

In Search of B-List Celebrities at the East Coast Music Awards

by Stephan MacLEOD

FRIDAY

Like great explorers we fearlessly sought adventure under and above ground in the heart of downtown Saint John during ECMA weekend. The blistering cold wind blowing off the harbour forced us to confine our expedition to the artificially heated maze of underground tunnels and pedways connecting businesses in the city's central market place. This dimly lit Habitrail of food courts, hotels, and flower shops provided a wealth of activity to stimulate our adventurous hearts. And the fact that minor regional celebrities and rock stars could be spotted in all directions made the experience that much more exciting.

Stalking musicians and television personalities is easy, if you can blend in with all the other industry weasels by wearing a media pass. Pretending to be a writer for a newspaper with intentions on covering the East Coast Music Awards is all you need to do in order to acquire a pass. My fellow explorer and I got three passes in total when we attempted this ruse. Two passes would have been fine, but the volunteers in charge of handing out passes included nifty ECMA backpacks stuffed with pens, condoms, breath mints, and other booty. I jumped at the opportunity to snag an extra bag by telling the volunteer that I had to pick up a pass (and bag) for a friend who was also a "reporter." I found out later that an official ECMA giftshop was selling similar bags for \$15. Had I known the value, I would have asked for another pass.

The extra bag came in handy on our first expedition. The circulated air of the connected buildings was very warm, my jacket was suffocating me, and I looked strange wearing two backpacks at the same time. So I folded up my jacket and placed it in a backpack, then placed that backpack inside

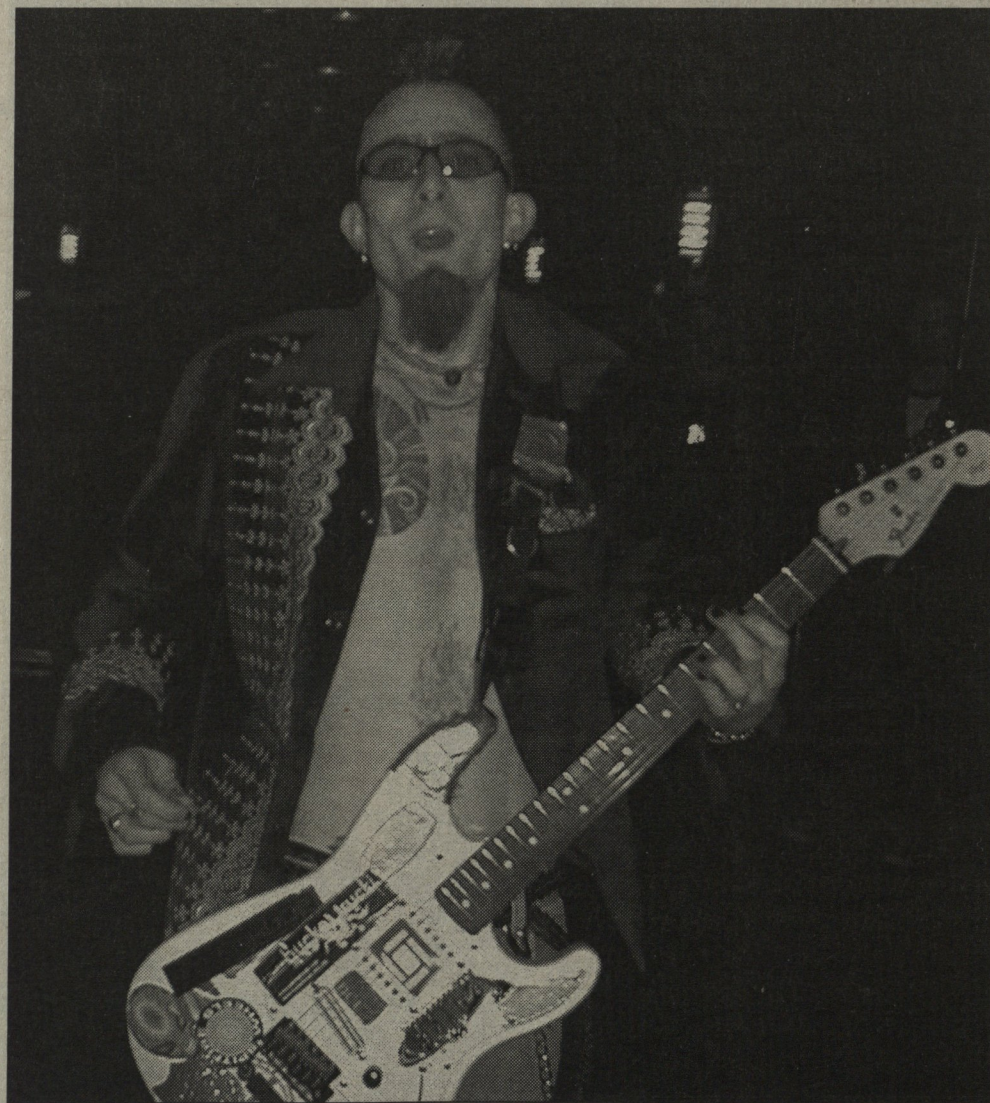
the other backpack. I was ready to explore.

Even my wildest expectations could not prepare me for the surprises that lurked around every corner, and on every escalator within the complex. Our first B-List celebrity sighting occurred almost immediately after receiving my media pass/survival kit. In an underground tunnel connecting the Hilton to the rest of civilization, I bumped into Global TV media personality, Nelson Hansen. At first I did not recognize the penis-shaped head, but when he struck up a conversation with me, I realized that this was the same person I had been making fun of the other night while watching his entertainment report on Global. He was fooled by my media pass and felt comfortable enough to share some small talk with me. I knew the pass gave me power. Status even. Not only could I get free merchandise and sneak into shows for free, but I could also trick reporters and musicians into thinking that I was important. My fellow explorer and I decided that we must abuse that power in order to gain access into strange new worlds.

Best New Artist nominee Joel Plaskett walked by us as we were contemplating the numerous ways we could use our media passes for evil. It dawned on us that we could stalk celebrities and nominees, take photos to prove we saw them, and in the process enjoy the thrilling excitement of adventure. Joel was heading towards the underground tunnel to the Hilton, so we pursued in that direction. We thought the best plan would be to follow Joel into the elevator at the Hilton. In order to avoid suspicion, we would pretend to be going to a different floor. But we intended to remain on the elevator for the rest of the evening snapping pictures of any celebrity that happened to use it. I could imagine bumping into East Coast icons like Anne Murray,



Slainte Mhath make me want to dance in my new pants.



The shirtless Robbie Holland of Flush says hi.