

ENTERTAINMENT

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The girl with the 'gift of gab'

PETER J. CULLEN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Kim Stockwood has been busy. After an afternoon of phone interviews, several attempts to establish a time for sound check and trying to deal with a shortage of hotel rooms, Kim Stockwood anxiously endeavours to arrange a dental appointment for next week in Toronto. In Fredericton for a weekend performance, the Newfoundland singer-songwriter is still being pushed to her limit, but considers herself one of the luckiest people in the world.

As the story goes, Stockwood was signed to a contract immediately after belting out tunes atop a piano stool for the president of EMI Music Publishing. After a couple of years of songwriting, Stockwood, now 29, recently unleashed her talents upon the rest of Canada with her solid debut album, *Bonavista*.

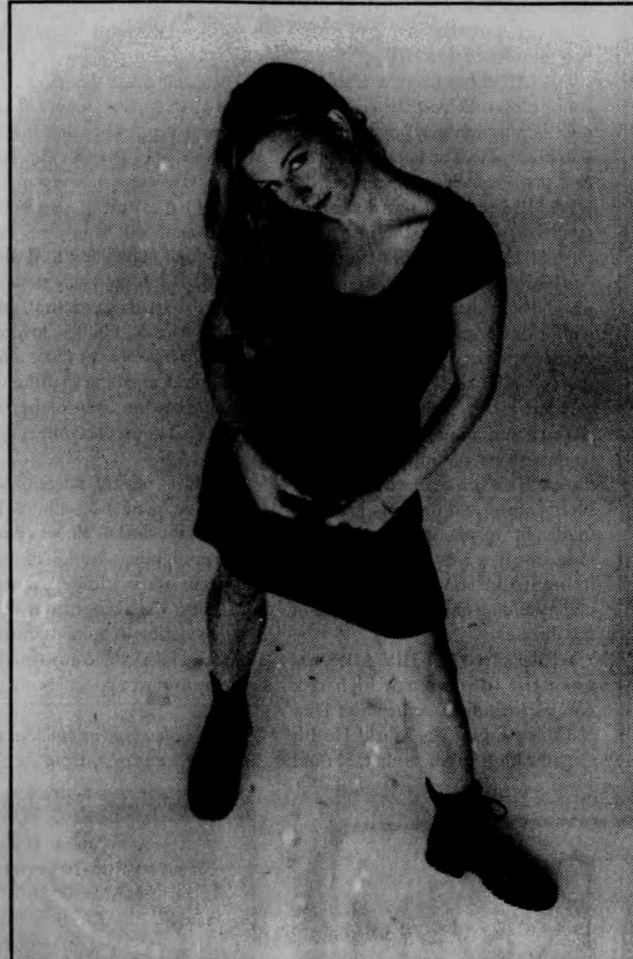
Reinforced with a country backbone but a varying range of styles, the album elicited a couple of credible radio singles and a cleverly-crafted sound; however, it lacked the amount of pep that the popular song "Jerk" has provided as of late. Written, recorded, and added to an updated version of *Bonavista*, "Jerk" ignited an explosion of attention in Canada. The aftermath left

it... It's just so weird." Weird, maybe. But Stockwood desires no less, and will not spare the time worrying about the effect this song's success might inflict in the long run. "Jerk" is such a novelty song. Anybody could be afraid of being remembered for just one song. But I'd rather have one hit song than none, and I think there's enough other good material on my record to back it up."

The girl who got her start singing songs in a small Newfoundland bar can certainly triumph with *Bonavista*. Utilizing the talents of a producer like Jim Rondinelli (Sloan, Odds), co-writers such as Randy Bachman and Johnny Douglas (ex-Hemingway Corner), and guest musicians like Matthew Sweet, Stockwood certainly made her debut one to remember.

But she has primarily herself to thank for it. "I did a lot of damage in Toronto for 3 years, let me tell ya," she states. "I went up all the time to every function I could and I met most of these people myself."

Although she counts her tenacity as a strong asset, it's her personality that has won her droves of fans across the country. "I have the gift of gab, and I could just talk the whole night," she laughs. Buoyant, bubbling and a ceaseless conversationalist on and off the



NOT A JERK: Kim Stockwood left the trail of her shooting star of success in Fredericton this past weekend at The Dock. With her album just released in the United States, Stockwood is loving life to its fullest.

screen celebrities such as William Baldwin and Nicolas Cage, but Stockwood credits much of her success to a different experience -- an educational one. Stockwood graduated from MUN with an English degree and a diploma in Business, two assets that have benefited repeatedly.

"University totally helped me," she comments. "I had done communications jobs with my English degree. I was a copywriter, I co-hosted a morning show, I worked in PR. And I always have a dream that someday I'm going to go to law school."

Stockwood continuously repeats those messages of encouragement and success to her university-aged audiences, but the crowds are ultimately paying to hear her songs. While Stockwood shares every song credit on the album with a co-writer, she explains why she doesn't write solely by herself. "I like to start and then go to somebody and say, 'Help me out.' I don't have enough confidence yet to just say, 'It's mine.' Because then if it's really bad I don't have to take all the blame," she laughs.

"I'm excited because I've finally started to believe a little bit that I'm a songwriter," Stockwood continues. "I never believed it even when I wrote my record -- I thought it was a fluke. I'm excited because I've learned a lot and I've practised it so

much... It's just the beginning, and I know there are a lot more things I can do. I'm hoping to start a new record in eight months, even though [*Bonavista*] is just coming out in the States."

Although the album was just released in the US three days ago, Stockwood has been promoting the record with a passionate fervour. After whirling through five cities -- one per day -- last week, she still exudes more energy than a power plant. "On these things I give it everything I've got. I get excited by learning. Even if I'm really tired and I'm learning, then I find energy. And I'm learning so much these days," she explains. "Or maybe [it's just] because I'm a Scorpio and a Newf!"

Stockwood tries to put everything in perspective before she departs to make an appearance at a local radio station, and fix the unresolved hotel room problem and get the sound check completed. "This is really just the beginning for me. I've learned so much about songwriting in the past little while. 'Jerk' is just great; it opened so many doors, and who knows how big it can get? But for me, as an artist, this is just a beginning... Life is pretty incredible and I'm pretty lucky. The only thing I could ask for right now..." -- she stops to think, and then laughs -- "...is sleep."

Red'n Black Revue: UNB in its true colours?

AJIT CHORDIA
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Reactions to the show? "Sold out!" The Red'n Black Revue this year saw a couple of alumni celebrities take a more active part than current students. Host and alumni C. David Johnson (of *Street Legal* fame) did an excellent job as the evening's Master of Ceremonies.

The much-lauded Maritime talent Anne Murray was a disappointment, and all the audience got from her was a couple of minutes of apologies via video from Las Vegas.

Alumni seemed to enjoy the show a bit more over last year: the Revue was a showcase of sorts as images and acts from the past 50 years were replayed. It was easy to see why alumni outnumbered present students for the show -- it brought back memories of years gone by, involving past students in most performances.

The number of songs performed by various students and alumni throughout the show gave it a musical touch, though it seemed that it was slightly overdone. Skits and acts were few and the show would have done well if it was

balanced by acting performances from the many talented UNB students. Innovative acts worthy of mention were "Two game show hosts meet," and "Jokes from the John." The kickline was spectacular and as the MC of the first Red and Black show put it, "It was the best kickline that the show has ever had." Sheila Roberts and Friends wasn't a surprise for many of the alumnus who remembered her show from the 1957 Revue when she had then-UNB President Colin Mackay do a jig with her in the show. This year it was President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston who played the role of the good sport.

The show, as always, ran past its time by over half an hour but the audience seemed to enjoy every moment of the extra time. Overall, organization of the show was very well done considering that it brought participants from over 50 years ago. The first MC to ever host the Red and Black Revue and the director of the 1948 show were both there, bringing together half a century of Red'n Black. Hopefully this performance and dedication are an indication of the next 50 years to come.

Jazzberry Ram: 'Alternative to alternative'

JAMES BIBBY
THE BRUNSWICKAN

On October 4 and 5 The Cellar will be bouncing to the groovy, energetic beats of Vancouver band, Jazzberry Ram. The band is fronted by singer and lead guitarist, Drew Stewart. He is accompanied by his brother Stephen on piano and acoustic guitar, drummer Colin Stobie, and bassist Al MacInnes. Amidst a hectic and eventful cross-Canada tour, MacInnes took a rare timeout at the side of a highway in Edmonton to let us know what the band is all about.

What kind of show can we expect from Jazzberry Ram?

Well, basically what we try to do is make sure everybody has a good time and gets up and dances. We try to play as many upbeat songs as we can, a groovy little funky pop rock show. We take bits of hip-hop, bits of rock, bits of funk, and mish-mash them all together. Just try to keep it one big long dance show.

How has your drive across the country been going?

It's been really great. We've had lots of great gigs. The first couple days were pretty crazy. We had three days in a row where we played an afternoon show in one city and then a late night show in the next. We've been motoring across the country. I think we've had maybe two days off, and those were just to drive.

How has living in the Vancouver area influenced your music?

I don't know if there's a Vancouver sound, but I've

noticed that a lot of bands from Vancouver -- as included -- have a more positive attitude than some other cities' bands. In Vancouver there was a real strong grunge scene for a little while.

Being that close to Seattle has to rub off in some respect.

Exactly, it did rub off a bit and during that time we were just starting out. I think we decided to become an alternative to the alternative. We decided that we didn't really want to have those depressing lyrics and all that. I think a lot of other bands from Vancouver also followed suit that way.

Give us a day in the life of Jazzberry Ram on the road.

Usually we don't get to bed till about six in the morning. It depends how many gigs we have. We usually load out of the gig by about three or four in the morning. [then] we load up our van, and usually Colin -- he's our drummer -- and Drew will stay up and drive. They're more night-owls than me and Stephen. [They'll drive] until ten or eleven in the morning, and then we'll get to some horrible greasy truck stop and have some greasy bacon and eggs and hash browns and lots of coffee. Then it'll be me and Stephen's turn to drive all day. Then we get to another town, have a couple beers and go play for a few hours. That's where the payoff is for sure: playing is by far what drives us. Somewhere in between there we take breaks. We'll break out our roller blades, hockey sticks and hockey nets on the side of the highway, and have an impromptu game of two-on-two.

"If you told me I was going to record a new song and add it to the CD, I'd say 'You're nuts!'"

- Kim Stockwood

Stockwood standing with a US record deal and a manager. The song has also become the Top 3 most-added single in the United States as of late, in addition to receiving heavy rotation on MuchMusic. Not bad for a tune that came out of nowhere.

"It's like a brand new CD," Stockwood enthuses. "Y'know, it's warped. If you told me I was going to record a new song and add it to the CD, I'd say 'You're nuts!' I've never even heard of it before! But we wrote ['Jerk'], and the record company freaked out and that was

stage, Stockwood draws her audiences back time and again to hear her stories and impromptu speeches. "Sometimes people just want to come and hear me sing; they don't want me blabbin' my face off. More than once I've been accused of talking too much on stage, but that's how you get your personality across. ... Performing is so much about who you are and your perspective on things."

Her years of experience in the entertainment industry have yielded humorous encounters with silver

The Watchmen spark an audience inferno at The Dock

MICHAEL ALLEN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

On Thursday of last week at 7 P.M., The Dock began to crowd with people who had bought advanced tickets to see The Watchmen. Outside there was a large line up of people waiting to buy last minute tickets and eventually The Dock was so packed that no one could move in any direction.

The opening band, Fredericton-based Smiley, performed at 10 P.M., playing a collection of songs from their independently released CD. The band was definitely into their music although there was a total lack of response from the audience, likely due to the lack of singing ability, groove, and originality in their songs.

After an excessively long break, The Watchmen began to play their set opener, "Bicycle," from their latest album, *Brand New Day*. Within seconds, the crowd pushed their way forward (the bouncers had no chance) and The Watchmen's equipment was pushed down, forcing the soundman to move it as they played. When the first song ended the band moved back about ten feet, with the crowd eventually ending up as far behind the PA



WATCH OUT!: The Dock was filled to capacity with fans of The Watchmen last week. The crowd became so energized that extra bouncers had to be called in to fend off the pseudo-mosh pit. As it was, the band had to retreat several feet under the onslaught of frenzied fans.

speakers as fifteen feet. Even though this portion of the crowd did not get all the sound, they still appeared to enjoy it.

The Dock management was

forced to bring in off duty staff from the Upper Deck and the audience to act as human barricades. After two more songs, Daniel Greaves asked the audience if it would do any good

for him to tell the crowd to move back. With no help there, the band slowed down their songs, talked to the audience and played a few newly written songs with intent to calm the

audience down. The band said afterward that they thought it would lead to injuries without doing so. It appeared to work a little.

The more upbeat songs began again, and the place became hotter, with the crowd becoming rougher. A few body surfers who landed on the band were thrown out, and bouncers took no chances and would not let anything happen. The general statement from the crowd was "Jockarama."

After most of the first set was over, it was hard to tell who was the most worn out and tired: the band, the bouncers or the crowd. The Watchmen ended the set with

"Boneyard Tree." They then returned for a short encore beginning with Greaves singing alone for quite a long period of time and then ending it all with "All Uncovered."

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