

The Home Country Folk Festival

There I was, taking a stroll in the Park, sauntering through vendors booths, listening to side stage artists of all sorts and generally feeling really laid back and comfortable on a beautiful mid July's day.

What more can I say about going to a folk festival.... The energy inside of me is so charged.



The weather was fabulous, the atmosphere perfect and the energy, did I mention charged? Smiles on everyone's faces, the smell of every imaginable fair food permeating the air, wall to wall artisans and a media pass to talk to the artists performing on the last day of the festival.

For those that have attended any folk festival of sorts, things are pretty low key, security is at a minimum and artists flow freely around the stage and in festival areas. It's not like going to experience the Rolling Stones or any other world renowned group. This event seems to me like one big happy family and their energies surely amplified this.

This day was the last day of a three day event and I am sad to say that I missed the other two days.

On this late day and evening there was some of greats of the Canadian Folk scene. I am not saying that the other days did not have some world class artists also. The list of performers was endless.



While making our way around the festival area, awaiting the start of the evening's lineup, I came across a side stage where some good old fashioned folk was being performed. Upon closer investigation, I noticed that one of the performers was the evening's main stage star,

[Valdy](#). Not wishing to pass up the opportunity to grab a few words with this icon of Canadian folk, I stayed to the end and waited for him to come to the side of the stage to harness some of him for our magazine.

It was a laid back few minutes as you could ever ask for. Valdy is a person of such inspiring magic who was very personable and always the jokester. We joked about Bob Dylan playing a tribute CD to [Valdy](#) and I for one will continue to wait for this one to hit the stores. Cards get exchanged, a few more laughs and a couple of photos and it was time to move on.



A beautiful artist and top notch organizer for the event, Catherine McInnes, had given us access to the side area where all the performers were slated to be around. As a performer, Catherine is also someone to take note of. Her latest CD is called Exposed and it flows with her passions.



By the time we had arrived to the stage area, Manitoba Hal had already hit the stage.



Manitoba Hal is a songwriter whose sound is rooted in the delta and piedmont styles of the blues. He tempers his finger picking style with a sharp sense of humor and gritty lyrics punctuated by the smooth slide of a veteran blues master. Like anyone whose name is a place, Manitoba Hal wears his love for his roots on his sleeve. But those roots aren't just in the prairie soil. Hal's got a songwriter's roots in eerie folk - murder ballads and killer floods - and a player's roots in the deep, dark, fixin' to die blues. This is a man who can sing the word "lonesome" like he means it, and no mistake.

What an beautiful treat to listen to this master songwriter and musician. You can read more about Manitoba Hal here:

[Manitoba Hal](#)

Next up was Paul Mills....



Paul has been part of the Canadian folk music scene and recording industry for over thirty years. He has produced over 100 albums working with artists such as the late Stan Rogers (all but one of Rogers' albums were produced by Mills), Sharon, Lois and Bram, Terry Kelly, Ron Hynes and John Allan Cameron. He is a founding partner of the ["Borealis Recording Company"](#) and he owns and operates his own production company and recording studio called ["The Millstream"](#) in Toronto. It was a real treat to see Paul's son Trevor performing with him. What an added boost to an already superb set.



Hitting the stage next was Andrea Koziol. A voice that sings like morning birds and a presence that just begs your ears to keep listening as her softness yet commanding voice settles you down into a space of beauty. Her website is here:

[Andrea Koziol](#)

One of Cape Breton's most promising young fiddlers, Andrea Beaton comes by her music honestly. Listen to her play, the power of her bow, the drive and swing of her timing, the crispness of her attack. She's making a name for herself in dance halls, concerts, ceilidhs, and festivals. Like the compelling tradition she represents, her reputation is growing, spreading beyond the island. [Andrea Beaton](#) seems destined for great things.





[Troy MacGillivray's](#) musical prowess can be attributed to an especially rare combination of commitment and bloodline. By the age of six, Troy was already impressing audiences with his step dancing skills. By 13 he was teaching piano at the renowned Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts in St. Anne's, Cape Breton. He has completed grade seven of the Toronto

Conservatory of Music for classical piano, has spent four years in a stringed orchestra and has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in music from St. Francis Xavier University.

Now place these two on stage together and just watch your feet start to move with ease. A totally enjoyable experience watching as the crowd begins to kick up their heels and enjoy the magic from eastern Canada.

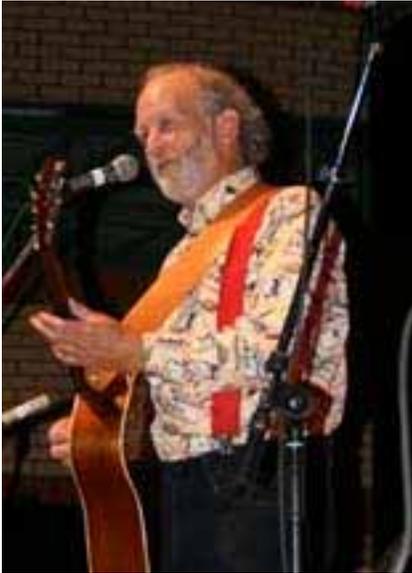


[DALA](#) is their name, and melting your hardened heart is their game. This was the second last act to perform. Amanda and Sheila, with vocal harmonies guaranteed to give you chills; the girls also make use of their talents on guitar and piano to create their unique brand of acoustic pop. Dala has won over audiences at festivals across the country, and their fun and energetic stage presence made them a hit on

their recent tour opening for Canadian legend Tom Cochrane. It was more than a treat to hear and be a part of them, if only for a bit less than an hour. Be sure and watch for these rising stars.



Finally, one of the original performers who played some 34 years ago at the opening of this folk festival in London, the man from Saltspring Island: [VALDY](#).



Valdy is a performer that could never just stand still while at the microphone. He loves to jig and jag his feet – often in his classic red runners – every which way but at the same time he does not miss a word to the mike.

He is someone that works his magic addressing environmental concerns and many social causes but not in a violent or angry manner but rather with, using every level of his truly soft and sweet tones.

I first came across this Valdemar Horsdal way back in the early seventies in Ottawa Canada. From that point in time forward, I have been graced to see many of his performances, both as a solo act or with other world caliber artists. This evening was a solo act but one that had the crowd jumping from the get go.

From his Juno Award winning hits, to east coast folk rap style, through his soft pulling ballads and his audience shouting chorus, he jiggled and jagged ever so gracefully through them all.

Valdy is the character who can only be described as the salt of the earth and it seems so fitting for him to be living on Saltspring Island British Columbia. We thank you Valdy, for bringing your magic back to this corner of the world in a way that you can only do.



The finale was for any performer that played and all of the volunteers at the festival to jump up to the stage and help with the two song

Grande encore. Talk about a real up



lifting ending, with each performer taking center stage for a brief moment. It was a perfect way to end an outstanding day of energy and entertainment.

Throughout the whole evening, I was very fortunate to speak to numerous performers that I had not had the chance to witness on stage from the other two days events. They all had their magic and shared a little bit of it with me in a few quick photos and words. Please check out their websites also as they are all playing with real powerful magic.

So once again, Kat and I jumped back in our old reliable car and made the hour ride back to home base with our minds going over the many performances and our hearts soaring in that beautiful energy place.

Till next year, when we revisit the Home Country Folk Festival.

Peace and Love

[Wayne Parker](#)

[Email Wayne](#)

Kat's 2 Cents



While I was thrilled to meet and talk with Valdy, Wayne was on cloud 9. He has met Valdy before and has always spoken so highly of him. I am thrilled that he was able to reconnect with one of the individuals that he admires so very much. Wayne just fits with the theme so very well; as you can see by the picture. Though he fits in other circles just as well, I could tell there was an ease about that day for him. I loved the whole day and I loved watching Wayne have so much fun!!