



Above: Dutch Mason is presented "The Dutch" by Rick Hutchins, Festival founder and Brent Staeben, Festival Chair. It reads: "The award is to be presented each September at the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival is dedicated to the legendary Dutch Mason."
Below: Waylon Thibodeaux on the fiddle gets a little help from his Dad.

A Tribute to Dutchy

By Mark Savoie

It don't happen too often, but last Thursday night I actually felt sorry for all of those people who do not live in this benighted burg of ours. You see, people not in or around Fredericton that night missed a rare opportunity to witness a jam session which at one point or another saw most of the major names in Atlantic Canadian blues on stage.

These names were gathered at the Boyce Farmer's Market for one reason: to honour Dutch Mason, the man to whom BB King gave the name 'Prime Minister of the Blues.' The Dutch Mason Tribute started off with a very enjoyable set by much of Fredericton's local talent in the form of Bubba Can't Dance. This set was in itself a bit of a jam session, as it was quite likely a one time only performance.

But the second set of the evening saw Dutch Mason himself take the stage. Joining him at the time were Tony Dee out of Halifax, Fredericton's own Danny Robichaud on the harp, and Roger Howse all the way from Newfoundland. Robichaud was soon supplanted from his place on the harp by Joe Murphy, while Matt Minglewood was given a place on keyboards and background vocals. In fact, the stage was constantly changing its composition; so quickly that it soon became impossible to keep track of all but the biggest names.

Keeping control of all this chaos was Dutchie's harp player, the besuited Rick Jeffery. Besides for playing a wicked

harp throughout, Jeffery also controlled the tempo of the evening, always making sure that it was Dutch's show.

This proved a difficult job, since Dutch actually performed for only about half of the last two sets, consenting to let his band and guests take the stage. Yet, there were no disappointments, for the second and third sets saw Matt Minglewood come to the front. He was joined there by Sam Moon, and these two old Maritime bluesmen put on a show that evoked memories of outdoor concerts at UNB a decade ago.

The highlight of the evening for the crowd came early in the second set, when Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival Chairperson Brent Staeben and festival founder Richard Hutchins took the stage to present the first annual Dutch Award. The first recipient was obviously Dutch Mason, a deserving winner of an award going to the Maritimer who best promotes Maritime blues. Presented along with the award was "The Dutch" (a guitar bearing a plaque acknowledging his contribution) and a Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival winter coat with his name embroidered upon it.

Unfortunately, arthritis and chain smoking have taken their toll on Dutch Mason's performing ability, but the ol' guy was still able to entertain an appreciative crowd of the faithful. At the end of the night there were no complaints, and the festive atmosphere of that sold out show set the mood for the entire festival.

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Waylon Thibodeaux



By Carla Lam

Hailed Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival's "Top Draw" at Bourbon at the Boyce—the festival's southern reformation of the Boyce Farmer's market I, alas, did not catch his performance at this venue. However, if it was a fraction of the powerhouse he created at the Blues Tent on Saturday night it was no less than overwhelming. One thing to be understood about musicians of this magnitude is that they make the atmosphere. Thibodeaux's high energy-high impact performance adhered strictly to this ideology. I get the feeling that I could have enjoyed this performance while nauseous on a boat, sinking..... you get the picture. Interestingly, this type of cajun music

always has the ability to put a smile on my face. But be warned; Cajun music, like the food is hot & spicy and best taken in moderation. This is music to be felt and heard, reducing people to gyrating and happy slaves to the rhythm.

Thibodeaux's is very much a family act (See Joe Murphy...) as was evident while father and son jammed together energetically, senior with his rub board and spoons; junior with his electric violin. Waylon, often singing in french, commanded the audience with the non-stop energy of a child on caffeine taking a rest only between sets and never between numbers.

Staight from Louisiana, the Cajun/Zydeco this man is known for

was undisputably authentic. With country-western roots the act was complete with gleeful squeals, twanging guitars, a fiddle ... But to quote a term popularized by our dear distractions editor—one should not partake in "Genocide." In other words, one cannot needlessly categorize music without depriving him/herself from a potentially wonderful music experience; this is definitely the case here. Despite my expressed distaste for country music I found Waylon Thibodeaux fantastic as well I should. His was the jovial, lively "knee slappin, toe tappin" kinda stuff that makes one happy to be alive. What's not to love?

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