

## La Francophonie

### *Kitchen Parties - Acadian style*

If I had to pick the best night of the entire ECMA weekend, the Acadian showcase late Saturday/early Sunday morning would win -- hands down.

Featuring the music of Loup Noir, Blou, Michelle Boudreau Samson, and The Glamour Puss Blues Band, the showcase officially lasted until 4am before turning into a kitchen party with some of l'Acadie's best musicians.

Added to the music was the effort each performer made to make each guest, francophone or anglophone, feel at home. To do this, they spoke in both official languages, creating an incredibly comfortable atmosphere, leaving no one out.

The night began with Loup Noir, who were nominated in the Francophone Recording category. Playing excerpts from their album *On est pas des criminels*, they quickly warmed the group to the general 'Cajun' theme of the evening.

They were followed by Blou, a group from Southwest Nova Scotia. Coming off of their recent tour of Acadian schools, a tour entitled *Voyage en Acadie*, Blou set the room on fire with a version of "Ste. Anne's Reel" that had to be heard to be believed.

Michelle Boudreau Samson then returned to the stage, having played earlier in the evening during the Mainstage Showcase. Presenting songs from her album *Liberee*, she soon displayed the talent that would earn her the award for Best Francophone Recording.

"This is the first year I've participated in the ECMA's," said Michelle. "I've only been in music for a couple of years, so I didn't have any great expectations; but when I got the mainstage showcase, I was pretty excited."

The highlight of the evening was The Glamour Puss Blues Band, who closed their show with their unique blend of Gospel, Blues, and Zydeco. With a never-ending drum beat, a saxophonist who climbed up on tables, and a lead guitarist who played like Stevie Ray, the audience never had a chance to relax and catch their breath.

There have been complaints in the past that the ECMA's never gave enough attention to the French community. After the Acadian showcase, I doubt that will be much of a problem.

## Spotlight - The Glamour Puss Blues Band

Winners of the award for Best Gospel/Blues Artist, the members of the Glamour Puss Blues Band have got something to crow about.

Though the band has only been around since 1995, the members have a combined experience of over 100 years. Based in Moncton, this band has already done extensive touring of the Atlantic provinces and is invited back everywhere they play.

Their self-titled album was the biggest seller of the weekend, and twice the buyer's centre ran out of stock.

Released in April of 1997, it has garnered quite a following in the last year. With cuts like "I don't need the money that bad", "Last Cigarette", and a slow, sultry version of "Georgia on My Mind", this album is one blues fans won't want to miss.

I interviewed Glamour Puss before and after they received their award. As far as they were concerned, the ECMAs have played an important part in their success.

"Last year we managed to find a recording studio and an engineer," explained Paul Boudreau. "We cut our CD, and it opened doors for us, helped us in bookings, and resulted in a nomination for the blues category."

The band realises that appearing in the ECMAs is not enough to kick-start a group's career. Hard work and a good attitude will help you more than a few gigs will.

"There are a lot of people here who can help your career and they can pick and choose who they want," explained Paul Boudreau. "They help you out because they believe in you as a person. When you're looking for help, it helps that you're a decent individual. You have to invest in yourself to show that you're serious. There are so many people hungry for success that you have to show what you've got and what you're willing to risk."

Being nominated carries its own share of responsibilities, though. It means you have to work harder to keep your momentum.

"Not everyone can handle it, after you get it," offered Travis Furlong. "If the ECMA bestows upon you an award, you then take on an ownership and you have a mantle to carry forth in it."

"It does help you, but you've got something to live up to," added Paul. "This area has decided you to be worthy of recognition. It carries a lot of weight in other places, and we know that."

If a nomination carries pressure, an award must be even more difficult to bear. Running into the band after their presentation, I was impressed by how level-headed they were about their popularity.

"Everybody wants to be where we're at, but we're really no where," said Paul. "But there's a lot of other bands below nowhere. The higher you get, the stiffer the competition is."

"There are people already at the top and there is no hurry to go down. When you think 'I've got it made,' you're wrong. If you're not prepared to go the extra mile like the best have done, then you'll be knocking at the door of nowhere all over again. Be nice to the people you meet at the way up, because you'll meet them on the way down."

And the future? The band intends to play in some major North American Blues Festivals, not to mention a new CD. No matter where they go, they will never forget their Maritime roots.

"We are representing the East Coast of Canada. Right now, we've been appointed ambassadors. As we travel, we are going to talk about the East Coast and let people know how great it is."

You'll have to borrow my copy of *The Glamour Puss Blues Band*. I hear it's hard to get.



Blowing the horn at the Acadian Showcase  
Blou-Cajun Reels

