

Healy and Orr

“Music is everywhere”

By Phillip Melchers



Music has the ability to show us how much the times have changed over the years. This is because music changes approximately every ten years, which in turn changes us with it. People tend to become the music they listen to, tend to stick to the sounds they enjoy. However, with music changing so much, sometimes it becomes difficult to stay with a particular sound. After awhile, people begin to prefer their music nostalgically, instead of progressively. Some people would even say that music can die, that it can be lost, that the spirit of their music could one day just evaporate from existence. Fortunately, these people are wrong. Find yourself in the right kind of bar, on the right kind of night with a band like Healy and Orr, and you'll discover that the spirit of a generation supposedly once lost, remains alive in the music that they play.

Chances are you've already heard of them, Healy and Orr, the self-identified world's smallest trio, who are often seen playing at local festivals like Ribfest or inside bars like Brockville's Key Storm pub. The band is comprised of two members, Doug Healy and Randy Orr, lifelong friends who've known each other since Kindergarten and have been playing music together ever since their public school band. As their own band, the two wouldn't officially play together until the tail end of high school, performing

under the name "Greed" in either their living room or at whatever gigs they could find. Then, sometime in the early 90's, the two began playing under the name Healy and Orr. Since then the two have been playing together performing where they can, whenever they can, always carrying an enthusiasm for music, and a desire to have fun.

This enthusiasm is obvious in the way they talk about music, which is to say, quite fondly. When asked what style they prefer to play they answered with some trepidation. They referred to themselves as "eclectic", saying that for them there really are only two styles of music, "the good and the bad." Even though their first album, *Old Dirt Roads* seems to have been more country inspired ("Country with no twang," says Randy), they defended themselves by claiming that it felt like the right thing to do at the time and not necessarily reflective of all that they play. As it says on the band's Facebook page, "redneck to black tie...Healy and Orr do it all..."

With how long the band has been together, it's evident that this love of music is deeply rooted within their lives. Both band members said they grew up in musical households. Randy himself told of how accepting his parents were, telling a story of how at one point he had even surrendered his own bedroom for the purpose of turning it into a micro studio (the bed became wall-

padding and he slept on the floor). Also remembered during these younger years is how both band members used to sit on their porch back home and listen to their 8track over and over. Since then, from what would be simpler times towards what is now their adulthood, it would seem little has changed within these life-long friends.

Of course, life has changed for the two who nowadays both have their own families and work. However, despite the fact that these extra-responsibilities might hinder the band's play time, it has not stopped the band completely from performing. At first they may seem like crusaders on some kind of quest to keep the spirit of their 8track yesteryears alive, but this is not so. The only spirit they wish to keep alive is the spirit of performing itself. In the end, it's all about the connections they make with their audience. Whatever comes out of their performance, if they see at least one person enjoying themselves they believe they've done their job right. When asked why they play music they responded with, "It makes people feel good. It makes people feel." What's the secret of their popularity then? Well, it's all about having fun. If they are having fun, they know their audience is having fun too.

There's a lot to be said about the direction that music is headed these days. In an age where entire orchestras of sound can be replicated on a switchboard, it would be hard to not wonder what exactly is going to happen to the authenticity of music. With Healy and Orr however, a new perspective is granted as the band has its own technological benefactor, an automated drum. In the absence of a third member, and yes they are looking, the automated drum has become a worthy stand-in, just another tool, like any other instrument that benefits their performance.

The truth is, even in a world as increasingly digital as the one we live in now, the spirit of music, of any music, can never really be fully lost. Music is one the most human things we have, an organism without a body that evolves beside us, remaining co-existent within us all. As both Randy and Doug believe, "Music is everywhere" and although the sound may change, the message does not. Music is indeed about feeling, about finding connection, and as long as we connect, as long as we feel, then the spirit of music is still very much alive. Whether it's just two Brockville folks having a jam on stage, or a performer in front of thousands of fans. As long as we can feel it in our toes, then music will remain as it is: The soul of us all. **LH**