

Hemingway Corner in town tonite



Hemingway Corner relax in their oh-so-cosy tour bus

by Peter J. Cullen
Brunswickan Entertainment

Disassembled and rebuilt with a new cast, Hemingway Corner returns to UNB to open for Jann Arden tonight at the Aitken Centre. Founding member David Martin allotted the time for a telephone interview to discuss his travelling lifestyle and latest successes.

With the departure of Johnny Douglas from the original Hemingway Corner duo, Martin recruited two versatile musicians in Scott Dibble and Mark Sterling to keep the band alive. A wise decision, as the trio's new *Under the Big Sky* album should obviously propel them back onto the radio waves as a mainstay. Martin simply summarized the recent events surrounding *Under the Big Sky* as "going really good." Their first single from the new record, *Big Sky*, charted at number one — and Martin could not be happier. "We're proud of that," Martin said gleefully. "Gosh, that's the first number one I've ever had! You certainly don't expect that, but it's really nice. We can at least say we've done it once in our lives."

The acoustic and electric pop/folk sound contrived by Hemingway Corner has magnetized fans to them throughout the continent. Martin realizes that success stems from diversity, and the band capitalizes with their magnitude of variety. "A show for us has some moments that are really up and pretty rockin', and others that are more introspective and more lyric oriented. We play all kinds of places where there are mosh pit type situations — not that people are moshing big time to 'Man on a Mission,' but you'd be surprised!" he laughed.

Despite the laurels already reaped by Hemingway Corner, Martin grasps a firm hold on reality; he loves his music, but he dislikes the side effects of writing and recording. "When you're touring, it's sooooo exhausting from the travelling," he explained. "And then you get to a city and you go do a TV program, or play live on air at a radio station or maybe go to a newspaper. Then you try to find maybe five minutes to get something to eat. It's just so unglamorous it's unbelievable." Crisscrossing the country provides opportunities for Martin to increase his awareness of Canada's geography; but unfortunately, exploring the nation firsthand sits on the back burner of his itinerary. "What I'd rather do is check out some really cool cities and then come back to them," he said. "Like here in Nova Scotia, I've found two or three really cool places that I want to come back to, to spend some time relaxing. It's just so nuts [while touring] that it's real hard to do much of anything other than to go, 'Oh, cool. Look at that part of town,' as you drive by."

But the rigours of travelling and promoting the band do not go unrewarded; Hemingway Corner remains the ultimate beacon in Martin's life. "I feel, like, if you're making a living in the music business you're as lucky as you can be. It's tough to do that," he said. Martin continued to explain the trials and tribulations of his musical history, and how his present is emerging much more promising than his past would have ever indicated: "I think the reason I'm in music is that I just have faith in what I do. There have been a lot of times that have been bleak and black with no ray of hope anywhere, just that feeling that nothing is going right. So right now — to be honest — I'm

just real thankful. I'm so far ahead of other times in my life that every day is really cool."

With all that has transpired for Martin in his Hemingway Corner career — opening for the likes of Chicago, The Rankin Family, and the Everly Brothers; charting a number one single; contributing a cover of 'Tell Me Why' to the Neil Young tribute album, *Borrowed Tunes* — the man still clearly recalls his humble beginnings when he first picked up a guitar even before starting grade V. "It was hard as hell [laughs]. I can remember just putting the fingers on the strings, and saying, 'That's 'C'. Then I'd take my hands off and go right back to that 'C' immediately, and it was like, 'How am I ever going to do that?' But all of a sudden you'll go to a new level that you haven't been to and you'll just go 'Wow!' And you just keep going that way. You're gonna suck at first and then you'll get better, and that's the way it is in anything."

But Martin's continuous practice paid off in dividends. In fact, Hemingway Corner's music has spanned the seven seas to settle in far flung lands. "A friend was in Amsterdam [Holland] and there was some guy busking, playing 'Man on a Mission.' Somehow the music found its way over there. To me that was bigger than a lot of the industry stuff," he said.

Although Martin vehemently expresses his enthusiasm for the band and their accomplishments, he follows a simple philosophy: "Just work really hard and enjoy yourself and let the results kind of take care of themselves." And if Martin's words, talent and sincerity serve any indication, the results should definitely culminate favourably for Hemingway Corner.

COMPETITION TIME!!!!

This week we have a couple of CDs to give away, thanks to our good friends at Sony Music. You can pick up either the soundtrack to the movie 'Strange Days', or Big Audio Dynamite's greatest hits. Take your pick. The question is: **Who performs a PJ Harvey song in the movie 'Strange Days'?** Get your answers into The Brunswickan office (Rm. 35 in the SUB) by midnight on Tuesday and you could win!!! Last week's winner was M-K Whitney, with the consolation prize going to Andre Theriault.

Gypsies & Lovers: An evening with the Irish Decendents

by Murray Thorpe
Brunswickan Entertainment

"A mystical beauty that draws you onward" and "a few fleeting notes of a haunting melody", quotes taken from Carvell Fenton's description of a Scottish Evening with Natalie MacMaster, are appropriate descriptions of some of the Irish Descendants' music. With the eerie sound of the flute and drums in their song, 'The Rollin' Of The Sea', the impression was left that the crashing waves on the rocky shores of Newfoundland were just feet (sorry, metres) away. The Irish Descendants sing traditional Irish songs as well as a mixture of songs about the fishery, whales and their home province of Newfoundland.

The audience, at the Imperial Theatre in Saint John, was of all ages and were quite happy to clap and sing along with the band throughout the evening. The deep harmonizing sounds of Con O'Brien and D'Arcy Broderick were impressive. Unlike many football stadium or hockey rink venues, the acoustics here was outstanding. It was a pleasant change to hear "home stereo" quality sound at a concert.

I was sitting in the sixth row orchestra level and the drums and the Bodhran seemed to come from in behind me. The Irish Descendants played songs about the loss of the fishery as well as the demise of the leviathan but they, on occasion, lightened the mood with comical songs including a tribute to Elvis. Con O'Brien dressed up as Elvis in his later years. The Band poked fun at their own girth and were apologetic that their workout video was all sold out. I think they called it, "The twenty second workout." For one of the encores, they played 'The Rattling Bog', which they called a song for the kids, themselves included.

The members of the band are from Newfoundland. D'Arcy and brother, Gerard Broderick, are from Bay de Verde, the lead singer, Con O'Brien is from Placentia, Ronnie Power is from Bay Bulls while Larry Martin and Kathy Phippard are from Grates Cove. D'Arcy, who plays the fiddle, banjo, bouzouki, guitar, mandola and the most recent addition, the accordion, says that he grew up playing at least three hours a day in the kitchen with his family. He used to practise by carrying an instrument with him to every room in the house. Now that he has a three year old, it is hard to practise at home. The next instrument

to be added to their repertoire is the piano accordion played by Kathy. She currently plays the keyboards and the flute, sometimes, at the same time. The bass guitar and the tin whistle are the remaining instruments used by the band at this concert.

The band has been together for over 5 years and has produced three albums. The first one, *Misty Morning Shore* is no longer available because the band switched recording companies for their second album, *Look to the Sea*. They released their third album, *Gypsies & Lovers*, just over a year ago in Ireland. When asked which artists inspire him, D'Arcy replied Christy Moore and the Irish Rovers. During the concert, the band praises Stan Rogers as well as mentioning that they cover a Donovan Leitch (of 'Mellow Yellow' fame) song, 'Catch The Wind'.

They are currently on a Canadian tour since the middle of October up until December. After finishing their tour in the Maritimes they will head out West all the way to B.C. The band does 200 to 250 days on the road a year. Once on the road, they usually play every night.

When asked about relaxing with a beer after a show, D'Arcy Broderick said, "when you are on the road, you do not relax unless you have a night off. It gets more hectic as we go along. The more tours you do, the more albums you produce, the more the demand there is. But that is a sacrifice you have to make. We all knew what we were getting into when we did it at the beginning with this group. That's what we wanted to do... It levels out."

The Irish Descendants plan another 60 to 70 day Canadian tour in the New Year before heading to Australia, New Zealand and Japan this spring. Whether they play at the Playhouse or not will depend on the demand. Their only concert performances in New Brunswick this time around were in Moncton and Saint John. D'Arcy summed up the group's spirit when he said, "We always have a good time wherever we go." The next time you hear a Newfoundland tourism commercial, it may be the Irish Descendants singing, "The far east of the western world." If you missed them in Saint John, you may be able to hear them, in the near future, on CBC radio, hosted by Natalie MacMaster.

