

# Marilyn Monroe spotted in Halifax

## Lunchin' at the Halifax Feast

BY JEN CLEARY AND  
KATHERINE HEBB

It's not often that Marilyn Monroe takes your order and Jimi Hendrix performs live in concert, but at the Halifax Feast this is a regular occurrence.

Known as "Halifax's most entertaining indulgence," the Feast is a dinner theatre tucked away in the basement of the Maritime Centre.

The moment we entered the restaurant we were swept into a time warp. Famous characters greeted us with warm welcomes and Prozac-induced energy. The nostalgic aura of the restaurant was similar to the restaurant in *Pulp Fiction*, with just a bit less flamboyance. The characters put forth their best efforts to entertain customers, but without an old Cadillac to sit in and no dance floor, our imaginations could only stretch so far.

Although the Halifax Feast's main attraction is dinner, our lunch

visit was an adventure. The food was delicious and affordable, and the menu was unique — including theatre components starting with an 'overture' and finishing with the 'bow.' The creative names of the dishes included "Anything Goes," "To Beef or Not to Beef," and "Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Cheese Cake." Getting the idea?

Throughout the meal the talented characters serenaded us with their appropriate tunes and were constantly approaching our table ad-libbing their roles. Perhaps it was the forty-ouncer we polished off the night before or our lack of appreciation for fine entertainment, but before long Jimi Hendrix's rendition of Frank Sinatra and the twangy voice of Patsy Cline drove us near insanity.

Lunchtime at the Feast is geared towards entertaining large groups of people, not towards a quaint date atmosphere — unless your date's a total hurt bag.

But thanks to co-owner and

artistic director Jim Petrie, the Feast's reputation as one of Atlantic Canada's best musical attractions is merited. The main night show is *Happy Daze*, and be sure to check out *It's a Wonderful Feast*, which opens in November. Petrie, a Dal grad, has written and directed 30 of the Feast's shows, and runs a musical theatre summer school.

Our experience at the Halifax Feast was delightfully entertaining. The visit was a pleasant alternative to the stale environment of McDonald's and the same old Big Mac combo.

But for future reference, if you plan on going to the Feast for lunch, remember to bring a bottle of Tylenol. Better make that extra strength.



Capt. Hook (Rob Lorway), Marilyn Monroe (Darlene MacNevin), and Cruella DeVille (Kim Jenkins) get in character.

## Celtic Colours diary of a good-time addict

BY KAREN PARKER

Cape Breton's second annual *Celtic Colours* festival wrapped up in Baddeck this weekend.

And with numerous mid-terms and assignments to worry about, it was the last place I should have been, but my friends and I seem to make a habit of taking terribly impractical road trips in the name of great music.

*Celtic Colours* was certainly an appropriate name for the festival. As we drove along the highway on Saturday afternoon we saw trees bathed in shades of red, orange, and gold. I tried not to think about all the work I had looming in the week ahead and concentrated instead on the beautiful fall scenery.

We arrived at the Victoria Highland Civic Centre just as the "World's Biggest Square Dance" was about to begin. People of all ages filed into the arena, and young and old took to both the stage and dance floor.

As soon as the music started the floor was full of square dancers (as well as a fair number of would-be square dancers such as myself). With some effort, we got ourselves sorted into groups of eight and the dancing began. Hundreds of us

stepped our way around the floor, swinging our partners and doing "grand chains".

As we were in Cape Breton, there was no shortage of fiddle players. Everyone from 20-year-old Richard Wood to 74-year-old Buddy MacMaster took a turn at playing jigs and reels for the dancers. When we weren't doing square sets, we were entertained by wonderful artists like Gordie Sampson, Slainte Mhath, Pierre Schryer, and the John Whelan Band.

The events at the Civic Centre finished around 1am and we hurried over to the Festival Club. According to several of the *Celtic Colours* musicians and staff we'd talked to at the dance, this was the "place to be."

Hosted by Baddeck's Inverary Inn, it was an after-hours venue that had already seen some pretty magical jam sessions during this year's festival, and this night — the last one — promised to be one of the best.

We felt very lucky as we walked through the doors of the club. The room filled to capacity almost immediately, and we were in the last group to enter before they had to begin turning people away.

The music started almost immediately after we arrived, and it didn't stop until the early hours of the morning.

It seemed that no one wanted *Celtic Colours* to end. We saw many familiar faces from the square dance, as an endless stream of musicians played to a room full of die-hard music fans.

There were far too many incredible performers on the stage of the Festival Club to remember all the names — especially since I was running on very little sleep and more than a little alcohol. But several moments do stand out.

Just as at the square dance earlier in the evening, there were plenty of fiddles. Local fiddler Jennifer Roland kicked things off and she was followed by a host of others, including Pierre Schryer of Ontario, Clare McLaughlin of Scotland, and several of the Barra MacNeils. And Gordie Sampson jammed out an incredible blast of tunes with Irish button accordion player John Whelan. It was obvious both were enjoying the performance immensely, as they strung together an endless stream of reels, throwing in creative guitar and accordion solos.

Whelan said he enjoyed the

festival so much that he plans to bring his whole family back with him next year. Towards the end of the night (or, more accurately, the beginning of the morning) he was running around with a magic marker, getting everyone to sign his *Celtic Colours* t-shirt in an attempt to record the memories of the past week.

The night flew by, and before we knew it, it was 5am. Someone announced last-call at the bar, and we were told the music would have to wrap up, as the sound equipment being used in the Festival Club was needed for a gig somewhere else the next day.

Slainte Mhath closed off things with a short but lively set. Just when we thought we had been done-in by lack of sleep, Bruce MacPhee's loud highland pipes woke us up again. Some of us even mustered the strength to get up and

dance. Then, sadly, it was all over. Or so we thought.

The Festival Club may have been closed, but the Inverary Inn's cafe was still open. The remaining crowd simply moved over into the cafe, where they were serving pizza and chicken wings for breakfast.

After a short break to refuel on fried food, some of the players started up again in the acoustic setting of the cafe. There were more fiddle tunes, and we found ourselves singing along to the likes of "the Mary Ellen Carter" and "Sonny's Dream."

Reality finally set in around 7am on Sunday morning. It was a long drive back to Halifax, and we had to return our rental car early that afternoon. Many others had already left the inn by then, but when we drove out of Baddeck at 7am, the music was still going.

## No spine tingling here

BY TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

The right piece of music will stir my soul like nothing else. The right performance will send shivers down my spine. Monday's piano performance by Ian Hominick did neither.

The performance by the Nova Scotia native took place in the newly refinished Art Gallery at Saint Mary's. It was a perfect setting for an intimate concert with a grand piano and 20-30 auditory receptors. And indeed it was a unique concert with a small selection of pieces of varying degrees.

Mr. Hominick got off to a rocky start and I think I saw some frustration and certainly a lack of enjoyment and confidence. But, as

the performance continued he seemed to regain his personal arrogance, which permeated the room when he spoke and played.

Although he had a good handle on the technically difficult segments of various pieces, his fingers seemed to glide too clumsily over the keys. It lent itself to a performance where some phrases were imprecise and thin, while others were choppy and lacked coherence.

Mozart's wonderful yet not spectacular *Sonata in A Major, K. 331* contains the infamous "Rondo Alla Turca," surely played by every young pianist at one time or another (trust me - if I could sing it to you, you'd know what I meant). This was followed by seven of PEI composer Richard Gibson's short yet tickling *Preludes*. A piece by Sigismund

Thalberg — a 19th composer who I, much to my own disadvantage, know little of — rounded out the first half of the performance.

The second half opened with two "ditties," as the performer described them, by Percy Grainger. The evening concluded with Johannes Brahms' less popular *Sonata in C Major, Op. 1*.

Now I'll admit I was pretty sleepy for this performance, and also that these are not my most favourite pieces. However, I do enjoy listening to the "old standards" of the 18th and 19th centuries as well as the "new bunch" of the early and late 20th century. It's only that a scratchy old LP has better quality.

To end on a positive note though, the piano was excellently tuned.

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