

Thrush Hermit and I, Mother Earth

BY JANET FRENCH

The McInnis room was rocked to shreds by I Mother Earth and opening act Thrush Hermit, on Wednesday, September 8. It was part of the Dalhousie Student Union's Frosh Week concert series, the evening delivered a healthy dose of Canadiana and local talent.

The evening quakes to a start with reverberating tunes from Thrush Hermit, a treasure from the Halifax music scene. No longer in the McInnis room, we are transformed to the world of a rockin' 1970's band, practicing in their basement. Laid back and comfortable in their stage space, Thrush Hermit pumped out catchy and upbeat tunes that send my foot subconsciously tapping. Just when the band is starting to sound generic, they spontaneously bombard the audience with trippy electric guitar manipulations which resemble cosmic sounds from space B-movies.

The audience is bobbing — but only on the side of the room where they are serving alcohol. The rest of the crowd stands and stares at Thrush Hermit, intrigued and mesmerized. Either the band has lulled one thousand frosh into hypnotic slumber, or they have created a fabulous, spellbinding impression. The faces of the crowd indicate the latter choice, and Thrush Hermit should expect an increase in attendance at their shows, thanks to this fabulous publicity opportunity.

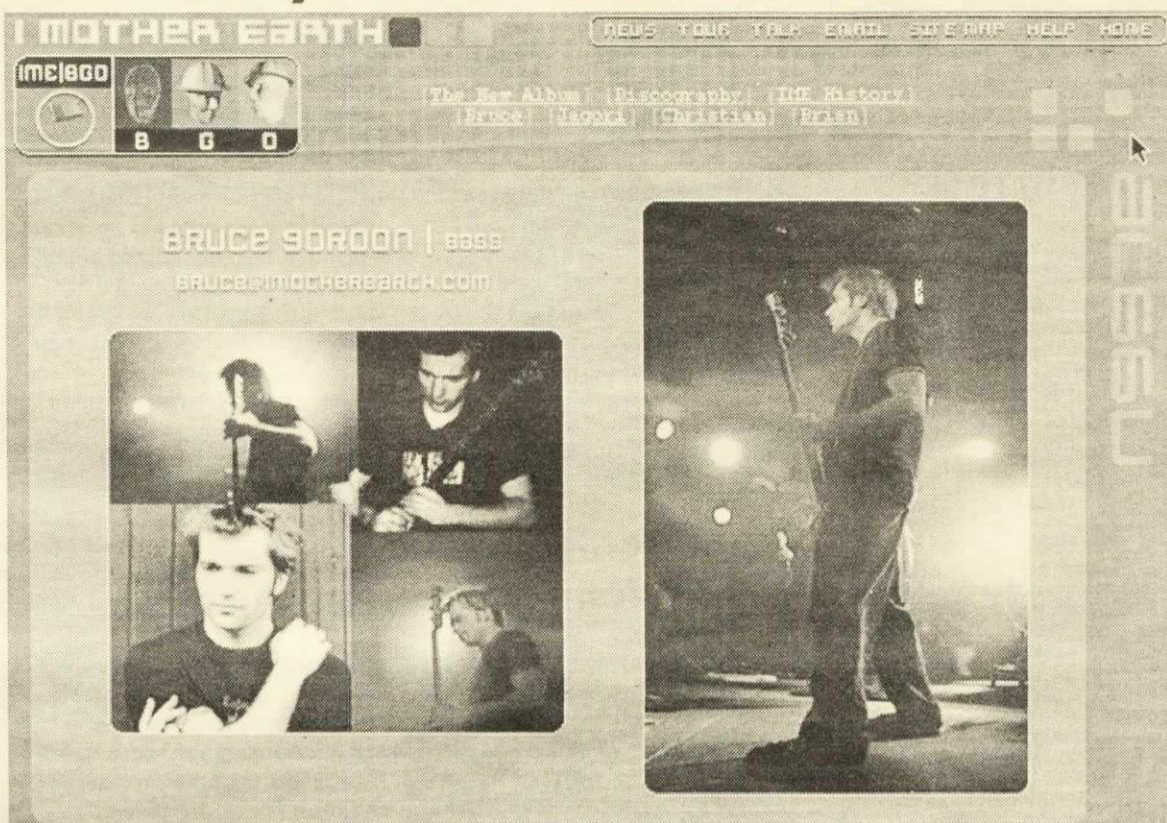
I Mother Earth is on for less

than one song before it is evident they are definitely not the band they used to be.

Times have changed since their 1996 release "Scenery and Fish," for they have replaced their former lead singer Edwin with the fresh vocals of Brian Byrne. Their sound is somewhat homogenous because most of the songs performed are from the new album "Blue Green Orange." Surprisingly, new lead singer Byrne tackles some old tunes also, back from the Edwin years. It sounds strange, like musical resurrection. However, the audience appears to be unscathed by the changes at hand. One fellow named Tom who refused to give me his last name, tells me "these guys blow Edwin away."

And the general consensus is no different from Tom's eloquent drunken utterings. They are consumed with enthusiasm and cater to every whim of the band's desire. Brian Byrne tells the audience to ignore the "No Crowd Surfing" signs. Crowd surfing commences within the minute. Byrne then instructs both the men and the women of the crowd to remove their tops at will. Shirts immediately sail through the air.

Perhaps I don't get it: I Mother Earth seems like another typical Canadian rock band, whose energy in concert is adequate, but not exactly phenomenal. Yet, the McInnis Room was packed with individuals seemingly possessed by the tunes, lurching deliriously around the



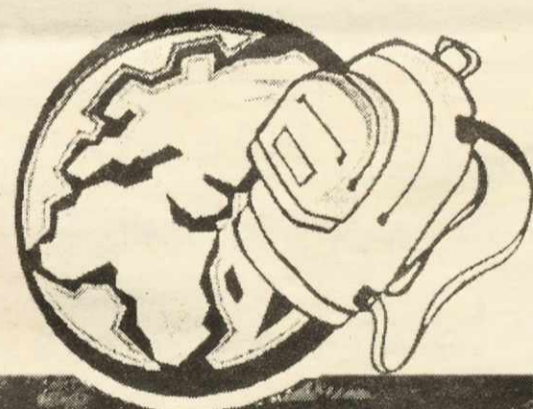
Adulation tools: IME's website has band bios & tour dates, another Canadian band for the road.

room. The evening simply proves that I Mother Earth does not fail to satisfy, and may even be gaining in popularity since their personnel renovations.

So grooving to good music aside, there are lessons to be learned from the evening. Thrush Hermit demonstrates that the appeal of the casual basement band will never die. On the other hand, I Mother Earth shows that change is never a bad thing, and should be welcomed with open arms.



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