

THE BRUNS Entertainment

music books concerts theatre movies interviews exhibits television videogames

Ember Swift ignites sound

Indie pioneer performing at Cellar Monday

by Rachel Long

Ember Swift has something to say, whether it's dissing big corporations, fairy tales, or a friend who wouldn't pay a five-dollar cover to see her band. After six albums and five years successfully running her own label, Swift is fired up, but also firmly grounded.

She is currently touring Canada, promoting two new live albums, *The Wage is the Stage* and *Snapshots*.

Swift's music is eclectic, with influences from folk, punk and jazz, as well as world sounds from Asia to South America. She has a unique sound: every song is different and her recordings are impossible to tie to any one genre.

"I'm glad people have trouble categorizing [my music]," she told me from her office in Toronto. "It's becoming more and more acceptable that there is this mélange among the art, and I really like pushing the envelope...that's a really freeing part of the work."

Pushing the envelope she does, with her voice, playing, and writing, and even her choice of band members, who are also very diverse and talented. Lyndell Montgomery moves between violin and bass and woos audiences with her unique bowed guitar, which produces an eerie, middle-eastern sound. Michelle Josef, who joined the band a year ago, completes the synergy of the band on drums.

Swift has a down-to-earth attitude about her art and is not interested in



Suzy Malik / Special to The Brunswickan

mainstream media or fame.

"I don't want to be famous at all...I'm just a regular human being with a trade that is publicly related and artistically related." Swift's ideas are well thought out and she is true to personal beliefs and mottos such as "love what you do, and do what you love," as expressed in her song 'Corporate Daddy.'

This attitude is extended to the

operation of her label, Few'll Ignite Sound. Swift has strong feelings against ownership, and when asked if she intends to produce other musician's music, she stated "we are not interested in signing other acts because that insinuates that we own them in some way...I'm not interested in having any kind of ownership over anyone else's art."

Instead, Swift tries to provide her

knowledge as a "resource center" for other artists, to enable them to learn from her, and do it themselves.

Ember Swift is the real thing: talent, attitude, depth, and pure entertainment. You can read more about Ember Swift at www.emberswift.com.

Ember Swift will appear with the Painting Daisies at the Cellar on Monday, November 5th.

Arlibido: safe and sexy?

Halifax kids open for David Usher

by Jennifer Barth

Chatting with Arlibido is an experience in itself, especially just after a show while relaxing over drinks and funk music in the background. To quote another interview, these guys are, well, weird.

Arlibido has been together since 1997, when DJ Timmins and Tim MacNeill first started jamming together while attending Saint Mary's University in Halifax. They soon picked up bassist Jesse Fraser, and just recently added a fourth member, guitarist Shane Fraser.

Their first album, *safe 'n' sexy*, was self-produced in a small Halifax studio, which gave it a definite feeling of pent-up energy. Their follow-up, *All the world's America*, was done professionally, and though that aspect of their input was a little more restrained, the style of it can't be mistaken for anyone else. MacNeill's original vocal sound works perfectly with the talents of Shane Fraser on guitar and Timmins on drums, while Jesse Fraser just makes performing look so easy.

This last Saturday night they opened for David Usher at the SUB cafeteria. They had the crowd rocking long before Usher and friends even took the stage, and on the way out collected a few more fans. They joined up once more with David Usher Sunday night for a show in Moncton, and then went home for some well deserved rest.

Before they left Saturday, I ran into them down at The Cellar and asked a couple of questions about future plans and shows. Though unsure of the dates, they will be playing in Halifax next month and are beginning to focus on collecting ideas for their third album.

Along with this conversation were some pieces of advice well worth pondering the origins of.

When asked about the band playing at the time in The Cellar, Jesse replied convincingly, "These guys are worth \$25.00! I should never be given a pen when I'm drunk! I love you guys!" Tim, commenting on whether he thought the chicken or the egg came first, hesitated for a moment, then wrote firmly and steadily, "If I were an egg, I would have tried to come after the chicken, or the egg."

Painting Daisies set to capture Maritimes

by Zita Nyarady

They have conquered the Prairies and are setting out to capture the Maritimes. Watch out Fredericton, the award-winning Painting Daisies is coming to town.

Painting Daisies is an all girl indie-rock band ranging in ages from 20-30. Co-founders Daisy Blue-Groff and Rachelle Van Zanten established the Painting Daisies in 1995, and have since added bassist Carolyn Fortowsky and drummer Kim Gryba to evolve into a strong four-person rock ensemble. Blue-Groff describes their sound as "rock with a really big focus on songwriting and harmonies."

The girls recently released their second album, *Fortissimo*, an album with a definite rock feel, but with some folk and blues influences cleverly woven in. There is a song for everyone, from the angry rock of 'Walking Home Lately' to the blues-sounding 'Serpentine Diatribe' to the softer 'Beale Street.'

Painting Daisies has powerful and enticing lyrics that tackle issues from aging to body image. The musicianship is also equally excellent. These girls are talented at what they do.

Painting Daisies' most recent accomplishment was winning "Entertainers of the Year" at the 2001 Prairie Music Awards. The award is voted on solely by fans, which makes it quite an accomplishment considering their competition (namely Jane Arden and Smash Mouth).

The Daisies were ecstatic about winning this award. "We were up for four awards and felt we had to win at least one, but we were shocked and excited to win Entertainers of the Year," said Blue-Groff.

They have been touring almost non-stop around Canada and the States in their grey 1991 Chevy van, affectionately known as "Muffy the Highway Slayer," and will be pulling into Fredericton on Monday.

The girls are looking forward to their stops in the Maritimes, especially the opportunity to open for Ember Swift at The Cellar Monday. Don't miss it.

Ticked off

by Stefan Robak

Beginning as a little known small press comic, *The Tick* has gained a cartoon, a live action sitcom (beginning this Saturday) and a loyal cult following. *The Tick* is about an super-strong and super-goofy asylum inmate who decides (out of boredom) to become a super-hero and defend the little guy. The Tick, who has a penchant for long tirades full of bizarre metaphors and analogies, fights such bizarre and hilarious foes as Chairface Chippendale (a spoof of those deformed Dick Tracy villains), the Red Scare and the Ninja clan. Assisting the Tick is his pudgy little sidekick Arthur, an accountant who left his job in order to fulfill his desire for adventure.

One of the most appealing things about *The Tick* is its combination of bizarre humour and spoofing of the world of comics. In one his earliest adventures The Tick faces a particularly clueless band of Ninjas in a spoof of Frank Miller's classic run of *Daredevil*. In another classic tale The Tick and a Dick Tracy lookalike take on Chairface Chippendale, a crime boss with a chair for a face who lowers our heroes into a pit of man-eating alligators and cows. Luckily for our heroes the alligators have glutted themselves on the cows and no longer have an appetite. Also, the main characters never remove their costumes and wear the same things during mundane tasks like going to the laundromat or grocery shopping.

The Tick himself is an appealing character because of his gut-busting monologues and bizarre behavior. The Tick is an overly muscular and not too bright super-hero - he obviously isn't playing with a full deck (he uses a Viewmaster to look for evil), but is sadly The City's greatest hero. Other heroes include the Man Eating Cow (the

WORD BALLOONS



only one not eaten by the alligators who eats criminals). Oedipus (a very unfortunately named ninja girl), Running Guy (can run as fast as ten men) and Paul the Samurai (a samurai about as loopy as The Tick).

The Tick is a monstrosity funny comic that's a great read for anyone who loves weird humour. Be sure to check out The Tick when it premieres on Nov. 8 on Fox at 9:30, or check out the cartoon Sundays at 9:30 on Teletoon.

The Tick isn't the only superhero spoof worth noting. I suggest checking out the comic strip *Lethargic Lad*, about a poorly drawn superhero who only says "Um" and fights. You can check out his daily comic strip at www.lethargiclad.com. Also, you might want to try to find issues of *Flaming Carrot*, the adventures of a superhero who read to many comic books and went nuts. Oh, yeah, and he has a flaming carrot for a head.

Another stupid horror film

Thir13en Ghosts painful, ridiculous

by Stefan Robak

Well, there were few good choices for Halloween viewing.

Sure, *From Hell* came out, but that's about it. *Monsters Inc.* would have been a good release for Halloween but it opened two days afterward. Instead, we were stuck with another stupid horror film remake. Also, is anyone else tired of these annoying attempts by filmmakers to make their titles "cool" by using poor spelling, with titles like *Face/Off*, or *Se7en*? It's just painful.

Thir13en Ghosts is about a crazy rich guy who dies and leaves his freaky huge house to an annoying family. However, the house is full of ugly ghosts, who are being released one after the other. The house is like a maze that changes every time a spook is released. If not for the homicidal bogeymen, that would be great for parties. Luckily, the characters are ale to see the ghosts using some cheap plastic glasses (I'm sure it's more technical than that, but I just don't get it).

Aside from the family, the other people in the house include an annoying lawyer, an annoying nanny and an annoying psychic guy. Also, there's a woman who is trying to free the ghosts. Seems that the house is some weird machine designed to end the world, or give someone infinite knowledge or something like that. The general consensus is that this house is a very, very, very bad house. It's also designed by Satan, powered by ghosts, and saves on electric bills.

The film's huge failing, aside from the



Oh my!

film, is the lack of good marketing. They could have made this film and given the viewers glasses to help see the ghosts, like in those gimmicky horror movies of the sixties with the vibrating seats or horror movies from the eighties that required 3D glasses. Sure, it wouldn't improve the story but there's just something fun about watching a bad movie with a cheesy gimmick.

I have to warn you - this movie hates your eyes and ears. Whenever something evil happens there seems to be a lot of flashing and a correspondingly loud, annoying noise. I don't know if it's an attempt to be scary or simply to try the audience's patience, but it's really annoying.

In the end, you are left with a movie in which you wished for all of the characters to be killed and only half of them died. But, if you're lucky, you'll retain your hearing and eyesight.

Rankin packs Playhouse

Musician breaks free of Rankin Family style

by Rachel Long

Jimmy Rankin played to a packed Playhouse last Friday evening. Fredericton was his first east coast stop, after a week-long break following the west coast leg of his cross-Canada tour, promoting his debut solo album *Song Dog*.

Rankin and his four-piece band opened with two folk songs, both from the new album. The first, 'You and me (nobody else),' a romantic tribute to the Nova Scotia winter blues, featured keyboard player Kim Dunn with the haunting sound of a Hammond organ.

Rankin pleased the audience with stories and jokes about his adventures with the Rankin family, trips to Mexico and Italy, and people such as the Grand Central Station homeless who inspired the next

tune, 'Drunk and Crucified.' The content but quiet audience perked up with radio hit 'Followed her Around,' most of the audience was clapping and singing along.

The show continued with 'Tramp Miner,' a song from the Rankin Family's *North Country*, then the band rocked out with 'Moving On,' featuring solos by guitarist Dave McKeough and bassist Ed Woodsworth, who both sang vocal harmonies throughout the whole show.

Despite Jimmy Rankin being the primary composer for the Rankin Family, his solo music is very different, with no fiddles, jigs or reels, and a sound closer to Springsteen and Lovett than his celtic roots. *Song Dog* songs are raw, honest, and introspective, a dive into a different part of himself after the tragic death of his brother John Morris last year.

The second set began with *Song Dog* tune 'Lighthouse Heart,' with its gentle lyrics: "let me be your lighthouse keeper/when your ship blows into dangerous waters." It started with an instrumental mandolin and guitar duo, the only presence



Elise Craft / alt magazine

Jimmy Rankin proves his musical prowess last week at The Playhouse.

of a mandolin during the entire show. Drummer Randy Cooke wooed the audience with a long solo in 'Carry On,' then Rankin got the audience standing for 'Wasted' and final song 'Miss Me Darling.'

After a roaring standing ovation, Rankin took to the stage for three

encores, starting with a quiet acoustic solo of 'This is the Hour,' a song about harvesters train-hopping to find work, and the audience requested 'Tripper.' Rankin ended the evening with the captivating 'Captain Harmony,' and the audience left happy and satiated.