

Paying it 'Forward'

ALISON CLACK
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The Maritimes, especially New Brunswick, have long been lacking a strong presence on the Canadian music scene. Forward Music Group is working to change that.

The record label was started by James Boyle after attending the 2006 ECMAs in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Boyle noticed that New Brunswick had a weak showing in the East Coast music scene.

At the same time, a grant program was created by Music New Brunswick. Boyle says the purpose of the grant was to provide funding for people to start artist management companies. The program was an effort to build up the music industry in New Brunswick.

Boyle didn't want to miss the opportunity this grant presented and started Forward Music Group.

The desire to help out the New Brunswick music scene didn't just come to Boyle randomly. Music has been a part of his life since he was 12 – the age when he first learned to play guitar.

"Music is important to me. It was a no-brainer to create something that would support music that I loved. My friends and I really feel that music is an important part of our lives and that there should be more support for it," says Boyle.

Staying with that positive attitude Boyle named the label Forward Music group.

"We didn't want to use anything that had a negative connotation; we wanted something that was positive. We were looking for growth and



Kyle Cunjak (cunjak.com) / Submitted to The Brunswickan

James Boyle of Forward Music Group is all about positive attitude.

wanted a name that supported growth and was positive," says Boyle.

And the label, like its name, keeps moving forward.

While the label is relatively new it already represents several local artists including: Share, Sleepless Nights, Grand Theft Bus, and Force Field (formerly known as the Fussy Part).

"They all vary from different musical styles and genres. From the sort of quiet, singer-songwriter, folkier style like Olympic Symphonium to louder indie-rock guys like Sleepless Nights," says Boyle on the diverse styles of his label's artists.

The fledgling label has also managed to find numerous allies already. Moncton's DJ Bones, famous for his Indie Pop Nights, frequently plays Maritimes artists from the Forward Music Label.

Boyle says that there are a great deal more allies that the label also has.

"I think every fan is an ally. Every one that can say 'hey check out this band' or 'hey, check

out this record' is an ally. Radio show hosts, bartenders, all of these people are allies. I would hate to start naming names and miss somebody because there's so many people that have gone to bat for us and have helped us out from one side of the country to the other," says Boyle.

The label's allies aren't relegated to Canada either. At the beginning of February, before the ECMAs, some of the label's bands will be travelling to the UK for some shows.

"We have focused on the UK and other places in Europe. We're keeping our fingers crossed and we're going to keep working at it and eventually it will come through," says Boyle.

The opportunity came from a meeting with a British agent at last year's ECMAs in Fredericton.

And the opportunities will only continue for the label if they stick to the positive attitude Boyle says is needed.

"Stay positive, keep our heads up, and keep moving forward," says Boyle.

Fashion gets it right



POP
TART

Ashley
Bursey

I hadn't even realized it, but somehow, I have subconsciously become a member of the hottest movement since Alicia Silverstone's Clueless-era marabou-tipped pens. It's called "recession chic", and it struck me last week as I was rushing through the mall - hurriedly heading from errand (hemming pants) to errand (shoe repair) to errand (returning a shirt).

It was a Sunday, and the mall was blessedly, surprisingly quiet: a few straggling mid-afternoon shoppers at Laura Secord, a handful of people gathered in the food court. After Saturday's frantic rush (I experienced the tail end of it while I was arriving for a movie), it was an uncharacteristic pre-Christmas weekend.

Well. Perhaps not so uncharacteristic. And that's what struck me as I unlocked my car and began driving away from the mall; I had barely even glanced at the newest merchandise in any of my favourite stores. I hadn't even so much as examined a pair of boots (my winter weakness). I had stopped at the mall to run a few errands and, without so much as a second thought, had left without buying a single item.

It seems that I've become, in the words of the fine folks at StyleFile, a "recessionista".

While perhaps low in funds, the recessionista movement is rich in vocabulary, what some might call euphemisms for a dying high-fashion mentality. The frugalista. The bargainista. Suddenly, coupon-clipping is chic and those

cheap-dress websites are a very viable option for the cash-strapped fashion hound.

It's a movement that's been building since the last batch of ready-to-wear fashions hit the runway. Fall's lines featured grungy and casual designs - higher-end pieces paired with vintage or thrift-store finds, offering shoppers a readily available alternative to head-to-toe Burberry. Mix and match the highs (price-wise, of course) with the lows. Even Vogue magazine features celebrities like Rachel Weisz who claim they're "trained to head uptown to the Salvation Army" or the latest sample sale.

It's a movement I can certainly appreciate. And with blogs like therecessionista.blogspot.com, or websites geared to finding the cheapest "it" blouse, it's a movement that is finally, thankfully, moving towards cheap-of-the-moments and fashionable high-end classics.

Even the uber-trendy, Jimmy-Choo-saturated Sex and the City seems to be taking it in stride: "Remember when the economy was good and we had a table?" Miranda chuckles, years ahead of her time, as the fabulous foursome munch street meat on benches during a lunchtime rendezvous.

It's Forever21.com. It's buying the cute scarf or belt or tights for cheap, and investing in the clas-

sic white blouse or wide-leg tweed trousers. It's replicas and doorbuster specials; it's shopping clubs, and it's thinking creatively.

As I write this, Christmas looms large only a few weeks away. As much as I can appreciate the movement towards frugal buying, I plan to invest something else this year: my time. Perhaps a batch of fancy squares or a homemade cheese-cake could be a pragmatic gift this year. This recession-chic mentality has manifested itself in more ways than just buying a vintage wool hat or retro boots. It's forgoing expensive movie nights out in favour of comfy, cuddly movie nights in; it's ice-skating for free at an outdoor rink instead of huddling indoors over pricey lunches. It's potluck dinner parties or homemade wreaths or borrowing a holiday outfit from a girlfriend.

There's no more dancing around this idea of becoming a self-proclaimed couponista. It's not just a too-hip movement that we'll all forget about once the spring ready-to-wear shows hit the runway. Finally, we're looking at sustainable fashion, at something more than the next "it" bag or micro-mini or shearing coat.

Finally, fashion got it right: this is one trend that'll always be in style.

Ashley Bursey is a former Arts Editor of The Brunswickan and a graduate of STU Journalism.

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A graduate from UNB, Jackie chose the CGA program because she knows that the CGA designation will give her that competitive edge in today's marketplace. As a staff accountant at EPR Daye Kelly & Associates, a CGA public practice accounting firm in Fredericton, Jackie is gaining valuable experience in accounting, tax and auditing while studying towards her CGA designation. Enrolling in the CGA Program of Professional Studies was an important part of Jackie's plan to reach her career goals.