

ERIC'S TRIP

In all the hype touting **Eric's Trip** as the next big thing to follow **Sloan** (already a big thing) out of the newly-vaunted Halifax scene, everyone's forgotten one significant fact, **Eric's Trip** is from Moncton, not exactly a Halifax suburb.

"When we were interviewed on *Brave New Waves*," recounts Julie Doiron, who plays bass and sings, "they did a sort of set-up interview with Chris [Thompson, guitarist/singer] beforehand and they thought we lived maybe a half hour out of Halifax—it's more like three hours. I guess it's partly because the rest of Canada doesn't know eastern Canada very well, but it also helped us a lot playing in Halifax because that's where we started getting a lot of attention."

Inevitably, the fact that **Eric's Trip**, **Sloan**, **Jale**, and every other recording act from the east coast save for **Stompin' Tom** and **Rita McNeil**, have been lumped together as part of the "Seattle of the East" goes to show that the Toronto-centric media was caught napping by the success of **Sloan** and instantly assumed the spontaneous appearance of a musical phenomenon from out of nowhere. In fact, as Julie explains, there's always been a vital, if unacknowledged, music community in Halifax and Moncton as well as a thriving punk scene in Saint John.

"New Brunswick's not too bad but it really goes in cycles—a few months will be really good and for a few months not much will be happening. But Moncton is really supportive. Our first demo sold two hundred copies two years ago after we'd been around for about six months."

And then there is the whole **Sloan** thing. If the East coast is the Seattle of the North, then does that make **Sloan Nirvana**? And where does that leave **Eric's Trip**? "We don't get compared to **Sloan** so much anymore," says Julie, "...**Sloan** has helped us a lot—they mention us in all their interviews. It's kinda weird, though, because it makes me nervous that there's too much hype. It's great that **Sloan's** bringing all this attention to the scene out here because there a lot of bands that deserve to do really well... but there are also bands who don't deserve it."

One such benefit that has come **Eric's Trip's** way has been their deal with **Sub Pop** which will, admittedly, do little to dispel Seattle comparisons. However, the band's commitment to the independent ethic and aesthetic was strong enough to initially turn the label down. "We wanted to continue putting stuff out on our own, at least for a while. Besides, their first offer to us wasn't that great so we turned it down. Then Jonathan [Poneman] and Bruce [Pavitt] from **Sub Pop** saw us at *Vermonstrous* [Burlington, Vt.'s recent band showcase] and really got into our show and made us a better offer. Actually, we still haven't

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signed with them. They sent us a contract a month ago but there was a paragraph or something missing, so we had to send it back. Sometime this week, though, we should be getting the contract."

While the move to **Sub Pop** was not premeditated, neither did **Eric's Trip** place priority on signing with a Canadian independent citing the dearth of independent labels in the Maritimes. Fledgling labels like **Naked in the Marsh** with two releases to their credit, including **Eric's Trip's** debut 7", and **Cinnamon Toast**, which has released 7" singles by **Jale** and **Bubaikull**, are sprouting up but have only tentative access to a broader distribution network. **Sub Pop** gives them world-wide distribution without going major.

"**Sub Pop's** basically the same as a major in terms of distribution. Of course, you get more money with a major but then you have to pay it all back for recording and promotion, anyway. We still get to keep our ties with Canada too. Our **Sub Pop** releases are gonna be distributed by **Murderecords**—they did **Sloan's Peppermint EP** [and enjoys distribution through the **Cargo/MCA** axis]—so it doesn't bother us that we're not signed to a Canadian label. Obviously, we're not big fans of the States but..."

"We heard that **Warner** was interested in us but we didn't bother. They had our demo for a long time but they didn't show any interest until they heard **Sub Pop** wanted to sign us. It's also nice that at **Sub Pop** we already know everyone and if we have an idea we want to talk about or work on, we can talk to them right away. I don't think you have that kind of access at a major."

Julie maintains that **Eric's Trip** are wary of getting too much publicity too fast, knowing how overzealous hype can translate into a backlash. To that end, they downplay their connection to **Sub Pop**. Like their other East coast compatriots, they really sound nothing like the prototypical **Sub Pop** band; if anything, the uneasy marriage of delicate melody and malignant

guitar noise espoused by **My Bloody Valentine** and **Swervedriver** comes to mind. Perhaps this signifies that by signing **Eric's Trip**, along with the likes of **Monkeywrench** and **The Walkabouts**, **Sub Pop** itself is trying to diversify its sound and dodge the grunge stereotype. The suggestion gains substance when you consider that in march 1993, **Sub Pop** will be releasing a "Maritime single" featuring **Jale** as a teaser for a single release by **Eric's Trip** in April and a full-length album to follow some time in June.

In the meantime we'll have to content ourselves with an EP coming out on **Murderecords** in February and a February Quebec-Ontario tour contingent on their misgivings about doing the Trans-Canada haul in winter driving conditions.—Chris Wodskou



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