



## Rocking from the 70s to the 90s

BY ANIKA ADEKAYODE

This annual Halifax Experimental Music Festival came to Halifax this past weekend, digging up the sounds of the past and mixing them with the sounds of today in a musical experience that had to be heard.

Representing the 90s was The RF Input Trio, Andrew Duke, and Leon Dubinsky. Playing for the 70s — 80s was Sonic Messiah, Phollop Willing (P.A.), and Robert Myers. Performing for the 70s was Murphy's Law, recently back together again for one more show.

All of these musicians were packed into an old church hall along with 60 audience members, which contributed to the dimmed light ambiance. The music festival was held at the North Street Church on October 16, which coincidentally was the festival organizer's Birthday.

There were two rooms being occupied in the church that night, one providing free food from Soho Kitchen, the other for taking in performing acts.

It was a great experience, having only heard experimental music here and there. The originality and intensity of the first performance, The RF Input Trio, was completely astounding. I closed my eyes half way through the performance to experience the music and let the sounds flow through my body. The tunes began with a very soft sound as if a radio was being tuned manually by a semi-hearing impaired person.

The sound began to escalate in volume and as it did it felt like that hearing impaired person had also just turned on the television and was also surfing through the channels, and had turned on their computer and was playing some sort of action game, had and also turned on a cd player and was

skipping through song after song and finally was also in a crowded room with people talking. The group was composed of three musicians and they attempted to show their audience the world through sound. It was an excellent opening for the program.

The night continued with 10 minute intermissions in the lengthy program that had started half an hour late. Andrew Duke was the second performer dazzling the crowd with a ghostly, rhythmic sound. His music held some characteristics of the first performance, but became all its own when I heard Darth Vader breathing, Star Trek Voyager travelling at warp speed, and what were possibly the sounds of demons passing through some unfortunate soul.

I closed my eyes, feeling like the little girl in the movie *The Exorcist*. All of a sudden, I heard a hospital machine flat line and I felt like I could hear myself dying. It was truly a mind shattering experience. The music then

became very intense at which point a lanky guy in a Mad Hatter hat got up and began to dance, shortly after his friend joined him. We knew it was over when Andrew Duke said, "C'est tout".

The third performer, Leon Dubinsky, who wrote the song "Rise Again" for the Rankins, rocked us with three songs on guitar. The first piece was a dedication to Phil Walling, the evening's organizer, for his Birthday. The second a song dedicated to Neil Young called "Neil's Real" which was accompanied by a female tap dancer, and the third called "Ellen", written for a little girl.

Following this, Sonic Messiah appeared, consisting of four guys and their instruments.

The exciting aspect of this performance was the unique personification of the songs in the form of a mask, worn by an extra. The first two songs were "Big Foot Boy" and "The Story of Joey Junkane" with an interesting choice of lyrics — some of which

were "They tried to ban playing, they were anti-fun!" and "Is there no end to progress???"

Their song "Rhino Girl" also teased the audience with lyrics such as "She's my horn headed honey, she's my Rhino Girl" and "Hanging with Benji, Lassie, and Flipper by the pool." The song "Robot Squirrel" featured another personified mask that repeatedly said "Robot Squirrel." The band ended with a

truck driver song and prayer, which furthered to delight the crowd.

This has reportedly been Sonic Messiah second show since 1995, and they have four releases. Sadly, I missed the last performances, but Murphy's Law were so amazing that they were asked to do an encore. The show ended at 1:30 p.m., but music like this will never end — it will live in my mind forever.

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