

# Harmonica man at the Cohn

by Peter Moore

Those who went to the Cohn to see a rock concert Friday night must have been disappointed at first. No big set-up; no shiny drums or electric guitars; no light show. Just a few speakers and amplifiers and a couple of chairs. Without introduction Murray McLaughlin ambled onto the stage, followed only by his bass player, Dennis Pendrith.

I must admit that at this point even I was pessimistic. Could Murray alone entertain an audience whom he had spoiled a year ago with the hard rock harmony of the Silver Tractors?

He could, and he did.

He started off slowly, with an old favourite, "Farmer's Song". This brought back memories of his '74 concert when Murray sang songs that started toes tapping in all generations. He was a simple Canadian folk singer then, and that's what we saw again Friday night.

Stripped of his rock and roll frills, his true talent was on display. With only his voice, harmonica, guitar and the accompanying bass he created a different mood with every song. In "Gypsy Boy" we rolled on the waves and dreamed of stowing away. In "Two Bit Nobody", we felt insignificant but free to laugh at "this fast life town".

Cold, wistful loneliness settled in as Murray and his other voice, that familiar harmonica, filled the Cohn with "So Far From You". Others in the same mood were "You Need a New Lover Now", "Lonely as You", and "Sweeping the Spotlight

Away", which was inspired by the great old clown, Emmitt Kelly.

In "Immigrant", he made our hearts ache for home with a slow, mellow tune that allowed us to realize the richness of his voice and appreciate what a graceful pianist he is.

Later on when we were all warmed up he answered the request for "Honky Red", a red-nosed raunchy drinkin' song. The theatrics in this and in 'Billy McDaniels' were a fun change of pace. And "Travelling Salesman" was great for laughs. And there were the free-spirited songs "Boulevard", and "Down by the Henry Moore" the ones that touch the part of us that longs to cut loose. This independent spirit is the most common theme in all of Murray McLaughlin's music. If it has a voice of its own, it is the howling and crying of that harmonica. It sings to us in almost every song, more like a voice than an instrument. It is his trademark; Murray McLaughlin really is Harmonica Man.

Presented with the task of taming and pleasing an impatient audience, and overcoming other obstacles such as poor technical management, he met the challenge and entertained us as the great folk singer he really is. The standing ovation that called him back to the stage was also begging for further appearances here at Dalhousie.

If I may quote his own song, "Harmonica Man - he will always live - ridin' that sky of blue."



In a recent concert in Halifax Murray McLaughlin returned to his roots and gave a performance par excellence.

## Students present ...

In the fall presentation of the popular Student Showcase Concert series, which will be held Monday, December 5, in the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium of the Dalhousie Arts Centre, at 8:30, there will be a broad representation of music from

Bach to Gershwin. The choice of repertoire shows vividly the wide interest of the Dalhousie Music Department students and includes works by Schuman, Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin as well as others.

## Bookfair at Acadia

by Sheena Masson

Writers and publishers from the Atlantic Region met in Wolfville last weekend to display their publications and discuss problems in publishing. The Atlantic Book Fair, sponsored and arranged by Alpha Magazine and attended by both book and magazine publishers. Writers including Helen Porter and Alden Nowlan gave readings during the day while in the lobby of the Acadia SUB, publishers such as Axiom and Germination displayed magazines and books.

During the afternoon, publishing problems in the Maritimes were discussed. The main problem, it was decided, is not a lack of publishers or writers, but a lack of editors. Maritime writers are submitting plenty of material but editors are needed to provide criticism and improve the work.

Another obvious problem is the difficulty new writers have getting published in the larger Maritime magazines. Smaller magazines exist on such writers but larger ones are generally unwilling to take a chance to give talented unknowns a 3 or 4

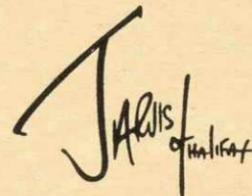
page spread. While the representative from Axiom did agree that Atlantic magazines should avoid local nostalgia, he did not answer the challenge to publish less commercially 'safe' writers.

It was also felt that the design of these publications needed improvement and should be presented with more confidence. Maritime literature lacks sufficient national appeal and it was thought that the rest of the country has not been shown a true picture of Maritime life.

The conclusion reached was that there is no one solution to any of these problems. Just as the various magazines aim at different markets so too the writers' material is suited to different audiences. It was agreed that some sort of Atlantic coordinating centre is needed for all aspects—writing, editing, publishing and marketing. A comprehensive list of Maritime publishers is currently being made and writers can obtain this and other information from the Writers Federation of Nova Scotia, located on the 4th floor SUB, Saint Mary's University, 423-8116.

Submissions are now being accepted for 'Skylight', a magazine of the arts to be published in the new year. All poetry, prose short stories and graphics are welcome. Submissions should be addressed to Sheena Masson or Scott Vaughan, c/o The Dalhousie Gazette, Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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