

Doyle warms a wintry day with a late night tropical breeze

It was about this time last year that well-adored Island singer/songwriter, vocal teacher and artist Teresa Doyle was getting ready to head down south to the island of Tobago with her husband and son for three weeks.

Being an intuitive person, perhaps Doyle knew somehow that this trip would spawn new inspiration, as she regularly played music with the locals and even found the title of her new CD — Late Night Parlour. It was the name of the mountainside rum shack where she jammed the night away with soca musicians, high above Perlatuvier Bay.

Recorded throughout the latter part of 2008 by engineer/producer David Rashed in Charlottetown, the 11-track CD includes a lovely mélange of Doyle's own quirky jazzy compositions intertwined with '40s swing-era classics.

As always, Doyle assembled some of the best musicians around to back her up: Mike Murley on tenor sax, Alan Dowling on drums, Ross MacDonald on bass, Dan St. Amand on horns, Ben Grossman on percussion, Ian Toms on guitar and James Mark on bass clarinet and alto sax.

And her collaboration with that final musician mentioned helped bring about the fruition of the event that took place last Sunday on the mainstage of Confederation Centre of the Arts: Teresa Doyle's launch of Late Night Parlour as a special guest of the Prince Edward Island Symphony, conducted by Mark.

Before we were jazzily whisked away to more tropical late-night lands, however, we first had the chance to musically indulge in the splendour of our Canadian winter with the symphony's world premiere performance of a brand new piece called Perce-neige, by Antoine Ouellette.

Visiting P.E.I. for the occasion, the Quebec composer was seated in the centre of the theatre, happily transfixed on his creation coming to life before his ears, surrounded by a two-thirds full audience that was just as engaged.

You could have heard a snowflake fall upon the stage as the symphony



Out and About

Todd MacLean

AT A GLANCE

- What: Between Sun and Snow.
- Who: The Prince Edward Island Symphony Orchestra, with conductor James Mark and special guest Teresa Doyle.
- When: Sunday, Feb. 15.
- Where: The Confederation Centre of the Arts mainstage in Charlottetown.
- What else: It was also the launch of Teresa Doyle's new CD, Late Night Parlour.

began, save for the entrance of violins, seeping into life with a chorus of high whistles of wind.

The piece itself centres around the transition point between winter and spring: that familiar interplay — an always-intriguing season push-and-pull that sees the foothold of winter reluctantly succumbing to the melting tides of spring's rejuvenation.

And every moment of the 15-minute long performance was absolutely gripping in its serene chaos. Indeed, to the listener, it was akin to watching a month-long video in fast-forward of a snow-covered forest-side valley experiencing its procession into spring.

Not an easy piece to execute well, the symphony performed it brilliantly. Highlight parts were the ominous horn section wintry bellows, the pounding storm tympanis and the chirping bird flute, which, fittingly, and gloriously, had the last laugh in its final beautiful, echoing note.

"And now ladies and gentlemen," spoke Mark, "along with guitarist Ian Toms, bassist Melissa Andrew and drummer Dave Shephard, our Island treasure, Teresa Doyle."

The jazz trio laid down a sensuous Latin-fused intro, as Doyle shone in a relaxed smile, poised to beam us from snow to sun:

"Late night parlour, moonlight on the harbour, in that late night parlour, I'll meet you there," she sang in the chorus of the CD's title track.

Effortlessly gliding from phrase to phrase, Doyle's

voice sounded as pure and easy as we've come to know it to be. But, watching her closely on this afternoon, I realized this: Doyle's relationship with her voice is more like a vastly experienced player-to-an-instrument — in her incredible ability to wield it in whatever way she pleases, knowing it like the back of her hand and therefore using it to its ultimate potential on any given note.

She seemed especially happily at home, too, in front of the grand orchestra behind her. And yet, all I was wishing for at times was to be in an old after-hours cabaret bar, a drink in my hand, dancing into the night with my sweetheart. The afternoon theatre atmosphere almost seemed too stifling for these carefree tunes.

But I certainly appreciated the big band accompaniment with songs like All the Cats Join In, No Moon at All and Doyle's original, Dance Me Outside.

And to have Mark turn around and do a tenor sax solo and then step back to the podium to continue conducting was just too cool.

The symphony finished off the afternoon of music with Grand Canyon Suite, which was, once again, a great delight for the senses.

Having experienced a ride into the canyon on horseback a few years ago, the On the Trail movement, complete with donkey clip-clops on the woodblock, brought back gorgeous memories of scenery (and reminiscent aches to my posterior).

To find Doyle's new CD, head to www.teresadoyle.com, where you can listen to some great cuts, check out material from her nine other successful recordings, and maybe be whisked away to a Tobago rum shack in the process.

Next week: I'll be enjoying Marlane and Virginia O'Brien's tribute to Patsy Cline.

Each week, Todd MacLean brings his readers into the experience of a new musical event, from Island cellidhs and festivals to the city's bar scene and rock concerts. When he is not writing or playing music, he can often be found strolling throughout the streets of Charlottetown philosophizing and eating cookies. He loves to hear feedback and suggestions. He can be reached at tmaclean@theguardian.pe.ca or at 626-1242.



The Sidewalks, made up of Jamie O'Brien, top left, Steve Giddings, Robyn Verhoeven, bottom left, Chris Gallant and Josh Pitre, recently signed with Sandbar Music Group Inc. Submitted photo.

Island-born band, The Sidewalks, looking to run into the future

BY MELISSA MCINNIS

THE GUARDIAN

Although they've only been together for about a year, an Island band has been signed to a record label, is in the works of making an album and is set to perform at this year's ECMAs in Newfoundland.

The Sidewalks is a band whose sound is a mixture of rock, alternative and ska, a type of reggae.

Members are Chris Gallant, Jamie O'Brien, Robyn Verhoeven, Steve Giddings and Josh Pitre.

The band was signed by Sandbar Music Group Inc. in October 2008. Pitre said they were in contact with Lloyd Doyle, owner of the label and invited him to one of their shows at Baba's Lounge.

After seeing the show and meeting with him at a session afterwards, Doyle signed the band within an hour and a half.

"It was pretty huge," Pitre

JUST THE FACTS

Band members

- Chris Gallant plays guitar and does vocals.
- Jamie O'Brien plays bass and does vocals.
- Robyn Verhoeven plays trumpet and synth.
- Steve Giddings plays trombone and does vocals.
- Josh Pitre plays drums.

said.

"The fact he took a chance on us based on the one performance was really cool," he added.

They were thrilled to be signed to the label, said Gallant.

"We were ecstatic," he said. "He is a mentor with a base of knowledge we can work off."

It's opened a lot of doors, said Pitre.

Since signing to the label, the band has had a fairly rigorous work schedule, said Gallant.

They jam two or three

times a week and hold live performances two or three times a month, he said.

Both Gallant and Pitre said they are looking forward to performing in Newfoundland.

"We're looking to get the name out of P.E.I.," said Gallant.

Gallant said they came up with the name, The Sidewalks, because they wanted a name that was simple and that people would remember.

Sidewalks are something people use everyday, laughed Gallant.

Pitre said the members are more than a band as they are all friends and are like a brotherhood.

"It's been amazing for people to come together who have a common goal," he said. "It's really cool how it meshes."

They are planning on releasing an EP album, a five-song disc by June and releasing a full-length album by the spring of 2010.

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of the year.

"It's a nice affirmation that people like the things that I'm doing, which is sometimes hard for an artist to know. And it feels great," says Davis.

Well-known for the Mit-tentime Review, an annual winter solstice show she organizes with Catherine MacLellan, Davis won't be at the ECMAs this year.

"But I'll be texting all my friends over there to get the latest," says Davis, who is getting ready to leave for the 2009 International Folk Alliance Conference in Memphis where she has an official showcase and several concerts next week.

After performing at unofficial ECMA events for the past five years, Pat Deighan and the Orb Weavers are happy to make it official.

The band has been nominated for rock recording of the year for In A Fever, In A Dream.

"It feels good. Everyone needs a little recognition when they put out a CD," says the front man for the band that also includes John Mullins, Shane Coady and Dan Wagner.

A mainstay on the Charlottetown music scene, the group performs regularly at Hunter's Ale House and Babas Lounge.

Getting the nomination will help them take the next step in their career — performing outside their home province.

"It's a chance to share our music with new people. The crowds are always so

great at the ECMAs. It's also a chance to play with bands that we like," says Deighan, who manages Back Alley Discs in Charlottetown.

The Grass Mountain Hobos refer to the 2009 nomination as "sweet."

"It feels fabulous. To be nominated for bluegrass recording of the year, we feel that we've won in a way. To be included with all those talented people is an honour in itself," says Josh Ellis, lead singer for the group that also includes Thomas Kirkham, Peter Cann, Mark Geddes, Gordie MacKeeman and Peter Webb.

The road to recognition for this band began in 2007 when the swing/bluegrass/blues/folk fusion entered the showcase at the Rollo Bay Old-Time Music Festival in P.E.I. to receive free tickets to the festival.

Not only did they perform, they won the fan choice award and were asked to play the next night. "This time we did it for money. So you can imagine how thrilled we are about our first nomination," says Ellis.

At the Music P.E.I. office, Rob Oakie says it's just the beginning for these first-time nominees.

"It's a tremendous stepping stone for them in their career path," says the executive director of Music P.E.I.

"It provides them with an opportunity for . . . regional and national exposure because of the profile of the ECMAs. That exposure can be used to leverage

AT A GLANCE

In the spotlight

- Who: The P.E.I. nominees at the 2009 ECMAs in Corner Brook, N.L., include: Battery Point; Colette Cheverie; Grass Mountain Hobos; Kendra MacGillivray; Lazy Jacks; Meaghan Blanchard; Pat Deighan and The Orb Weavers; Tanya Davis; Vishten.
- When: The awards show will take place on Sunday, March 1, and will be airing on CBC at 11 p.m. The taped delayed show will feature a performance by P.E.I. nominee Meaghan Blanchard.

more gigs (and for) advancements in their careers."

One of the groups that has been waiting for recognition for a long time is Lazy Jacks. After working in the trenches for a decade performing Irish music, they have started crafting their own songs.

For their creativity, they received a nod in the roots/traditional group-recording category for Watercolour Windows.

"We've been out doing our thing for years and years and finally we have gotten a nomination," says Peter Wynne, a member of the band that includes David MacDonald, Peter Wynne, Dwight MacDonald and Peter Robinson.

And they're elated. "We're the guys that people know locally. So getting the wider recognition beyond your own home town is a wonderful thing" he says.



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Upcoming Events!

Visit your local Public Library for family and preschool story time.

FREE Family Skate
Simmons Arena
Sunday, February 22,
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Free hot chocolate

Check out the City of Charlottetown website for skates at local arenas and a list of outdoor rinks (weather depending).

Islanders Take 30 for the Family.

ISLAND ENTERTAINMENT

P.E.I. Sociable Singles holding dance tonight CHARLOTTETOWN — Join the members of the P.E.I. Sociable Singles at the Charlottetown Royal Canadian Legion

on Pownal Street, Clover Club, for their monthly dance to be held this evening.

The music gets underway at 9:30 p.m.

Music will be provided by

The Dunsfords.

People are invited to come and dance to great music and socialize with other singles. For information, contact Audrey at 628-3938.