

Wonderful Grand Band is wonderful and grand



by Rob Cohn and Lee Ritegan

The Wonderful Grand Band (alias the Bande Grande de Newfoundlande) made their first Metro appearance in almost a year last week. Sneaking into the Palace for a four night stint, they packed the place by the strength of word of mouth. After stealing the hearts of their audience they quietly stole off for the Rock.

Initially the band was formed to provide accompaniment for various guests on the CBC TV show "The Root Cellar". Mainly on the instigation of vocalist Ron Hynes, and then fiddler Kelly Russel, the group produced such classics as "Sonny's Dream", "Just like a Movie Scene", (which has been recorded by Valdy), and "One Last Lover". From there it was a lengthy stay at the Newfoundland pavilion at the Toronto Caravan site. From there Canadian tours and appearances at the Atlantic Folk Festival have garnered them critical praise and prosperity.

The band now has their second offering on the way with an ambitious release of 20,000 copies, due in October. The record is an accurate accounting of the band, reflecting the rockier approach favored by its members. Titled "Living in a Fog", after a cut that defies definition but certainly demands attention. There are several up tempo rockers written by Ron

Hynes and guitarist Glen Simmons of which "Where Do you Go for Love" and "Ophelia" are outstanding.

For those of you who enjoy traditional, there are two jigs and reels, "The Merry Widow" and the "Kerry Polka". There is also a moving version of the Newfoundland classic "Hard Times". Speaking of classics, it should be noted that the band has included a definitive version of "Sonny's Dream" which contains an extra verse left off the previous release for commercial reasons.

Anyone who has ever viewed the band can attest to the fact that they are a blur of constant motion and energy. Certainly, a great deal of the credit belongs to the only non-Newfoundlander in the group, Jamie Snider, who plays fiddle.

Other band members note that Snider has opened the group to new musical directions, particularly in the area of new wave. However, on the new album the two most interesting pieces by Snider are the accapella numbers "UIC" and "Dancing in the streets."

The LP was recorded at Springfield studios in London Ont., as was the first Minglewood RCA LP. It was produced and engineered by Deckland O'Doherty who has worked with such luminaries as Elton John, Gerry Rafferty, and Wings. With

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