

# GREAT BIG SEA

(bio from Great Big Sea website)

Great Big Sea is a bastard. Forged from the loins of Figgy Duff and Ryan's Fancy, GBS found its feet on the unforgiving streets of St. John's, and stood their ground when others faltered. When asked about their unlikely success, founding member Bob Hallett is typically candid: "We weren't the best musicians in town," he says, "we just wanted it more. We were driven by a bloody-minded need to succeed and we were rewarded for our bleeding."

The band dragged themselves out of the city's infamous bars to release their Warner debut *Up* in the spring of 1995. Relentless touring and a raucous live show quickly propelled the record to platinum. Their next effort *Play* enjoyed even bigger success and the band moved its show into hockey stadiums across the nation.

The US labels took notice and GBS was subsequently signed to Sire by Seymour Stein (Madonna/Talking Heads), who unleashed the band on an unsuspecting American public. Accolades and a solid cult following ensued. "We are showmen and we live and die by our trade," offers electrified lead singer Alan Doyle. "I am drawn to the light and I was born to burn".

Born and raised in 'the far east of the western world', the lads have traversed the globe, all the while wearing their hometown on their sleeves. "Our music is of Newfoundland," explains McCann. "It would be impossible to do what we do if we were from anywhere else. Our songs come from the sea and the cliffs and the rocks and all the other natural beauties our country provides. Without her we simply couldn't exist."

For this, their ninth album, the band made the surprise choice to work with indie gadfly Hawksley Workman.

"We wanted to push ourselves, to be surprised by our own music," said Hallett, "and Hawksley was the right pilot for the flight...or the fight, depending on the circumstances."

A remarkable 15 years in, the band should by this time be content to slow down and rest on their laurels. Instead, *Fortune's Favour* sees them boldly embracing new sounds and new ideas, fearlessly pushing the boundaries of their own art and music. In their lifelong quest to marry the traditional music of Newfoundland with their own pop explorations, *Fortune's Favour* is a new benchmark.

"We embraced the law of the road when we started this, and we apply the same rules to our music," explains Doyle. "If you are not going forwards, you are going backwards. And we hate retracing our steps."

"This album is a stew of all our influences," adds Hallett. "Bob Marley, the Clash, Fergus O'Byrne, Ron Hynes, Johnny Cash, Donal Lunny, and who knows what else. So who better to sum it all up than C.S. Lewis: 'Further in and further up.'"

Alan Doyle, Sean McCann, and Bob Hallett still live, breath, and create in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their ninth studio recording, *Fortune's Favour* will be released on June 24th.

Read Great Big Sea's 2005 bio for *The Hard and The Easy*