

ENTERTAINMENT

...music...films...exhibitions...theatre...arts...

Live music: As you like it

From left: California's 1000 Mona Lisas entertained the crowd at Rye's Deli last Tuesday; up-and-coming Molly's Reach, from Edmonton, drew applause for their set at the same show; Fredericton's own Stokom Sisters played many covers and some original material down at The Cellar last weekend.



DREW GILBERT PHOTO

ADAM ARGRAVES PHOTO

Acquisitions on display



DREW GILBERT PHOTO

"ITALIAN AND MEXICAN": One of the pieces highlighting the Acquisitions 1995-1996 exhibit.

JETHILO E. CABILTE

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

This month the UNB Art Centre presents a collection of works entitled *New Brunswick Art Bank Acquisitions 1995-1996*. This exhibition displays a selection of past and recent artworks collected by the New Brunswick Art Bank. *Acquisitions 1995-1996* is intended to publicize the selection of pieces chosen from this year's juried discourse for the Art Bank. Overall, seventeen artists have had their pieces chosen for this collection, and a comparative selection of previous Art Bank acquisitions has been presented in conjunction with this year's selections.

The Art Bank is dedicated to the preservation and presentation of New Brunswick art and artists. Established in 1968, the current collection

houses over five hundred works representing two hundred artists. This massive collection is available on loan and has been displayed in public areas, government institutions and various exhibitions in New Brunswick and beyond. The jury system was created in 1990 and is made up of a selection of approved jurors by the New Brunswick Arts Board, artists and arts organizations. The group of three panelists involves two visual artists and either an art historian or curator. Selections are chosen every two years with a new jury appointed biennially. The *New Brunswick Art Bank Acquisitions 1995-1996* displays some beautiful and fascinating artwork by established or new artists. The seventeen works from the 1996 acquisitions artists in the East Gallery provide some wonderful selections of classical and modern artistic styles. The pieces provide a rich

counterpoint to each other in their respective merits. For instance, the massive and complex structure of Jacques Arseneault's *Italian and Mexican* presents interesting multimedia workmanship. Yet the simple but detailed piece by Suzanne Hill entitled *Denial* is in stark contrast to Arseneault's work. In another comparison, M. C. Parker Hunter's *Regeneration* is a colourful and restive painting; a dissimilar style to Brigitte Roy's dark and spirited *Cycle Salin*. Other talented artists include Rebecca Burke, Janice Wright Cheney, Francis Coutellier, Ray Cronin, Isabelle Devos, Mark Dixon, Linda Rae Dornan, Paul Healey, Louisa Barton Johnson, Sarah Maloney, Raymond Martin, Robert McLean and James Wilson.

In the West Gallery, *Acquisitions 1995-1996* provides an historical presentation from previously selected works. One can see the juristic styles that underscore the selection process between past jurors and the present committee. There are examples of some well-favoured pieces in this collection. The works by Molly Lamb Bobak (*The Legislature*), Brigid Toole Grant (*Sasha's Garden*) and Claude Gauvin (*Autobiographie*) provide a wide range of media representation, from colourful to minimalist, detailed to simplistic. Again there is the presentation of classical and modernistic art styles, yet there are subtle differences in the past and present selections. The 1995-1996 pieces present some differences in art media that have not been represented in the West Gallery's selection. The photographic media represented by the ensemble by Robert McLean and James Hooper is not a part of the previously chosen pieces. By the same token, the sculptural process represented by Ned Bear and Kathy Hooper are missing in the East Gallery's display. Nevertheless, the Art Bank has selected a fine example of New Brunswick art that will be enjoyed in the years to come. For those who wish to see this exhibition, it runs from November 4 - November 24, 1996.

Gowan gearing up for F'ton

PETER J. CULLEN

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

Larry Gowan makes his return to Fredericton, playing *The Dock* almost exactly one year after his last performance here. During his last visit, despite the naysayers and critics that stated Gowan was past his prime, the Canadian rock legend surprised some and pleased all who attended the performance.

But this time he's in his own. Aside from his road crew and piano, Gowan is travelling solo this time out.

"The audience seems very into it," he says during a phone interview before a soundcheck in Quebec. "When we first started doing these solo shows I didn't think it would be something people would be able to hang on to for an entire evening. ... I really think there's something out there and you just don't want to question it."

Still promoting last year's *The Good Catches Up* album, Gowan maintains his focus on the song writing aspect that has enabled him to secure the high profile he wields in the Canadian music industry. "It's certainly more of a singer/song writer approach when you hear the live shows. Most songs are originally formed on one instrument ... [and] for me it's enjoyable because I get to rediscover where the song came from and re-live what it sounded like before I played it for anyone else."

Gowan's image hasn't been prominent on video stations like it was when songs like "A Criminal Mind," "Strange Animal" and "Moonlight Desires" were released, but that's only a sign of Gowan's maturation process and intense focus on song

writing as of recent years. "Videos have become much less of a factor in putting the music across. I'm pleased with how those [songs and videos in the '80s] were done and I'm still very pleased with that period. That's why I don't feel bad about playing those older songs at my shows."

However, Gowan is planning to unveil those older songs again — and some new ones — on an upcoming greatest hits album. "That looks like it's going to happen next year. Probably just before the summer," he says. While the music hasn't been selected for that album just yet, Gowan also has another project in the works.

"Well, right now we're recording the solo shows so I'm probably going to put out a live record of the solo performances. They really seem to have a really big flavour to them."

Continuing on about his live exhibitions, he adds that "the show is very spontaneous and it spans the last 11 years of music for me, and it keeps jumping back and forth between the past and the present. Plus I've been able to play a couple of the influential songs that have come along and shaped the kind of music that I do. I get a chance to play some other people's music at the show that I normally wouldn't get to do with a band."

In addition to travelling throughout Canada on his solo set, Gowan is also scheduled to tour throughout Egypt, Israel, Croatia and even Bosnia during the month of December. "I'm anxious to get started on it, but at the same time a couple of places that we're going into will be pretty

dangerous. I have a little bit of concern, but that's always a minor detail. I think it should be a great experience."

Despite playing to crowds in excess of 100,000 at certain festivals this past summer, Gowan admits he is looking forward to seeing small town Fredericton again. "Last year was tremendous. [Playing a bar] is the smallest place I get a chance to play, but I like the audience. I remember playing there last year and I remember how the audience reacted. I'm looking forward to getting back there. Fredericton's been a good town for me."



The Big Sugar rush

PETER J. CULLEN

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

Big Sugar seem much more content nowadays. They've settled in with A&M Records after communication breakdowns with their former record label, and now the band has recently released *Hemi-Vision*, blending rock, blues and reggae in the audibly delicious manner that Big Sugar does so well. With the lead-off single "Diggin' a Hole" charting well on MuchMusic, the band itself is hellbent on promoting their project. Especially the ever-popular frontman, Gordie Johnson.

Johnson doesn't hesitate to express how his latest album sounds: "Rock. No doubt," he says in a quick, clipped fashion. He hesitates, then slowly contemplates what he has said. "Well, it's not really straight out rock. If you think of it that way, you sort of think of AC/DC or Aerosmith. But we're pretty much straight out," he continues in a pleasant tone. "You could call it anything, really. ... If you look at the Rolling Stones, you could call them blues, you could call it country, you could even call it disco. Even Led Zeppelin was blues and weird celtic stuff. ... [But] ourselves, we've got the elements of blues and reggae."

Johnson sort of drifts off as he discusses the band's sound, but he firmly asserts that he's very happy with *Hemi-Vision* and the present formation of his band. Accompanying musicians would play for Johnson one day but then he would seemingly replace them in the blink of an eye. Until now, that is.

Kelly Hoppe (harp, sax, melodica) first began with Johnson in a blues band, while renowned

loves his music and he loves it loud. Observing acts such as Rush, Queen and KISS in concert influenced his decision to glue the volume knob at 10. "These people played super loud to crowds of 30,000 people, and I thought that's how it was supposed to be done. Recently, bands will play mostly small clubs, so that thing has pared down. In the last 10 years, people snub arena rock, but that's where it's at for me."

Above all else, Johnson believes in quality, especially in regards to his music. "Great sound with shabby lyrics just amounts to nothing. Great poetry without the music — nothing. I just let the songs happen. If I feel that strongly about something it's just going to come to the surface. ... It's all gotta work together."

Hemi-Vision took four months to complete, a statistic that displays the diligence Johnson and the band put into their work to create a product worth buying. "The record company wants us to get people to the show [in order] to sell records, but we're the opposite; we want to sell the records to get them to coming to the show."

However, Johnson's belief in quality extends far beyond the music. Aside from their eclectic musical sounds, Big Sugar also stand apart because of their attitude. And Johnson's attitude towards classiness, in general, is noteworthy. "Look, I don't say in dumps. I mean, you're bringing me to your city. I love to play. I do it for a living for money. I've been doing it since I was a kid. Don't ask me to do an amateur level. I'm doing you a favour playing your venue. ... I mean, where can I iron a Hugo Boss suit in a reach motel?"

But Johnson doesn't consider himself "above it all"; it's merely his professional attitude speaking.

BIG SUGAR (l-r): Garry Lowe, Kelly Hoppe, Gordie Johnson, Paul Brennan.

"I sweat all that I can sweat."

— Gordie Johnson

bassist Garry Lowe and former Odds drummer, Paul Brennan, establish themselves as permanent fixtures in Big Sugar. "I had always hired guys on before, always striving for perfection," Johnson states. "[But this album] is definitely more band-oriented. The four of us have been together for about a year, and now we're much more a unit."

Johnson says the writing process for *Hemi-Vision* didn't differ much from previous works — apparently he still sits in the driver's seat. "The songs come pretty complete. I do them on an acoustic guitar, then I electrify it. I might get Paul to do this, or do that thing that you do, or else I'll get Garry to do that thing you did at sound check. I incorporate what I know they can do into the song."

Johnson also wants to make the point that he

"I dress for the stage. It's the whole stage appearance. I shine my shoes, just the same as I would tune my guitar. I do what I can, y'know. I can't sweat more than I can sweat."

Not all bands possess the workhorse ethic of Big Sugar, either. "The main thing is recording, but the big deal then is touring, getting people to the concert," Johnson says. And he means it. While recently on the road for three weeks straight, the group took a breather for only one evening. "And I feel fine! There's no problem with my voice. I mean, what are we supposed to do [when we're not playing]? Sit in the hotel and watch *MuchMusic*? Our reps ask, 'Are you sure you know what you're doing?'"

Johnson pauses, then summarizes everything succinctly. "Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure."

KNOW WHERE TO GO?

ARTS

• Theatre UNB. Norm Foster's *The Sitter*, Nov. 23-25 and Jean Anouilh's *Episode in the Life of an Author* Nov. 21-23. 4 bucks for students, 5 for others.

• *The Trojan Women* at STU's Black Box Theatre, Nov. 19-23.

• The Beaverbrook Art Gallery
Jack Humphrey: *Compartmentalized Space*
Now - Jan 5/97

• *Saturated Fields: Colourfield Painting in the Permanent Collection*

Nov 9 - March 16/97

• *Exotic Foreign Locations*

Nov 9 - March 16/97

Info: 458-2024.

• *Exfoliation* at Gallery Connexion, Donna Nield. Now - Dec 15. Info: 454-1433.

• UNB/STU Creative Arts presents Toronto Dance Theatre at The Playhouse, Nov. 16, 8 pm, \$25 adults, \$15 students.

Capital Film Society presents Lone Star at Tilley Hall 102, Nov. 18, 8 pm, \$3 members, \$5 non-members.

MUSIC

• The Cellar presents Brent Mason, Nov. 15.

• The Dock:
Larry Gowan, Tonight.
Big Sugar, Nov. 21.

• Kelp Records and UNB Art Centre present Kirk McInerney and Jon Bartlett at Mem Hall (East Gallery), Today, 12:30 pm, FREE.

• PeaceDog Chris Colepaugh, Cosmic Crew and Simple Pleasures, Oddfellows Hall, corner of Brunswick and Carleton, Tonight, \$5, \$4 w/ non-perishable food item, 8 pm, ALL-AGES.