

GATORADE AND NACHO CHIPS- PIGFARM ON THE ROAD

by Stephen Mason

To be honest, when I first heard of Pigfarm, hyped as "a cross between the Barenaked Ladies and Sloan," I was a little skeptical. Who wouldn't be? But then I heard Pigfarm, and ended up being more impressed by this alternative (but non-grunge!) band than I ever would have imagined.

If you haven't hear of Pigfarm before, you're certainly not alone. But chances are you will hear of them soon. Their popularity is fast growing, and with a new album, a new video and a Maritime tour, this name is destined to become a household word, or at least a campus word.

John DesLauriers, the bassist/back-up vocalist of the band, told me right off that Pigfarm is in no way a new band. In fact, they originally formed in 1986, taking their name from a piece of graffiti scrawled on the wall of a pig slaughterhouse in Toronto (home city of the band). They have not, however, been a constant presence in the music scene. They released the 1988 album "Hold Your Nose," and then promptly broke up the following year. The reason? "We were really frustrated... there was really no interest in our kind of music at that point." DesLauriers went off to play base for the Doughboys, while Adam Faux (lead vocalist/guitarist) joined up with the Lost Dakotas.

Separation lasted until 1992, when—feeling the need for greater musical freedom—Faux and DesLauriers decided to reunite, bringing on new member Mike Philip Wajewoda as the drummer/back-up vocalist.

The new lineup released the album *Plug* (Independent) in 1993. DesLauriers describes the focus of the album as "getting demons out... realizing we're not teenagers anymore and just becoming more adult." The first single, "Midas I'd Be," has been made into a video,

which plays a regular rotation on Much Music. It's a great song, full of infectious melodies and feet-moving rhythms—one of the definite high points on the album. However, DesLauriers admits that he did not enjoy the video experience, and hopes in the future to find someone "who has got a concept of their own, has got all their own ideas—a real video artist. I'd like to get a song over to them. Performance stuff is crap to me, it just doesn't make any sense."

DesLauriers laughed when I brought up the Barenaked Ladies/Sloan comparison. It isn't his description of Pigfarm's sound, and he doesn't necessarily agree with it. "We all come from the same influences, and certain characteristics are similar with us and other



bands, but I'd say start with Barenaked Ladies and Sloan then I'd go another, you know, fifteen to twenty bands beside that, to get any idea of what we're about."

And who are those influences? DesLauriers cites mainly American punk rock bands such as the Replacements for excitement and energy. However, he also says that pop icons such as Elvis Costello, the Pretenders and even the Beatles all factor into the sound of the band. He acknowledges that punk rock holds less of an influence over the band now than it originally did in the eighties.

DesLauriers spoke to me just shortly before leaving on a Maritime tour that will include Sydney, Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton and perhaps Saint John. They'll be in Fredericton tonight, play-

ing at the Attic downtown. It will be their second performance here in the capital, the first being in August, at the same location.

DesLauriers is ambivalent about the touring life. Back in 1989, while touring in the U.S., they had a hard go of it. "We'd make maybe fifty, sixty bucks a night, and sometimes you'd have to go like four, five nights without shoes, so it was like drinking Gatorade and eating Nacho chips." Now, things are a little better. Although he confesses to missing his wife while on tour, he also enjoys being out and around, earning enough money to eat well. All Pigfarm members agree, though, that three to four weeks is long enough, so their tours are short and concentrated.

A few quick comments on *Plug*. It's a thoroughly enjoyable album with many bright spots. The harmonies of all three members resound throughout, and the tunes are singable and likeable. A couple of songs, however, have a tendency to ramble on without any real focus or binding force, and this can be quite distracting at times. As well, sometimes the lyrics enter the cheesy rhyme zone with line like "And let's pretend you take a trip / It's really long cause you're so hip" (cringe). But onto the whole, the impression I was left with was a good, solid album that can easily stand on its own in the Canadian Music Industry which DesLauriers feels strongly about: "Canadian music, in general, is probably the best music in the world because it draws so much on American influences but can keep the ironic distance that good music needs. Unfortunately, Canadians can't seem to support it."

Well, UNB, here's your chance. Support Pigfarm by attending what is sure to be a great concert at the Attic tonight, and maybe even buy an album. It's a good investment.

Lesbian Feminist Reads in Fredericton

by Carla Lam

Makeda Silvera, Jamaican-Canadian lesbian writer, reached the end of her Canada wide tour in the provincial capital last Friday reading at STU's new Black Box Theatre. It was a brief reading consisting of only two short stories from her second collection of short fiction *Her Head A Village*. The remainder of the approximately two hour gathering was devoted to the entertainment of questions. This was taken advantage of by the small but personal, almost entirely female audience. It is no doubt that the author is accustomed to questions with honest ease—one of the many qualities present in her written material. She prefaced her readings with a subtle warning of the unconventionality of her writing, clarifying that "literature should push the boundaries [of society]." The pieces she chose for the evening, "Hush Chile, Hush," and "Her Head A Village," reflect Silvera's social concerns. The former condemns the silencing "law of society" that enforces conformity allegorically via a mother's refusal to acknowledge a child's nightmares; the latter concerns the conflicting voices in the head of a black/woman/lesbian/writer. The lyrical dialogue in her work—written in Jamaican slang and set to the rhythmic, smooth motion of her voice—

gave it a tropical authenticity reminiscent of an exotic vacation. But there is a seriousness envisioned in her words; a cause and a purpose. A strong woman, the Toronto-based author who immigrated to Canada in 1967 at age 13, Silvera is a voice for every essence of her being: a human, a woman, a lesbian, a writer, an immigrant. As such, she spikes her stories with a profound understanding of hardships blending

"humour, anger and sadness as seamlessly as she slides between standard English narration and the colloquial speech of Jamaica." Silvera, growing up in Canada, and prompted by the discovery—that there were no books around to which she could relate, realized that "[she] would have to create them." She became active in Canadian publishing, "as a former

collective member of the feminist quarterly *Fireweed*, and as co-founder of *Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press*—where she is managing editor. She went on to produce *Silenced*—an acclaimed collection of oral histories of Caribbean domestic workers in Canada; *Growing Up Black*—a resource guide for youth and *Remembering G and other stories*—her first book of fiction. Silvera also edited numerous anthologies including *Piece of my Heart*—an anthology of writing by lesbians of colour.



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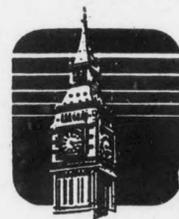
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