

Thursday September 19th
The Avengers 7+ Hercules \$3

Friday September 20th
**JOHNNY FAVOURITE &
 THE SWING KINGS +
 URBAN SURF KINGS \$4**

Saturday September 21st
**JULIA'S RAIN \$4
 CD Release Party + Shine Factory**

Thursday September 26th
**SCRATCHING POST
 + MARS WE LOVE YOU \$4**

Friday September 27th
**FURNACE FACE
 + Grace Babies \$3**

Saturday September 28th
The Punters+ Dusty Sorbet \$3

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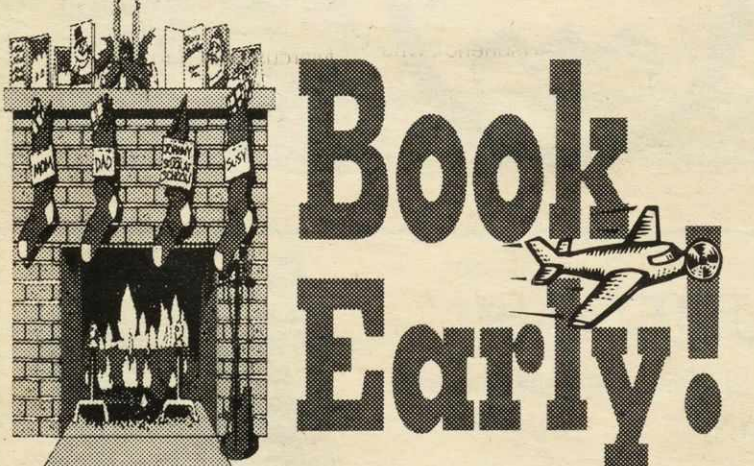
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Friday, September 13 Café Olé

The Thursday Toads/Cleveland Steamer/Madhat/The Superfriendz/Change of Heart

The night started off badly: I could not find a parking space anywhere near Café Olé. One would think that at this time (5:45 p.m.) there would be ample parking downtown because all the working types are home. No. This was not the case. I'm quite sure that I have Mr. Brooks to thank for my predicament. This event only serves to deepen my hatred of country music. I'm sure that pick-up trucks came down off blocks to go to that concert.

I didn't end up inside Café Olé until ten minutes after six. This of course had to be the one night when bands in Halifax would start on time, but I digress.

I had missed the first two songs of the opening band, Thursday's Toads, and I'm still kicking myself for that as I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of their show. Their sound reminded me of a more energetic Treble Charger. This band was new to me, although the members told me after their set that they had in fact been around for about two years, and for some time had been masquerading under the name Buick. It seems that the reason I hadn't heard the name before was that they were mostly designated to play the "& guests" slot at shows. The Thursday Toads have a couple of tapes out now and a 7" coming out in March. I think I just might have to pick one of those up.

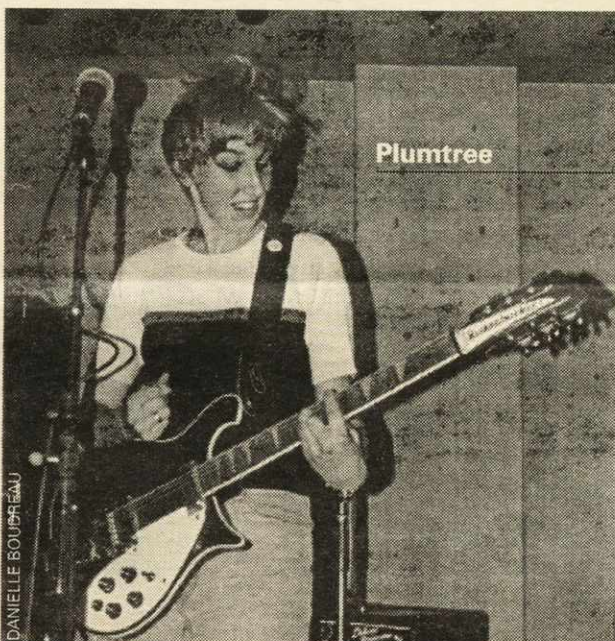
Next on the billing was Cleveland Steamer, a band that seems to get better each time I see them, and this time was no exception. These guys are definitely one of the heaviest, fullest-sounding three-pieces around. They are just about as close as you can get to heavy metal without having to resort to just playing one string on your guitar. I picked up their 7" at the show, a steal for a measly \$4. I always look forward to the next time I see this name on a gig poster.

I got a good impression of Madhat, from Lunenburg, as they started their set: a nice lady gave me some free stickers. It seems to me that Madhat are nearing the point where they are going to make another album. I say this because more than 2/3 of the songs they played are new. Playing a lot of new songs perhaps makes for a slightly less enjoyable show (you know, 'cause you can't sing along), but I know I'm buying that next release when it comes out. Their new stuff is easily twice the calibre of the material on *Hardhitters*. As usual their show, music and otherwise, was great and went off without a hitch...unlike the next band's.

The Superfriendz are a force to be reckoned with — even if the bass just stops working and sends the bassist scurrying around the stage looking for something (I'm

not sure what). I wasn't really surprised to see that most people had showed up specifically for them. At this point though, Café Olé became the next best thing to a sauna. It was packed so full with people that I had to stand on a chair to see, and I'm not exactly the shortest guy in the world. This band's live show is a must see. A mere recording cannot do justice to their talent or stage presence, both of which they have in spades. Songs like "Come Clean", "Karate Man", and "Green Hand" are great on CD — or vinyl as the case may be — but they are outstanding live. I've missed them the last couple of times they've played in town. The last time I saw them was in 1994 when they were playing one of their first shows, an all ages gig at the Green Room of all places. A fantastic band and an even better show. See them whenever you can.

Last up were Toronto's Change of Heart, and they were well worth waiting for. This trio puts an energy into their songs that hasn't been seen since...the last time they played Halifax. The Stupid...I mean Superfriendz were incredible, but Change of Heart were unbeliev-



able. They have a tightness like the lips of a mime. They played like a band possessed even though the crowd dwindled disappointingly after the Superfriendz were done. Perhaps the most interesting part of their set was that during their third song, the soundboard, which I happened to be sitting beside, started to smoke. Oh, the peril. I feared for my life.

This show ran very smoothly. There was not much time between the bands and each band started within about 10 minutes of their advertised time. I was quite impressed. But I was not to be for long. As this night started out badly, I suppose it was destined to finish badly. I walk out of the Café and apparently it's monsoon season in Halifax and nobody told me. After running the half mile to my car, my jeans are soaked through to my skin, my hair is dripping, and my rubber raincoat is causing my torso to sweat profusely. Oh well, it could have been worse.

STEVE DINN

Friday, Sept 13 Birdland

Rome Plows/Cool Blue Halo/
 Tristan Psionic/Thrush Hermit/
 Olympic Death Squad

It was a dark and stormy night. It was also Friday the 13th. Laying aside my superstition and my fear of the elements, I set out to enjoy

a night of musical entertainment at the Birdland Cabaret.

The Rome Plows kicked off the show and played their hearts out to the early Friday night crowd. Switching from melodic playing to heavy riffing, this talented threesome was definitely one of the highlights of the weekend. Lyrically sparse, the Rome Plows concentrate on the music instead, taking the audience on an aural journey that has to be experienced. Very tight, and very cool. Expect to see a lot more of them as they promote their new CD.

After the intensity of the Rome Plows, it was time to relax. Cool Blue Halo came on with some harmless pop songs, most taken from their latest release, *Kangaroo*. They delivered a boppy set that had a small crowd dancing on the floor.

Then boom! Tristan Psionic came on fast and furious, acting in parallel to the hurricane that was brewing outside. This is the band that doubles as a record label in it's spare time. Sonic Unyon is home to Hayden and the ever-cool SIANspheric, and is probably the friendliest little label you'll ever meet. They also have a cool selection of stickers. But tonight they were a musical force. From the opening instrumental through a set comprised of songs from their *TPA Flight 028* release, they had me wishing they were headlining so I could see them outside of the time constraints imposed by the festival.

With the ink still relatively wet on their signing to Elektra (home to Metallica and Bjork), and with a new album due out soon, local boys Thrush Hermit have a lot to prove. The dance floor filled up and the band showed what they were made of. Straight pop-rock and an energetic stage show got the crowded dance floor jumping, but there was no moshing this night.

Next on the schedule was Olympic Death Squad. With a name like that I had visions of screeching guitars and screaming vocals. Imagine my surprise when Mark Robinson came on stage with his friend Evelyn, a guitar and a drum machine, and played a set of "neo lounge" tunes. After the initial shock wore off, I got into the idea, but not everyone did. I saw quite a few confused faces leaving the dance floor at this time. Watching him on stage was like watching Billy Corgan on downers. His occasional slip-ups on guitar, shifty eye movements, and bizarre facial expressions had me convinced that this man was slightly deranged, and his lyrics reflected that. One song, sung as a duet, contained the chorus: "I'm gonna get fucked up today." While it was good, this ultra-depressing music was a bad way to end five hours of music, but one can only blame the organizers for that.

This was a good launch for the first of (hopefully) many Halifax on Music festivals. It just goes to show that not even a hurricane can suppress rock n roll.

NEIL FRASER