



# Talented Sailboats are more than a 'kinda crazy' show

BY JAMES TENNANT

If you follow the local music scene or read the various weeklies in Hamilton and Toronto, you can't have missed the name Sailboats Are White.

The hype isn't hollow, either – they recently signed a record deal with the U.K. Poptones label, run by Creation Records founder Alan McGee (think My Bloody Valentine, Jesus and Mary Chain, Oasis).

So what gets a crew of local sots on the cover of Eye Weekly? Not just a record deal.

It's the music, too – a jerky, jittery kind of post-punk, propelled by a stuttering drum machine, wiry guitars, keyboards and deranged vocals.

## Showtime

**What:** Sailboats Are White, with Lullaby Arkestra  
**When:** Saturday, 10 p.m.  
**Where:** The Underground, 41 Catharine St. N., Admission, \$8

They're hardcore one moment and more subtly unhinged the next (McGee has compared them to Big Black and Public Image Limited).

If the music has made the band, the live show has made them legend. Stories of public nudity and reckless violence – self-inflicted, inflicted upon one another – abound. Vocalist Kevin Douglas has a reputation for unparalleled insanity on stage. Yet his insanity

is really only self-expression. Sailboats never decided to make a name for themselves by being "crazy." They just happen to be, well, kinda crazy.

"Some people look at us like the circus is coming into town or something," says guitarist and founder Kevyn Wright. "People want to see (vocalist Kevin Douglas) get hurt. It's weird. First and foremost we want to make good music."

Still, there's no doubt that a much-talked-about live show is good for an indie band – that, after all, is where the revenue comes at that level, not from record sales.

There are plenty of rotten bands who stumble around drunk and hurt themselves, but few who do it with such

aplomb – and the music to back it up.

As a result of both the show and the album, Turbo! (available in North America through Let's Just Have Some Fun/Sonic Unyon) SAW has come to be considered, if not the "next big thing," at least "kind of a big deal."

For Wright, the gap between hype and reality is clear. SAW doesn't dismiss the importance of magazine covers and record deals, and the band knows there is plenty of potential ahead.

Still, it's easy to stay humble when, as Wright says, you have a pay-as-you-go lease on a vehicle owned by the HSR.

James Tennant is a local writer and program director at 93.3 CFMU.



DAVID WALDMAN  
Hamilton band Sailboats Are White.

# CITYLIFE CITYLIFE CITYLIFE

a look at what's happening in and around the city

## Out of the vault

King Biscuit Boy's *Ain't Gonna Do It* is one of the best on new Stony Plain CD



GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

It's been more than three years since Richard Newell died in his east Mountain home, but people are still unearthing little nuggets of King Biscuit Boy blues and putting them onto disc.

This month Stony Plain Records released an extraordinary album, celebrating its 30th anniversary of producing some of Canada's best blues and roots music. Thirty Years of Stony Plain features two CDs with 36 tracks and a bonus DVD. Among the international artists on it are Steve Earle, Maria Muldaur, Duke Robillard, Long John Baldry, Emmlylou Harris and Gillian Welch. Canadian-based musicians include Jeff Healey, David Wilcox, Ian Tyson and the Downchild Blues Band.

But the most interesting track on the record is a New Orleans boogie number called *Ain't Gonna Do It*, recorded by King Biscuit Boy in 1988.

"I played on those sessions," says local sax player Sonny Del Rio. No kidding. The sax is signature Sonny, booming through the mix like a foghorn cutting through the gloom.

*Ain't Gonna Do It* never made it onto any King Biscuit Boy albums Newell recorded for Stony Plain. It's been packed away in the record company's vault.

The truly odd thing about it is that it features absolutely no harmonica, the instrument that made King Biscuit Boy known all over the world, even catching Keith Richards' praise.

"Everyone knows he was a great harmonica player," Del Rio says, "but we forget how great a singer he was, too."

And that's exactly why Stony Plain owner Holger Petersen chose *Ain't Gonna Do It* for his 30th anniversary package. He wanted people to realize Newell was much more than just a great harmonica player. He also sang the blues with a feeling few others of his generation could.

It was that feeling for the blues that inspired so many musicians, especially the ones from his home-



HAMILTON SPECTATOR FILE PHOTO

Stony Plain owner Holger Petersen chose *Ain't Gonna Do It* for the company's 30th anniversary package because he wanted people to realize Richard Newell, above, was a great blues singer as well as a harmonica player.

town. Newell had been searching out blues records since the early 1960s when he would hitchhike down the QEW to Buffalo solely to prow through dusty record bins for hidden treasure. He became a walking encyclopedia of the blues. Newell knew it all and was always ready to impart his knowledge to anyone who asked.

"If people only knew," Del Rio says. "He was much more than a harmonica player. He was special. He had a

great sense of humour ... I think he had more respect around the world than he did in Hamilton."

Newell's death at age 58 left local musicians of all ages in shock.

Musicians' friend and mentor had finally succumbed to the alcoholism that had always held him back from greatness.

They put together a wake in his honour at Club 77 in downtown Hamil-

## Showtime

**What:** Fourth annual King Biscuit Boy, Blues With A Feeling, featuring Fathead, Groove Corporation, Trickbag with Sonny Del Rio and Jesse O'Brien, Zark & the Sharks and a celebrity jam.  
**When:** Saturday, May 27, 7:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Mohawk College, Arnold Centre  
**Tickets:** \$20 with proceeds funding music scholarships in the name of Richard Newell (a.k.a. King Biscuit Boy). Advance tickets available at Cheapies, Dr. Disc, Lou's Music, Looney Tunes (Burlington) Stardust and The Hamilton Spectator.

More than 100 musicians showed up to participate. All the surviving members of Crowbar came. Kelly Jay flew in from Calgary. Actor Graham Greene, a roadie from the Bad Manners days, joined the band for *Oh What a Feeling*. Skip Prokop, Newell's school buddy from Hill Park, brought Lighthouse. Harry Manx played, so did Tom Wilson, Bob Segarini and The Shakers. Teenage Head closed the show. It was a magnificent concert, worth it to just stand around and soak up all the stories people had to tell about King Biscuit Boy.

It raised \$4,000 to establish a scholarship fund in Newell's name for Mohawk College music students. Newell's friends have organized a similar benefit every year since to keep the fund going.

This year's Blues With A Feeling fundraiser tribute will be held Saturday, May 27 at the Mohawk College Arnold Centre, featuring Juno-winning blues band Fathead, Groove Corporation, Trickbag with Sonny Del Rio and Jesse O'Brien, Zark and the Sharks. It ends with an all-star celebrity jam.

Most of the musicians will play for free, but with a feeling, in tribute to their old friend King Biscuit Boy.

Yours truly has the privilege of co-hosting the evening.

If you want to learn more about Richard Newell, go to [thespec.com](http://thespec.com) and click on the King Biscuit Boy icon for videos, photos, audio clips and stories.

Graham Rockingham can be heard on the new Scott Thompson show (900 CHML) Thursdays between 4 and 6 p.m.

[grockingham@thespec.com](mailto:grockingham@thespec.com)  
905-526-3331

**Juliet).** Ann-Marie MacDonald's 1990 Governor General's Literary Award-winning play comes to Dundas Little Theatre. May 18 to 20 at 8 p.m. Garstin Centre for the Arts, Main and Market Streets, Dundas. Tickets: \$15. 905-627-5266

**The Last Resort.** Drury Lane Theatrical Productions presents this Norm Foster-Leslie Arden musical comedy whodunit set in Saskatchewan. Directed by David Mallis. The Loft, 2269 New St., Burlington. May 18 to 20, 25 to 27 at 8 p.m. Matinée at 2 p.m. May 21. 905-637-3979

**Broadway Beauties.** Theatre Aquarius teams with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra to present a salute to the women of Broadway. Tickets: \$27 to \$49. Special prices for seniors and children. Dofasco Centre for the Arts, 190 King William St. May 18 to 20 at 8 p.m. with a matinee May 20 at 2 p.m. 905-522-7529

## Local Opening soon

**A Month of Sundays.** Hamilton Players' Guild brings this Bob Larby comedy about the bitter-sweet goings-on in a retirement home to their Studio Theatre, 80 Queen St. S., features Chuck Hayes and Graham Clements. Directed by Diane Brokenshire. May 26 to 27, June 1 to 3, 8 to 10 at 8 p.m. with matinees at 2 p.m. June 3 and 10. Tickets: \$20. To order, call 905-529-0284.

**Mambo Italiano.** This hilarious comedy by Bob Galluccio is filled with warmth and wit. Two young Montreal men excite their Italian-Canadian families by coming out of the closet one June just around Gay Pride parade time. The play looks at life, love and the need to be truthful to yourself against a background of family conflict. Features Kitty Varley, Matthew Robert Willson, Robert Knuckle and James Pettit. Directed by Willard Boudreau. Westside Concert Theatre, 434 King St. W., June 9 and 10, 15 to 17, 8 p.m. Tickets \$20. Presented in association with Gay Pride Hamilton. Tickets at Bryan Prince Bookseller. Call 905-528-4508.

**Geritol Follies.** The annual Hamilton love-in with music, dance and off-beat comedy, senior citizen style, comes to Hamilton Place June 14 at 2 p.m. and June 15 and 16 at 2 and 7 p.m. This year's production takes us to TV Land and promises plenty of fun and music you know and love. Call 905-528-8095.

## Out of Town Now Playing

**Song and Dance.** Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical about relationships — one half song, the other dance — is at the Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth in Toronto. It stars a mis-cast Louise Pitre in the song half. Evelyn Hart and Eric S. Robertson now lead the dance portion of the show. Choreography by Wayne Sleep is dull. Now through May 28. 147 Danforth Ave., Toronto. Tickets: \$25 through \$79.75. 1-416-872-1111

**Hair.** The tribal rock musical of the 1960s is coming back with all the revolutionary spirit it can muster. Expect all the big songs from Aquarius through Let The Sunshine In. It's at the Bluma Appel Theatre, 27 Front St. E., Toronto, through June 22. 1-877-399-2651

**Mathilde.** Nightwood Theatre Productions presents Martha Burns and Tom McCamus in this Kelly Thornton-directed production. Young Centre for the Arts, to May 27. 1-416-866-8666

**Wingfield's Inferno.** This comedy starring Rod Beattie is the latest in the cycle of Wingfield's slice-of-life comedies. At the Royal Alexandra, 260 King St. W., Toronto. Tuesday through Saturday, 8 p.m. Matinees Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday at 2 p.m. Now through May 27. Tickets: \$30 to \$75. 1-800-461-3333

**Cabaret.** Sally Bowles and the Kit Kat Girls are back in this musical about decadence in old Berlin as the Nazis rise to power. It's at Stage West Dinner Theatre, 5400 Dixie Rd., Mississauga, through May and June. Various dinner and brunch packages. 1-905-238-0042

**Lord Of The Rings.** More is truly less in this extravaganza designed to save Toronto theatre. At the Princess of Wales Theatre, King Street West, Toronto. Open-ended run. 1-416-872-1212

**Shaw Festival.** This feast of Canadian theatre has opened with Shaw's comedy **Arms And The Man**, directed by Festival honcho Jackie Maxwell in the Festival Theatre, alternating with the Cole Porter musical **High Society** starring Camilla Scott. **The Heiress**, the Ruth and Augusta Goetz drama, is at The Royal George Theatre. In previews at The Court

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entrance), Burlington.

**Kensington Gallery**, 235 Kensington Ave. N. 905-544-1246

■ Shipman: Placed in Light. Until June 9.

**Loose Canon Gallery**, 150 James St. N. Open 12 to 8 p.m., Wed. to Sat. 905-515-4346

■ 52 photographs from a blockparentcommunity's J.D. Howell. Until May 26.

**McMaster Museum of Art**, Alvin A. Lee Building, McMaster University, University Avenue at Sterling Street. Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tues., Wed., Fri.; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thurs.; noon to 5 p.m., Sat. 905-525-9140, ext. 23081

■ 705,600, an exhibition titled to signify the number of dollars spent on tuition and art supplies by students. School of Arts' annual graduating students' exhibition. Until May 27.

■ In Excess. Until June 29.

■ Embodied Matter. Until May 28.

■ Herman H. Levy Collection: Works by Monet, Caillebotte, van Gogh, Soutine and others

**Niagara Artists' Company**, 354 St. Paul St., St.

Catharines. 905-641-0331 or [nac.org](http://nac.org)

■ Fancy Planet by Kevin Richardson. Until May 26 in the Dennis Tourbin Members' Gallery

■ Hluboke (Deep Waters): An installation by Lenka Novakova-Anjo, with audio by Marinko Jareb. Until June 17.

**Norfolk Studio Tour**

■ 2006 Studio Tour Brochure Launch takes place 2 p.m. on June 1 at the Studio of Joanne Munzar, 33 Willowdale Cres., Port Dover. RSVP by May 29 to 519-583-1630 or e-mail [donna.mcmillan@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:donna.mcmillan@mohawkcollege.ca)

**Norfolk Heritage Centre at Eva Brook Donly Museum**, Simcoe. 109 Norfolk St. S., Simcoe. 519-426-1583

■ Open House Day for May is Museum Month takes place May 20, featuring new exhibits: Whirligigs & Whimsies and Winds of Change. Meet whirligig collectors, Ellen McIntosh Green and Terry Green (in early afternoon). Viewing of new donations of artifacts, hands-on history for kids, refreshments. Free admission.

**Parker Pearce Gallery**, 158 James St. S. 905-525-1399

■ Sea & Sky Scapes, paintings by Doug MacBean and Robin Laffler

**The Print Studio**, Hamilton Printmakers Arts Association, 173 James St. N. 905-524-5084

■ Mary Wardle: Nature's Stories, a collection of delicate collographs recording the textures of nature and time in a series of original fine art prints. Until June 2.

**Sunrise Gallery**, 765 Beach Blvd., 12 to 5 p.m., Tues., Thurs., Sat., Sun. 905-549-5888

■ Sandee Ewasiuk: By the Sea. Until May 27.

■ Cindy Riach: A Few of My Favourite Things. Until May 27.

**Textures Gallery**, 236 Locke St. S. Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 905-523-0636

■ Here Comes The Sun: Special pieces for home and garden. Until May 29.

■ Over The Rainbow: A colourful selection of items in a rainbow theme. May 30 to June 19

**Transit Gallery**, 230 Locke St. S. Open from 10

a.m. to 6 p.m., Tues. to Sat.; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Fri.; and 12 to 4 p.m., Sun. 905-522-1299

■ Since I Left You, paintings by John Kennedy. Until May 28.

■ Camouflage, photographs by Amy Creighton. Until May 28.

**Under the Moon**, 170 James St. N. (at Cannon) 905-529-4461. Open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wed., Thurs. and Sat.; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fri.

■ Historical and contemporary art.

**you me gallery**, 330 James St. N. 905-523-7754. Open noon to 5 p.m., Wed. to Sun.

■ A tree is one kind of sound. Sound, another kind of tree, installation by Nora Hutchinson, with kitchen string, birchbark and wall hanging by Ruth Oldham. Until May 27.

## Theatre

**Local Now playing**  
**Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning**