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MUSIC FEATURE

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Scenes From A Marin

Roger Marin gave up an engineering job in Toronto to become a traveling pedal steel guitarist
Published August 13, 2009 by Tom Murray in Music Feature

ROGER MARIN BAND

w/ Gordie Tentrees, The Guaranteed, The Swiftys. The Pawn Shop (10551-82 Ave). Fri, Aug 14 (8pm).
Tickets:\$10, available at the door.

If you see Roger Marin sketching away at a picture in the bar before a show, best to give him some room — he might be writing a song.

"I know it sounds weird," says the Ontario native backstage after playing with The Swiftys, The Skydiggers, and Alex Cuba at a workshop stage during the Folk Fest. "It's not like I'm a great painter or anything, but it's something I like to do — I'll sketch something out and then write a song about it. Matter of fact, there's a song from my first record called 'Bar of Broken Hearts' which came from a sketch I did of a bar before playing."

Marin has been sketching and writing for years now, starting a while after he picked up the pedal steel guitar at the urging of family members: "My dad was a singer, my uncle a guitarist — he was the one that showed me how to play the electric guitar. I wanted to play in the band, but dad said, "That's Uncle Bob's job; if you want to play with us, you've got to learn to play the pedal steel."

Determined to enter the family business, Marin dutifully made his way to the music store, where he picked up his very first instrument. He fell in love with it right away, kicking off an after-school career with the family band as well as any number of honky tonk combos zipping up and down the 401 through Ontario. By the time he was 17, he was up to five nights a week, sometimes seven.

He dropped off when he entered university to study mechanical engineering, graduating and taking a well-paying position in Toronto. He still had the fever, though; while commuting between his new job and his home in St. Catherines, Marin would stop in and look at pedal steels in music stores along the way. While trying one out at a particular store, the owner suddenly took an interest and asked for his number.

"I thought that was kind of weird, but whatever," Marin shrugs. "Then I got a call from Fred Eaglesmith saying that his friend had seen me play, and would I like to join his band?"

Marin begged off, citing his comfortable job, but Eaglesmith continued calling. Eventually Marin realized that his heart lay with music — he joined up with Eaglesmith, kicking off a career that's seen him on the road for over 250 nights a year since.

"That was 12 years ago," Marin muses now. "I've been across Canada, the States, Europe, Australia — and I love it."

Now on his third record after leaving Eaglesmith to form his own band, Marin has been criss-crossing the continent as hard as his teacher, with longtime collaborators Phil Bosley (bass, vocals) and Matt Keighan (drums, vocals) in tow, recently adding new guitarist Mike Tuyp to the mix. The new CD is a throwback to live off the floor after the lushly produced *High Roads*, and the only reason why it won't be available for purchase when he shows up this Friday is that Marin hasn't quite finished with it — testament to the seriousness with which he takes his craft.

"It's all done, all of it, except that I decided I needed one more verse for this particular song," he laughs. "It's taken me two months to write this verse — hopefully it won't take as long to record it."



Supplied

Hurry Up And Write That Final Verse, Roger | Roger Marin is really cutting it close with the finishing touches on his latest CD.

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