

# Wide Mouth Mason Commence Tour in Charlottetown

By STEPHEN MCQUAID

On Monday, March 8th, Wide Mouth Mason and opens the Miller Stain Limit started their condom-sponsored tour in Charlottetown, PEI. An appreciative yet unfortunately small crowd was on hand at Myron's to witness the performance and minor spectacle.

As you may know, Wide Mouth Mason's latest tour is sponsored by Durex, maker of condoms. Feeling as if money they'd accepted from other sponsors before, like Belevedere, was almost 'dirty money,' the band decided to go with a sponsor which carried a more important and positive message.

Shaun Verrault of WMM commented on the new sponsor. "We're glad that we get asked about this. AIDS is not a hot topic right now, so it's important to bring it back into the public eye. Sure, people will be giggling, and thinking that we just want to 'get laid' on the road, but the approach to this has to be light-hearted. It's fun for the fans to laugh at the bug pink bus, and the guy in the big condom suit named Richard, passing out brochures and condoms. I think it all illuminates their own ignorance."

Shaun also commented about the possibility of people misinterpreting their message.

"It's important to know that we're not making a choice for you. Most people are not going to give a damn about what a band says. The decision is up to you, and if you decide to have sex,

then you have to protect yourself... there's so many things that could happen, and rip apart your relationship."

And it is all pretty humorous. Girls getting their picture taken with 'Richard', the free condoms, and the large pink bus that resembles a horizontal bottle of Pepto Bismol with a sad, giant sperm on the side of it.

Shaun also talked about how the timing of events has gradually increased in scale, in regards to opening for big-name bands, has been crucial for their success.

"We've slowly been making it, gathering momentum. It's been very comfortable. I believe that's why we've become successful; we've gradually been playing in bigger places... it's all timing that's opened doors for us."

We discussed their opening slots for the Rolling Stones. I asked him, at the request of someone else, if Keith Richards looks even scarier up close. "No, he looks so much better up close than he does in his interviews. I think he always has this odd look on his face during interviews that makes it look all wrinkled up... the weird thing about the Stones is that they're all really short, like, little guys. Even Ron Wood, with all of his hair poofed up, only comes up to, like, my eyeballs...." I found that most humorous.

The concert itself was excellent. Wide Mouth Mason played as if they'd been on tour for weeks, firing on all cylinders, improvising, and playing as a very fine-tuned and tight band. The set

was heavy material from their new CD, *Where I Started*.

The new CD is a bit of a change for them, but all of the new songs blend very well with their older ones, as part of their rock-blues-funk sound. There was also a bit of reggae, in the new song Sugar cane, as well as some choice cover songs such as Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Cold Shot", Jimi Hendrix's "Gypsy Eyes" and a funkified version of "All Along the Watchtower" If at all possible, stake out a position at the very front of the stage, dead center, if you get a chance to see this band.

Witnessing Shaun's incendiary mastery of his guitar is a real treat, not to mention the stellar performances of drummer Safwan Javed and energetic bassist Earl Pereira.

After the show, we dined on veggie pizza, some folks had beer, but 'Saf' and I had cranberry juice. We sat around and talked about various things, with a few other lucky fans. We laughed at the new Fatboy Slim video on Much Music, 'Saf' and Earl commented on their fancy for Lauryn Hill, etc. When the topic of the Junos came up, I told Shaun that Celine Dion had announced a hiatus from

music. His response was something like, "All rig-...I mean,...oh no...that's terrible (he laughs with Safwan and they high-five each other)." I found both bands to be incredibly friendly and fun, even accomodating. Shaun actually served me my cranberry juice. These guys must have really great mothers.

If the opening show is any indication, this should be an extremely successful tour for Wide Mouth Mason. The new CD is very strong, and the live show is excellent. They will continue to tour Canada until the middle of April.

## Big Wreck and Emm Gryner

By STEPHEN MCQUAID

On Wednesday, Jan. 27, Big Wreck and Emm Gryner showcased their different, yet equally impressive talents at Myron's. I wasn't even aware that Emm Gryner and her band members were going to be there. Apparently, they were a late addition.

I'd heard Emm Gryner's music before, seen her on TV, but never got the privilege of witnessing her music in person. I was happily surprised to see her appear on stage, and perform about nine songs in her 40-minute set. She played some of her songs, most notably her small yet catchy hit "summerlong," and a re-

cently written "Revenge." Also of note, she played Ozzy Osborne's "Crazy Train" and closed her set with the Beastie Boy's "Sabotage." The crowd loved it, and I'm sure I'm not the only one hoping she'll come back soon.

She's quite talented, and at the young age of 23, she's already formed her own record company, appeared on the Lilith Fair tour, performed with many "big" musicians, and got signed by Mercury records. If you'd like to sample her music, try her new CD, *Public*.

After what seemed like a short eternity, Big Wreck finally made it onto the stage. Ian Thornley (lead vocals/ lead guitar), stepped up to the mic and took a quote

from the book of The Fonz: "Ayyy," he said as they started into their set.

Their performance was a good one, a mix of their own songs from their debut CD *In Loving Memory Of...* and many cover songs, whether they be full songs or little snippets grafted into the middle of some of their own songs.

They started with a very short intro of "John the Revelator," which I suspected was influenced by Gov't Mule's version of the song. Dave Henning, their bass player, confirmed my suspicion after the show.

They also did bits of "Into Your Arms" by the Lemonheads, "If I Had My Way" by Big Sugar, an ear-

•continued on page 16