

Jonathan Edwards

Warm music and good friends



by Cheryl Downton

Thawing out an audience is not an easy task; defrosting frozen bodies in the wee hours of the morning takes a special knack. Fortunately the Edwards combination was equal to the task and even the most frostbitten and soggy melted at a touch.

Jonathan Edwards is not a new face to Halifax audiences, and it's not likely he'll fade from view for many a year. His latest concert at

the Cohn was all one could wish for—polished, yet wrapped up in so much warmth and good feelings. Edwards is a man who shares his family, his friends, and even his dog, through a combination of music and musicians. He does backup for his wife Carolina, and she for him. They both play with the same musicians, exuding the closeness they all seem to feel for each other. Even excellent musicians can come together to a finer degree if

there is that extra something—a oneness.

Wife Carolina did the opening set, and one was truly amazed at the refreshing quality of that voice. It's the 'live' concerts which give the lie to the recorded sound, but there was no disappointment. She doesn't sound like anyone else—a realization as pleasing as her songs: **New Sun** ("to warm you up"); **Holiness** ("graceful rock music is what we do"); **Shipwrecked** (the listening audience is responsible for the jungle noise sequence); **Rainbow Reign**—Rainbow reign is falling / and I thought I heard you calling / out my name / could I believe again / .

As could only be expected, she concluded the set with **Nova Scotia**—the song which established her as a talented solo performer.

Another super talent who really excelled throughout the concert was keyboard virtuoso Kenny White. White could have easily upstaged his fellow musicians but was content to remain part of the entire effort, although his brilliance is undeniable.

During the intermission the audience was bombarded with the recorded voice of Linda Ronstadt and her **Simple Dreams** lp; probably in an unusual attempt to keep everyone awake and ready for the second set. It was worth the wait.

Jonathan Edwards is a true musician in every sense of the word. He plays excellent harmonica, polished guitar, and has a clear singing voice which remains unaffected despite varying degrees of success in the recording industry. It is again the 'live' performance where he comes into his own. He has an enviable rapport with his listeners, and seems to respond to every mood. The musical offering was a little bit of all things: **Honky Tonk Stardust Cowboy** brought out the ham; **Don't Cry Blue** and **Athens County** had hands clapping and feet stomping; **Sunshine** brought back memories; a new selection **Show Me**, accompanied

by excellent oral accordion, is worth the price of an album on its own merits; **Cold Snow** was the song of the weather hour—"The sky is shining white my love / to cover all the ground"; the smash hit **Carolina Caroline**—"I love you" set to music.

Unable to ignore the frenzied chants of 'play' 'play' 'play', the weary Edwards entourage returned for a very unwary rendition of **When the Roll is Called Up Yonder**, and sent one and all off into the blizzard outside, warned that "We'll see you all right up there."



Star Wars

Saturday night a friend and I set out on an evening of mellow film-watching. The evening began with **The Marx Brothers Go West**, the 1940 production in which Groucho tells Lulu Belle "Oh, I didn't recognize you standing up", and in which Harpo hones an axe on a railway car wheel. It made me think of "A Day At The Races", a Marx Brothers classic set in contemporary times, and a film which has a lot of music. Most of the music is trite (I think Groucho planned to have the music in his films as self-parody); but when the track stewards and their families get to boogieing behind the stables with Harpo and his licking stick—well (hot damn) that's fun.

We followed the Marx Brothers with two hours of jazz films at the National Film Board. Like the Marx Brothers, the jazz greats in this collection—**Fats Waller**, **Cab Calloway**, **Count Basie**, the fierce riff man **Benny Goodman**—were pictured in that specially mysterious world of black-and-white. Seeing these films, just spliced together, most of them commercially prepared for showing as shorts in theatres, was an intense historical trip. Calloway, in white tie and white tails, spinning like one of the Locker Dancers on Soul Train—in 1935. Totally liquid jitterbug and jive dance moves, accompanied by the hard saxophone of Coleman Hawkins—in 1960, the dancers being a doorman and waiter in a New York club. You should have seen that—that was people boogieing.

No Dancin'

Saturday evening ended. I was watching people trying to get some boogieing done at a disco here on campus. Not even enough room on the dance floor to fart, let alone dance. Music on the \$10,000 JBL sound system that was outrageous: the disco version of the Beatles. Not just one hit by the Beatles. Every song I ever heard by them, right down to "I Want You So Bad". A medley: each excerpt 20seconds.

It is possible that like the Piccadilly, this disco was programming anything but funky music so that it would not attract a black audience. The Pic seems to do this every few months. But the irony of it, after seeing those films; the thought of such stupidity . . . I remember saying to myself at this disco: "God—this is real life." The films were history.

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