

# Halifax duo display unique style

by donalee moulton

For the last four years Dave Hayes and Steve Feuer have lived in Halifax surviving off the money made from a few paying performances. Recently back in Toronto, in an attempt to build a larger following and earn more money, they have decided to leave Halifax for a permanent residence there.

Feuer and Hayes are known locally for their unique style of

music, inaptly described as a blend of folk, blues, and jazz. They believe very firmly in themselves and folk music, telling the *Gazette* that, "There's got to be a folk revival before 1984 because right now folk music is dead" - one of the reasons its so hard to find jobs, along with the fact that few, if any, exist in Halifax.

Their biggest performance occurred recently at the Cohn when they played backup to Jessie Winchester. Although a big break, it was not a successful one with respect to audience appreciation but much of their failure was not their fault.

They never saw the advertising that supposedly exists, they were promised sound monitors only to be told 90 seconds before performing that there would be none. But they admit they were novices and did not have the expertise to perform a polished set. The Cohn did not have the class to even introduce the duo and they felt it was not their responsibility which left the audience wondering who was on stage a serious drawback for any performer trying to build a reputation. Feuer and Hayes were nervous and this nervousness came across, as they said, "We were just not ourselves, when we play bars or coffee houses we're really loose but we were so nervous. There was alot of hype but it wasn't our kind of hype."

But the concert was not a total disaster. Winchester's agents John and Jo-anne Smale are considering taking on Feuer and Hayes, one of the reasons for the move to Toronto.

Feuer and Hayes have played every possible place available in Halifax. This not only includes coffee houses and bars but radio stations, gallery openings, and some concerts. They say that 7 out of 10 performances are done for free, another one of the major reasons for the move to T.O. Although they told the *Gazette* that the money was not better there, they always have a job and a regular salary to depend on.

Feuer and Hayes live solely off their music, a living which has been troublesome and frustrating but they consider themselves fine musicians and with time and effort will reach their goal of playing to large audiences concert style with a backup group of "superior musicians" behind them.

Both write music and their



Locals Feuer and Hayes are off to Toronto permanently.

performances include only their own material. Their music is singular in a positive vein. The *Gazette* listened to two of their tapes and found them to be a singular and totally enjoyable musical experience a far cry from their appearance with Winchester. Steve says of their music, "the chords that we use are not very common in what you'd consider folk music, more a folk jazz music." What they need now is not a musical improvement but, "...ex-

posure, playing a lot more, and getting through to people."

Unfortunately for metro Feuer and Hayes do not intend to return to Halifax unless it is for a short visit. There's no opportunity here and they feel they've achieved as much here as is possible without "killing" themselves. Both of them have the talent, the energy, and the ambition to reach their goals. Here's hoping Toronto gives them the opportunity Halifax didn't.

## Cockburn's folk music metaphor of greatness

by donalee moulton

Two performances, a half filled auditorium, one guitar, and one lone singer, - these were the features that marked Bruce Cockburn's third visit to Halifax in as many years.

Cockburn, "the artist without a label," has done little to revise his show structurally in three years. He still performs alone, just a man and music. On stage Cockburn is an icon and the pagans rave. His music has become a metaphor for greatness and a comparison base for other folk singers and critics.

Cockburn represents music qua music. There is no attempt at gimmickry, there is not even a back-up band. But this is Cockburn and this is the return to music for music minus the flash, the noise and often, the meaninglessness.

Reactions to Cockburn concert vary from boredom to elation. Cockburn is a performer who has the arrogance not to amuse, barely to interact while simultaneously presenting his audience with a grade of music that has won him more blue ribbons than any other Canadian folk star today. What Cockburn gives is music, not Cockburn.

The transition from last year's

concert to this year's has shown marked improvement. There is less time spent tuning between songs, there is more interaction with the audience, and there is a seemingly more relaxed, more confident performer. But even with all these inconveniences, Cockburn was and still is a hit. His rapport with the audience is gained instantly through their appreciation of the music... Many fans prefer to listen to his albums rather than seeing him live and that is because Cockburn is not entertaining; he is a musician-singer who performs his music on stage. Often this leads to boredom although it does not lead to a reduction in appreciation.

For the first time in three years Cockburn did not play to a full house on either night. This is probably a result of bad booking, overpriced tickets and, somewhat, to Cockburn's concept of a Bruce Cockburn concert.

Since his birth as a folk singer, Cockburn has strived for the recognition he has now attained. He is "good" because his music is "good" and not because he puts on a show for his audience. For the most part his audiences apparently don't mind.

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