

From Vancouver to Halifax...

"Roots" a strong hit at Pub Flamingo

by Jenn Beck

When Roots Round-up played the Flamingo Thursday, October 18, The Gazette was there in a smoky backstage room to interview them. The individual comments of the band members: Gregory Hathaway, Dym E. Tree, Keith Rose, Barry Taylor, have been condensed under the abbreviation "Roots".

Gaz: *Being on the road as much as you are, your homelife must suffer — or do you really have a home life?*

"We're not limited in any way."

Roots: I hope so. We tour quite a bit, about twice a year, and we constantly do stuff in and around Vancouver, but yeah, we all have homes, sometimes their location fluctuates, but we're based out of Vancouver and that's where we call home. Right now our home is our brand-new van.

Gaz: *How is the Halifax leg of your tour going?*

Roots: Last time we did Halifax it went over really well, and the response we got was totally overwhelming, with people sweating and dancing all over the place. The Flamingo has wanted to get us back a few times since but the problem was getting us out here — we were here a year and a half ago, and now we're hearing good stories, that people are looking forward to seeing us again. It's nice, when you've been touring and land-locked, to get to another coast and smell the difference in the air — it's cleaner, like home.

Gaz: *Your style really defies labeling, it's been called everything from reggae and ska to funk, blues, and folk. Has this been a help or a hindrance for you?*

Roots: To the audience it's been a help, it goes over really great all over the country. It's just the music we love to play, but I know what you are saying, because as far as the record companies are concerned it has been a hindrance. They can't figure out how to slot us, or how to market us to a specific target audience. We're not really worried about that because we're just playing the music we love to play. A lot of bands can only get away with playing live once every two months, they've got such a limited

crowd, but we've got so many different types of people coming to see us.

Gaz: *Has that evolved into the most important thing then, the touring and the audience having fun?*



Diverse and creative: Roots Round-up from Vancouver

Roots: Oh, yeah. Sure. That's definitely it for us. I mean, we're still working on the studio thing, wanting to get it down really well, but touring and playing for different audiences is what it's really about for us.

Gaz: *It would be severely limiting, then, to stick yourself with just one label.*

Roots: Oh, yeah. No way would we do that. Unless it were the "fun" label or the "Dancing" label. And then there's the "sweaty" label. That's the great thing about Roots Round-up: we're not limited in any way. I mean, we play a heavy metal song, we play funk songs, and it's all original. Skate-punk songs, thrash and ska, mellow reggae, blues, you name it. And we can go anywhere with it: swing, jazz, we're not limited in any way. The audience loves that, and we love it, and

Gaz: *There has been so much change in Roots Round-up over the past two years. Have the line-up changes been the force behind the major changes in your sound?*

"It's been a slow growth and a long road."

Roots: The different people have influenced our sound all along. We started out with an acoustic guitar and a single snare drum played with brushes — we were totally folk style. As we got more players, they brought in their different influences. We had one guitarist who was deep into country, another more

influenced by African music, and now we have Keith Rose on bass, and that's just about it for us, to have a guy who shreds on bass. Each of our musical influences is different, and that shows up in our music.

still apply?

Roots: Yes. Staying close to our roots allows each of us to reach all kinds of people, and that allows us to play in all kinds of places. And that's roots in itself.

The name still applies because all the songs we play are based on and originate in our musical roots. They all show the personal appreciation for our roots. We play reggae and ska and funk and that's all our youthful appreciation, and then there are the deeper, older roots like for the originators: Jimmy Read, Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard...

Gaz: *With all these combined influences, your target must be really broad.*

Roots: Oh, for sure. It's different every night — it's really amazing. We do a lot of small community shows on the West coast, these little island communities, and the whole island shows up with grandparents and kids, and all of them dance. In fact, we just did a show in Sydney and the older people were the only ones who danced.

Gaz: *So what's next for Roots Round-up?*

Roots: We love playing in the band, but a record deal would be nice. So would making a bit more money. I mean, it's not really a struggle, it doesn't cost us to play in the band, but we'd like to make a living off it. Build up a good following, pay the rent and have a good time doing it. Maybe get some roadies.

GRADUATION PORTRAITS

The contract for DAL PHAROS Yearbook Graduation Portraits has been awarded to Robert Calnen, Master Photographer of Halifax.

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HALLOW'S EVE PARTY

Oct 31st Wednesday \$3 A celebration of witchcraft, goblins and spoiled pumpkins, featuring some of Halifax's finest independent artists: No Damn Fears, Avacost, Earthwitch, Jeremy Robinson, Roland Blinn and others. Best costume, as judged by TED, wins a three month pass to the Flamingo.

COMING UP: Nfld's FIGGY DUFF (NOV 1st-3rd)

\$2 Tuesdays - Local Music Night beginning Nov 6th 8pm
barrington at salter • entertainment 420-1051 • food service 12-2:30pm & 5-10pm

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