

# Shooting the shit with Bob and Darrell

BY TIM COVERT

Bob Hallett and Darrell Power of Great Big Sea came upstairs to the Gazette office for a very casual chat Friday night before their McInnes Room Show, a record release party for their new CD *Up*.

**Gaz:** Do you guys find that the industry in the Atlantic region is supportive of you?

**Darrell:** If you look at it over the past couple of years when a band like the Thomas Trio from Newfoundland were slugging it out, the infrastructure just wasn't there in Atlantic Canada for a band to come out and plug their way across the country successfully and meet the right people along the way. People in Atlantic Canada have really come together and taken the music.

**Gaz:** So it was the great home support for all these home grown bands that initially got the record companies looking down from Toronto...

**Bob:** Record companies are in

the business of making money. In Atlantic Canada, the bands in Nova Scotia go to Newfoundland and they're supported and vice versa. You can create a career, you can create a following for yourself. So when the record companies do take notice they can say, "Well look, these guys sold 10,000 albums down here, they're playing every night, they're making a living, and they're growing." They look at Sloan, Great Big Sea, or The Irish Descendants or Rawlin's Cross or Ashley, and say "These people are already building a career, all we have to do is just give them a little boost and we could really take this somewhere."

**Gaz:** Speaking of careers, what do you guys have in mind for the next couple of years?

**Bob:** Our goal is to keep building the profile of the band. You can't travel back and forth between Halifax and St. John's all your life. You need to have as wide an audience as you can. We've been to the UK and Ireland



and Scotland and that's another market we've got to go back to and work on some more. In terms of touring, our future is cut out for us.

**Gaz:** Do the people overseas accept your skills, as they are ultimately the home of all this traditional music?

**Bob:** Well, Newfoundland has very strong links with the United Kingdom as they're preserving something that in many places in England they've totally lost. Irish and Scottish people are very proud of their celtic roots and to see people from a thousand miles away who are working that hard to preserve that, then that's something that they're proud of.

**Darrell:** And you'd go to one town where someone in the night would play one song and people

in the audience will recognize that song from their local area or a hint of that song. They must get a real warm and gushy feeling.

**Gaz:** Speaking of the UK, whose idea was it to cover the Slade song? (ed: Run Runaway)

**Darrell:** Well, part of our show is to blow the dust off a blast from the past. Alan had it on 45 and we were doing it live and...having a lot of fun with it. Dan Greenspoon, our producer for the album, he liked it as much and when we were going back in June to do touch ups, he said we should record this song. So we did this song basically from start to finish in one day. When something like that comes out of one day in the studio, you can take it home. Of all the memories we have of recording this album, I think that that one stands out.

**Gaz:** It works with your sound but it's a power rock song...

**Bob:** Well, the thing about runaway is that it's got that Duh Duh Duh-Duh-Duh, Duh Duh Duh Duh-Duh-Duh. It sounded like a jig line. Normally in the studio nothing comes together quickly...but Runaway was one of those things that we couldn't be done any quicker. We like to be loose on stage...casual and fun. We enjoy playing so we want the audience to see that. I think the song really captures that feeling.

## Tones and bones:

### An interview with Rob Lorway of Highland Heights

BY TANIA TREPANIER

Highland Heights is a Halifax-based band whose members have roots in Cape Breton.

Their members are: Norma MacDonald, a vocalist and 12 string guitarist who aspires to go to medical school; Glen MacIsaac, vocalist and lead guitarist; Jimmie Inch, a vocalist, bass player, and engineering student; Rob Lorway, a vocalist and keyboardist who has a degree in Anthropology; and, Kenney Renton, who plays the drums.

When I asked Lorway how the band was formed, he told me that

they met playing traditional music for tourists at the Holiday Inn. When they came up with the idea of forming a band, they decided to approach Bob Dooley, the manager of McGinty, to ask for some advice. They made arrangements to rehearse in the T-Room at TUNS every Thursday night, a quiet night at the pub.

Through word of mouth, more and more people started coming to see them. Within weeks, they had developed a following. Lorway told me that some Thursdays, it was so packed, they had to turn people away at the door.

The band recorded a demo tape at Soundmarket Recording, and gave it to Bob Dooley, who then took them on as their manager. They soon recorded their first album — with Rocky Coast Music Inc. — which included a number of original tunes.

Their plans for the future? They want to continue to record, focusing on producing more original works and developing their own sound. They would also like to play at more concerts and festivals both in Halifax and outside of the city. They have played in P.E.I and New Brunswick and will soon play in Cape Breton for the first time since they formed the band.

Highland Heights recently made number one on the independent recording list at Sam the Record Man. Commenting on the success of the band, Lorway said, "We never expected to get this far this fast."

He gave credit to all the bands who came before them, those who set the scene, making their popularity more likely. He listed just a handful of them — The Rankin Family, The Irish Descendants, Ashley MacIsaac, Rawlins Cross, and Rita MacNeil. Lorway suggested that these artists have set the stage for the popularization of east coast music. He said that this, with the addition of a bit of luck, has helped Highland Heights to get to where they are today.

## From the Highland Heights to the Depth of the Great Big Sea

CONCERT

Great Big Sea with Highland Heights

Oct. 20, 9 p.m.  
McInnes Room

BY TANIA TREPANIER

I had heard that Halifax has a vibrant music scene. Before I moved here from Vancouver two months ago, I was familiar with maritime and celtic music, but it was usually in the context of an ethnomusicology class or a folk festival. Imagine how I felt, then, when I went to the Great Big Sea concert on Friday. Here was folk music as it should be — enjoyed by people who have grown up hearing it and loving it.

It was obvious to me that this young university crowd had common roots and a sense of place, characteristics which are harder to come by in Western Canada. Many people sang along to ballads and pub tunes that I had only vaguely heard of, and they grooved in a highland dance-influenced style. The musicians called out between sets, "Anyone here from Cape Breton? Anyone here from Newfoundland?" to which various portions of the crowd responded with whoops and cheers. Also new to me was the tradition of holding up your drink and toasting to "Sociable!"

These musicians have a great deal of talent, and I was particularly impressed with the strength of Highland Heights member Norma MacDonald's compelling voice. Both bands are doing a remarkable job of revitalizing the folk music tradition by blending rock and roll with Celtic music and incorporating other contemporary influences into the tunes. In doing so, they gain a new audience. This music is no longer seen as a dying art. It is participatory folk music; a vital, changing musical tradition of which to be proud.



## GAZETTE MOVIE GIVEAWAY

Vampire in Brooklyn starring Angela Bassett, Eddie Murphy and Kadeem Hardison

Take your Pick:

If you come to the Gazette office and tell Tim:

- what was the last half decent flick Eddie Murphy made.
- what popular series of horror films Wes Craven created.
- why Eddie Murphy just wouldn't scare you?

you can get a double movie pass for tonight or a Vampire in Brooklyn t-shirt.

**CHEMISTRY** 7th @ 10:00pm Rm 111 / NO sober up formula! (what no coffee?)

-volumetric alcohol content = original gravity minus terminal gravity, divide by 7.5

-Alcohol from Arabic 'alKohl' meaning 'like Kohl' (eye cosmetic paint) because method of distillation by vaporizing same for both.

-yeast converts malt sugar into equal parts ethyl alcohol & CO<sub>2</sub>

high levels affect Balance, Vision, Alertness

-160pounds, 2beers, 2 hours, blood alcohol level .0596 Very important

Tonight laundry squash nurses' pub - Mike

KNOW WHEN TO DRAW THE LINE

Labatt