

The best of the bands

A few acts stood out from middling lineup during Canadian Music Week

There's quiet in the clubs, snoring in the offices and leftover booze fumes in the air... it must mean another edition of Canadian Music Week has been folded into the archives.

This year CMW offered a less-than-earth-shattering lineup filled with musicians who already play the same clubs every month. Still, some shows are definitely worthy of comment.

At the very top of that list was C'mon's sweaty, intense, thrilling show at the Bovine on Friday. The band, featuring singer/guitarist/producer/national treasure Ian Blurton, Nashville Pussy's Katie Lynn on bass and powerhouse drummer Randy Curnew, blasted the packed crowd with a sound that brought a little more Southern groove to Blurton's usual angular rock. Sometimes the soulful, heavy grooves got positively Hendrixian. The equation was something like Blurtonia plus sex equals C'mon. Can't wait for more.

The other standout was the visitation from Nardwuar the Human Serviette and the Evaporators, who wrapped things up Saturday at the Horseshoe. Following an energetic set by fellow Vancouverites the Smugglers, Nardwuar and co. came out swinging, with the irrepressible, over-the-top frontman jumping up and down and screaming out the lyrics to songs like (*I Gotta Disease*) *I'm Addicted To*

Cheese, *Gerda Munsinger*, *Cardboard Brains* — a left-field tribute to the Toronto punk band — and *I Feel Like A Fat Frustrated F***k*.

But wait, there's more: Toward the end of the set Nardwuar — also a Canadian music historian of sorts — brought out one-time metal howler/body-builder Thor to sing a couple of songs and prove his lungpower by blowing up a hot water bottle. FYI, Thor's got a new album, and plays the 360 Thursday without benefit of Human Serviette.

A somewhat more muted CMW highlight came in the form of Aaron Booth's understated show at Healey's Saturday. Booth is obviously unfamiliar with the concept of over-the-top performance, but he writes simply beautiful songs and

sings them with passion and style. His fine new album, *Our Last Escape*, is out this week.

On Thursday, Lee's Palace hosted the welcome return of Montreal's Tricky Woo after an ill-advised hiatus. From the first notes it was clear that the Woo — left out when Jet borrowed their sound and hit big — would return to the fast-paced rock that made their name, rather than continuing their prog tendencies. Yay! Too bad the A&R reps there to see the very ordinary Shaker had moved on to some other inexplicable attraction.

When By Divine Right emerged at the Horseshoe Friday, there were so many people onstage I thought they had morphed into Broken Social Scene. It turned out the superfluous percussion-beaters were contest winners of some sort. From his state of bliss, frontman Jose Contreras led the motley crew in the funky tunes from the band's upcoming album, *Sweet Confusion*.

Other highlights included Detective Kalita's sweet Christmas tunes at Healey's Friday and The Curfew's VU/Modern Lovers guitar at Clinton's Saturday — although one or other of the singers should really take centre stage.



Mary
Dickie
Club Watch



NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE, left, and Ian Blurton, above.

