

Over a year later, dance refugees are still homeless

Cabbagetown only a blurred memory

by Shelley Galliah

Do you remember dancing until your legs were burning in a dark but hardly dismal place that reeked of stale ashtrays when it wasn't crowded and of mothballs and Frenchies when it was?

Perhaps you may recall black-clad bodies stumbling, skipping, thrashing or undulating to a pounding stereo which poured out tunes from Iggy Pop, the Cure and the Doors. It was a stage for music that stretched from the primal to the commercial to the psychedelic, and a refuge for punks, granolas, Le Chateau trendoids, born-again hippies and other wayward souls. This was the home of a weekly black celebration. This was Cabbagetown.

Though most of my memories have been blurred by Heinekin, I can recall my first night there. It was my initiation, so to speak.

Overdressed and exceedingly paranoid, I watched a puny guy play leap frog to the beat of some psycho song, waded through a suspicious sea of yellow smoke, and tried to avoid being muzzled to death by a very strange and sweaty Cabbagetown regular. I was introduced to a place where nothing seemed to matter and I liked it.

The doors of what was called "one of Canada's hottest dance clubs" have been closed for over a year now. On those two final nights, it seemed that everyone who had never experienced C-Town decided to satisfy their curiosity. The "alternative" crowd moved aside to make way for the "top 40 clones". January 1988 saw hundreds of feverish dancers



Maria Patriquin: Dal Photo

All dressed up with no place to go

pushing against each other on an unusually cramped floor. It was overcrowded and sticky, but above all, wild. In this huge going away party where everyone there was the guest of honour, Dionysius himself would have been proud. The T-shirts on sale even boasted "The End of an Era".

But that was then. Where have all of Cabbagetown's loyal followers gone? After speaking to some old groupies, I was informed that most of them just

hang out at the Seahorse. Yet, one of them commented, with all the melancholy which can be managed between drags of a cigarette, "When Cabbagetown died, an essential and exciting part of Halifax nightlife was buried with it."

Still, I choose to naively hope that all is not ended and that alternative dance parties are happening somewhere in this metropolis.

In pursuit of those evasive ex-Cabbagetowners, I thought that

some may have conformed to the more common breed of the "dance bunny". That is, a dance bunny is one who dons brand new black and perfect hair for a night of dancing on the town. With this in mind, I visited the other alternative — The Pub Flamingo. This location had an 8-year history as the Bonny Piper and a short stint as Diamond Dick's Cavern before it became the Pub about a year and a half ago. Since the Flamingo itself has changed from a non-alcoholic club to a pub with a beverage room license, and finally a lounge license, I asked if there had been a consistent change in the clientele.

"If anything," co-owner Derick Honig assured, "the clientele of the Pub has only expanded over the years." After all, there are the regulars, the new lounge fans, as well as the old "Club" alternative crowd which is now coming of age.

In response to my question whether they aspired to become another C-Town, Manger Kenny Silver said, "Perhaps this is what

we are aiming for, or at least we are trying to become a dance club after 1pm." As for capturing the old C-Town crowd, he said "We may be doing this unintentionally." However, Honig says, the Pub will only be a lounge between these hours, because at Cabbagetown, "people would buy one drink and dance the rest of the time. This is the reason it went under."

In my lonely search for fellow ex C-Towners, I discovered a select few at Rumours and Jaguars. Otherwise, the rest seem to prefer drowning their memories in copious amounts of liquor at the Horse or other choice establishments. Or perhaps they have become conditioned to mindless Top 40 and are somewhere boogeying down to the drum machine beat and bubble gum lyrics of a Tiffany or a Debbie Gibson. I implore you, ex-Cabbagetowners, ye black clad lovers of the dance, make yourselves known. Prove to me and everyone else that the demise of Cabbagetown was not the end of an era.



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An economic roller-coaster with no one at the controls

by Marc Epprecht

Ever wonder, what the fuck is going on? With the global economy, I mean. IMF riots (Algeria and Venezuela so far this year), rain forest burning, communist counties turning capitalist and capitalist countries going bankrupt. . . It's certainly not from a shortage of money — Nigeria may be crushed by a foreign debt of \$25 billion but someone just spent that much in the single takeover bid of RJR Nabisco. Well, if you are like most people who suspect that all these things are somehow interconnected but you can't quite say how, then Joyce Kolko's new book is for you.

Since the oil price hike of 1974, Kolko argues, noisy propaganda about 'unprecedented economic recover' or prosperity cannot hide the fact that the world economy is in a perilous state of crisis. She draws her analysis from the most prestigious, conservative business journals and from the views of top-level bankers, politicians and bureaucrats as expressed in such documents as World Bank and IMF reports. She examines all the major aspects of the present crisis — stock markets, banking, corporate mergers, technological developments, the arms industry, falling commodity prices, the decline of manufacturing and the rise of the service

Continued on page 16

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