

Potton gets the blues with Montreal musician, Rob Lutes



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

On Saturday, February 20, the Misisquoi North Youth Centre (CAB) in Potton welcomed Montreal bluesman, Rob Lutes for a musical evening that featured some of the best blues music around. The intimate space at the Youth Centre was transformed into a café type candlelit scene as some 60 people gathered to bathe in the sweet lyrics and masterful picking of Lutes and his guitar.

According to the website, <http://www.maplemusic.com/> "This Montreal-based, maritime-born artist spent ten years as a writer/editor, before discovering that song writing and performing was what he was called to do full time. Evolving his own signature style with his richly textured vocals and earthy feel, Rob steadily gained ground nationally in Canada by playing prestigious festivals such as the Montreal In-

ternational Jazz Festival, the Ottawa BluesFest and the Stan Rogers Festival. Rob has also been featured in various Canadian television appearances and national radio broadcasts, and has had several of his songs recorded by other artists. In Canada he has released three CD's, Gravity in 2000, Middle Ground in 2002 and Ride the Shadows in 2006."

Opening for Lutes on Saturday evening was Former Youth Involvement (FYI) members, Jason Forget and Ethan Ball who performed their version of Chris Stapleton's Tennessee Whiskey as well as a few other popular numbers.

Saturday evening's performance was Lutes second visit to the Youth Centre in Mansonville. The musician has also animated a song writing workshop for the group a few years ago as part of a leadership retreat weekend and now has a devoted following of youth who admire both his talent and his love for music; something that the youth can relate to.

Lutes has a variety of cd's to purchase including a collaborative effort recorded live at the Red Room (former Auberge Glen Sutton) with another talented artist, Rob MacDonald. Lutes is also a part of the band, Sussex.

Sussex recently launched their debut CD "Parade Day." This Montreal band features Rob Lutes, Michael Emenau, Josh Zubot, Sage Reynolds and Ivan Jolicoeur. Sussex skillfully blends violin, acoustic bass, trumpet, guitar and vibraphone transporting you to another

time, with artfully crafted songs.

If you have not had the pleasure of hearing Rob Lutes perform, visit his website to purchase a cd, you will be glad you did. Rob is a master at inspiring and engaging youth of all ages when offering a workshop and this is just another of his talents. For the youth of Potton, Lutes has become a friend and they hope

to welcome him to the Centre for many years to come.

To find out more about Rob Lutes visit his website at: <http://www.roblutes.com/>
For more about Sussex visit: <http://www.sussexmusic.ca>

For more information about the Misisquoi North Youth Centre visit: www.cabmn.org



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Slightly Haggard

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In December, they played at The Lion for a food and toy drive before Christmas. Other gigs in recent months include Cookshire and Ayer's Cliff fairs, the Ayer's Cliff Music festival (benefiting the Make a Wish Foundation), dances for the Sawyerville and Hatley 4H Clubs and a benefit for Pope Memorial Elementary School.

Slightly Haggard has been affiliated with hundreds of fundraising efforts in the region.

Curtis said that after an event, somebody usually lets the band know how

much the dance raised.

"I couldn't even make a guess," Curtis said, when asked for a dollar figure for how much money the band has helped raise over the years.

"It's not just the dance, there are a lot of other things too," Curtis insisted, regarding the fundraisers the band participates in. "The organizers do a lot of work and promotion. We just have to go and sing and play and have a good time," Curtis said.

"We can't do it all for nothing," Curtis said, explaining that the band does get paid for their performances.

"We have to charge to cover our

costs," he said, but the band's fee won't make them rich.

In addition to contributing to fundraising efforts, Slightly Haggard is filling another void in the community; Townshippers love a good dance.

"Around 25-30 years ago there were bands playing everywhere," Curtis said. "That's what you did on a Saturday night."

"Now it's more of an event," he said. Curtis said he only knows of three or four other active bands in the area.

"I guess it's a good excuse to have a dance," Curtis said, happy to be associated with community groups and pro-

vide the music.

He also said he was pleased to see a fair number of younger people at dances who still know how to two-step.

Slightly Haggard's next appearance will be at the Stanstead Firefighter's Dance at LeBaron Hall, 450 Dufferin on March 19.

There is a whole generation of Townshippers whose parents met at Nick Dean's barn dance or some similar event 60 years ago.

Slightly Haggard, arguably the hardest working band on the local fundraising circuit, could very well be the common bond for future generations.



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