and have better things to come.

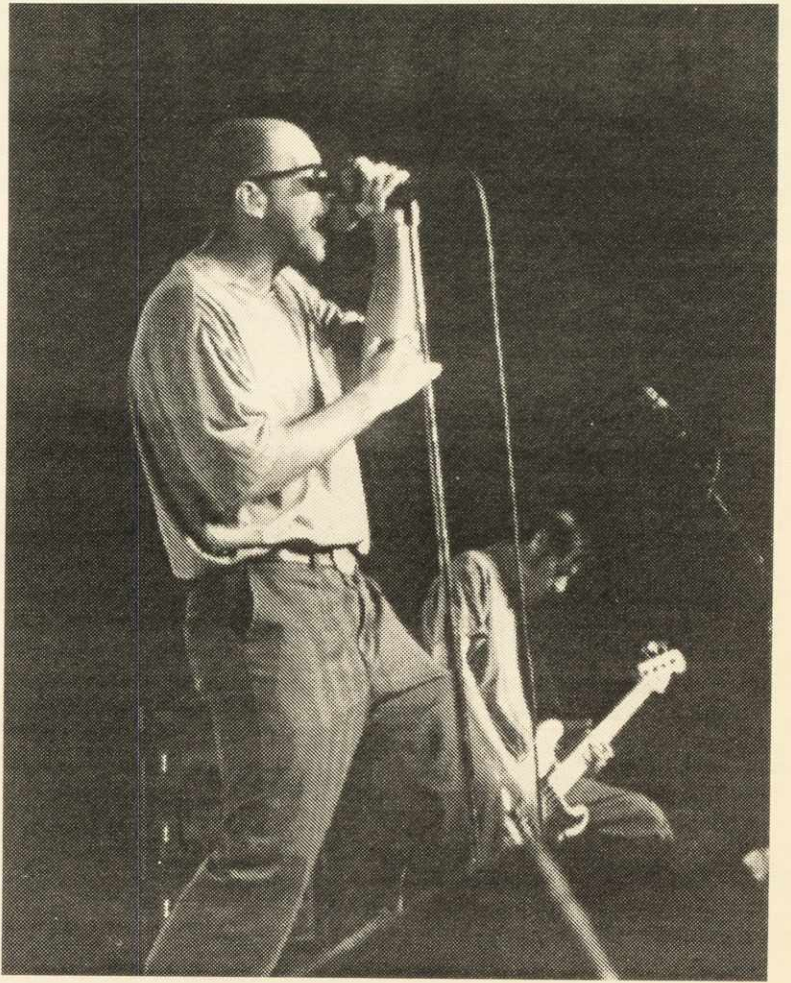


PHOTO: DANIELLE BOUDREAU

## Eric's Trip returns

by James Covey

Moncton's own reigning monarchs of lo-fi punk/pop, Eric's Trip, returned to Halifax this past Saturday for their first gig here since their Pop Explosion festival closing show last October. The show marked, in suitably noisy fashion, the return of the band from an extended hiatus due to the birth of bassist Julie Doiron's first child. One of the biggest crowds at Birdland since its opening saw the Trip put on a high-energy, excessively loud show.

*Eric's Trip at Birdland*  
Saturday, February 25, 1995

It was so loud, in fact, that the set became rather tedious after a few songs, since one couldn't really hear the notes. Eric's Trip can really rock out but even their hardest-rocking numbers have memorable pop melodies and harmonies, most of which were subsumed by a nearly ultrasonic booming and vibration that obscured most of the musical nuances. I found myself looking forward to the slower numbers because I could actually hear what was being sung and played, especially on songs like "Lightly Feeling," "My Bed Is Red," and "Stove."

As one after another unbearably loud, indistinguishable rock song was played, "Your Always Right" blended into "Smother" and the total effect was rather wearing. Some of the mid-tempo songs were the best because they alternated between distorted crashing and decipherable sections, especially "Sunlight" and

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