

caps. I thought that punk was dead. I was wrong. And I caught the bassist in the middle of a Pete Townsend leap. I'll be bragging about that photo until someone decks me.

Mary Lou Lord sounded a lot like Juliana Hatfield does when she plays acoustic. She was great, always asking if she was playing too long. It takes something special to go onstage by yourself with an acoustic guitar and make it work. She had that something. **Stereolab** played the best set of the festival. I'd listened to their latest cd and I just didn't get it. Then I saw them and my mini-review to a friend was "Wow! Wow! Wow!" I don't really know how to deconstruct that aesthetic response to a band. They were an experience.

Friday (Brunswick Hall) The Monoxides are a young band from Moncton who played a set of hardcore-grunge that I am too old to get into. The kids seemed to like it, and does anything else matter? The Kiss-inspired synchro-guitar posing was superb as well.

Hardship Post played a short set and signed to Sub Pop the next day. At the all ages show, **Sunny Day Real Estate** played a pretty bland, dime-a-dozen sound grungy set. At the bar show they turned things up a few notches and it sounded a little better.



Stereolab

Sunday (Khyber)

After four hours of sleep and two hours in a semi-conscious state I realized that I had to go to the *Gazette* to get the cover photo spec'd/approved/whatever and I also had to develop ten rolls of film. I was baked. Too much music. Speaking of music, Much Music covered the Pop Explosion (wow). About the Khyber gig...I could not go. I wasn't

even supposed to review it. I wasn't supposed to review ANY of this!! Ok??? What I heard was the audience was comatose (not unlike myself), **Hedge** was passive-aggressive grunge, **Mona** was heavy but boring grunge, **Thee Suddens** were good old school punk, and **Suckerpunch** were sorta like The Cramps.

Sunday (Brunswick Hall - finale)

Still hadn't caught up on any sleep, so an hour before the gig I decide to rest a few minutes on the couch. Bad move. I am shaken awake and instantly realize that I am going to be late. But that's ok, because as long as I get there before **State Champs** finishes, I can get my shots and that's that. It's not like I have to review them or anything. Turns out that I get there as they are leaving the stage. I've seen them once before and they were surprisingly great for a band that just came out of the woodwork. **Trike** are next and they are better than ever. I loved their acoustic set at the Cinnamon Toast barbecue. They are now apparently a three-piece and Melanie has brought her five-string, star-spangled bass out of retirement (she used to play in Cool Blue Halo and Chaz Rules). One thing which has remained constant is her great voice. She is probably the most underrated female singer in Halifax indie rock.

The Superfriendz are next and I am feeling sick. Nevertheless, Matt and friendz put on a great show. I still feel sick. I am about to see my 27th band in five days. This is too much, but only two more bands to go. **Hip Club Groove & Stinkin' Rich** provide a welcome change from geetar rawk. HCG are just in from a 20-hour drive from St. Catherine's, but they go off and do their thang unfazed. Stinkin' Rich raps like the manic maniac he is. HCG are super-tight with their rap and Shakii's freestyle is hilarious and very fluid. A serious pit starts to happen. I can't wait to leave. The bands are great, but I am burnt, sick, tired and hungry. **Eric's Trip** come on and there is the obligatory mosh. The front is crammed and I decide to get my photos from somewhere more sane. Then I check out with a like-minded person who is sick of live music. Live, loud music. Live, overbearingly loud to the point of distortion music. Five days of it, and I had to shoot it/develop it/print photos and #&%@ing write this review.

Overall, the Pop Explosion was a masochistic pleasure, and I'm glad that it is only an annual event. It will take me a year to recover. Hmm... I don't want to end on that note. The Pop Explosion is a great thing and Peter and Angie of Decent Management (among countless others I'm sure) are the greatest for getting some incredible bands to come all the way to Halifax. It was a well-run event and even though I burned out near the end I did enjoy it. It's just this #&%@ing responsibility of getting all the photos done and writing this review which I shouldn't have had to do which is getting to me. But now I am done and I can finally sleep. Goodnight.

However, after all of the footage taken this past week, I figure I've had more than my share of Much Music cameos.

The Pop Explosion allowed us to show everyone that the scene down here isn't just hype. OK, so maybe we exaggerated just a little bit. I suppose every day in Halifax isn't like the pop explosion. In actuality, it felt more like trying to speed up the pace incredibly and cram about 6 months of gigs into five days. But it still reminded everyone what we can pull off. Even though, by the end of my stint of gigs, I was quite ready to go home and read a nice, quiet book. My ears are still recovering. In retrospect, I have to use a favourite CKDU expression and say that 'it was wicked.' It was great to see all of the folks who travelled here from far off places to check out the Halifax 'scene'. There are now a whole new bunch of people who can say that they've been here and that it was as incredible as everyone has been saying. We lived for five days up to all of that hype. To choose between the 1994 Halifax Pop Explosion, and our much anticipated summer visit by the Queen, I'd have to say that we put on a much better face for the Pop Explosion.



Hardship Post

The songs were dull and far too long. **Thrush Hermit** has nailed their live show. They just came off the road with Sloan and they rocked.

Saturday (Khyber)

The break up of Bubaiskull has spawned two (arguably) better bands, Rebecca West and **Coyote**. The latter played their first gig and it was good. Chris was on vocals and Tim on bass, so there was some obvious carry-over from their previous band. But the songs were better than what Bubaiskull had been pumping out before its demise. I always thought that **The Liz Band** was traditional folk. Was I ever surprised...pleasantly. They were heavy and Liz was wailing on vocals. Too bad that the crowd seemed content to sit cross-legged for the entire set. Apathy rules again.

Pest 5000 from Montreal are a sick, sick band. Well, at least the guitarist said that he had the flu. Oh well... They played a good set and the violin didn't get on my nerves! The set was good, but too short and I am still mad that I missed them when they played here during the summer. OK... **Six Finger Satellite** are a menace to society. Lock up your children. This band is completely over the top. Insane. The lead singer would point at someone in the crowd and scream "You! Yeah, YOU! RAAAAH RAH RAHHH!!!" I did not feel safe watching this guy teeter on the five-foot stage. I did not feel safe when he jumped off it and climbed over the crowd, kissing guys and, I am told, mounting another (clothed of course, position unknown). They had the energy and presence of ten bands.

Saturday (Brunswick Hall - all ages)

I'd heard all the hype about **Treble Charger/NC-17** and I was interested in seeing them. They sucked. Happy grungy-poppy crap. Enough already. **Thrush Hermit** played again. I was very tired. **Scarce** played a short set to an enthusiastic crowd of kids. More later.

Saturday (Brunswick Hall)

After the all-ages show I went to a friend's house for some food. I didn't actually eat any food. Instead, I collapsed on the floor and was roused about an hour later. To make a long story short — I missed **Local Rabbits**. A lot of people missed this band but I am told that they were great. Oh well.

Was it just me or did **Hardship Post** play their most affecting set ever? Maybe I was just suffering from extreme sleep deprivation, but I thought that their set was incredible, especially the slower, more melodic songs. This is a truly great band.

One heckler in a crowd. I thought that **Bruce McCulloch** was hilarious with Bob Wiseman's band, but one goof had to voice his disapproval numerous

by Jen Horsey

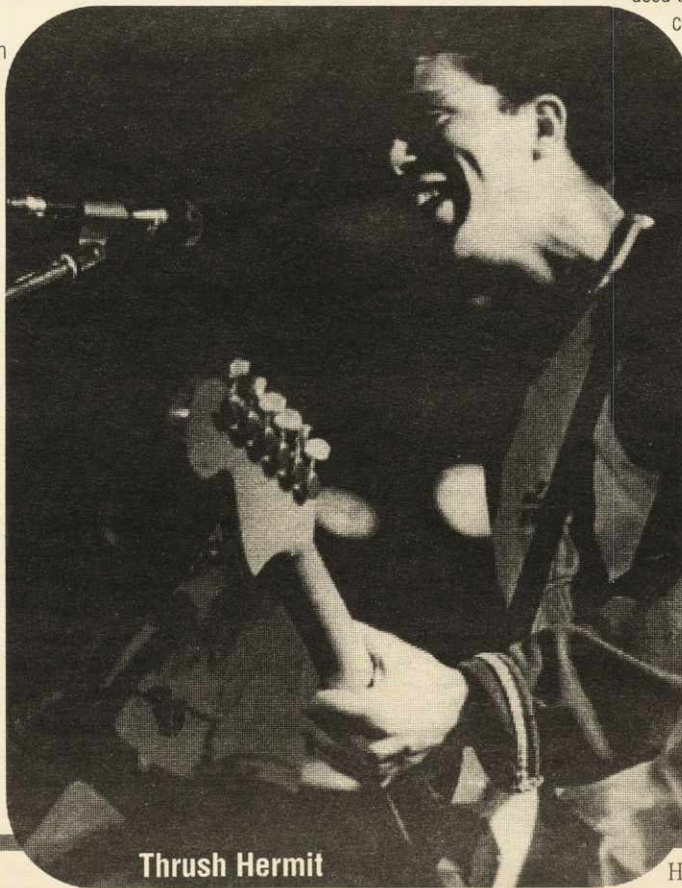
The 1994 Halifax Schmooze-fest is finally over. All of the major label industry types and indie gurus have packed up their 7" records and headed home.

I only attended three days of the Halifax Pop Explosion. It was exhausting, and all I was doing there was having a good time (oh, and maybe taking a few notes). I can't imagine what it must have taken out of the people who were there on business. Those who were, however, took every opportunity they had to meet everyone.

The "Come From Away's" appeared to be revelling in the close knit and approachable feeling that our local scene provides, and those from the Maritimes spent their five days trying to show all the outsiders what we really have to offer here — which is really quite a lot. By the end of the Explosion, the schmoozing started to get to people though, and all of the friendly grins started to turn into a rather forced barring of teeth. But if you wanted to schmooze, every opportunity was given to do so.



Sunny Day Real Estate



Thrush Hermit

Schmooze-fest '94

And everyone who's ever picked up a guitar turned out in full force to talk to the various 'reps' and musicians who showed up. MCA, BMG, Sub-Pop, and of course, our local Murder and Cinnamon Toast 'reps' were only some of the people who could be found wandering around being accosted by musician would-be's every two seconds. Although, I suppose "Thee Gold Lamay Industry Passes" (yes, that's actually what they said on them, and yes, they were gold.) made them pretty easy targets. The media turned out in droves too. The Much Music camera was absolutely everywhere. I've lived in Toronto and I pride myself on the fact that I've always managed to walk past the Much Music building on Queen Street without being accosted by a Vee-jay.