

GREW UP IMMERSSED IN MUSIC

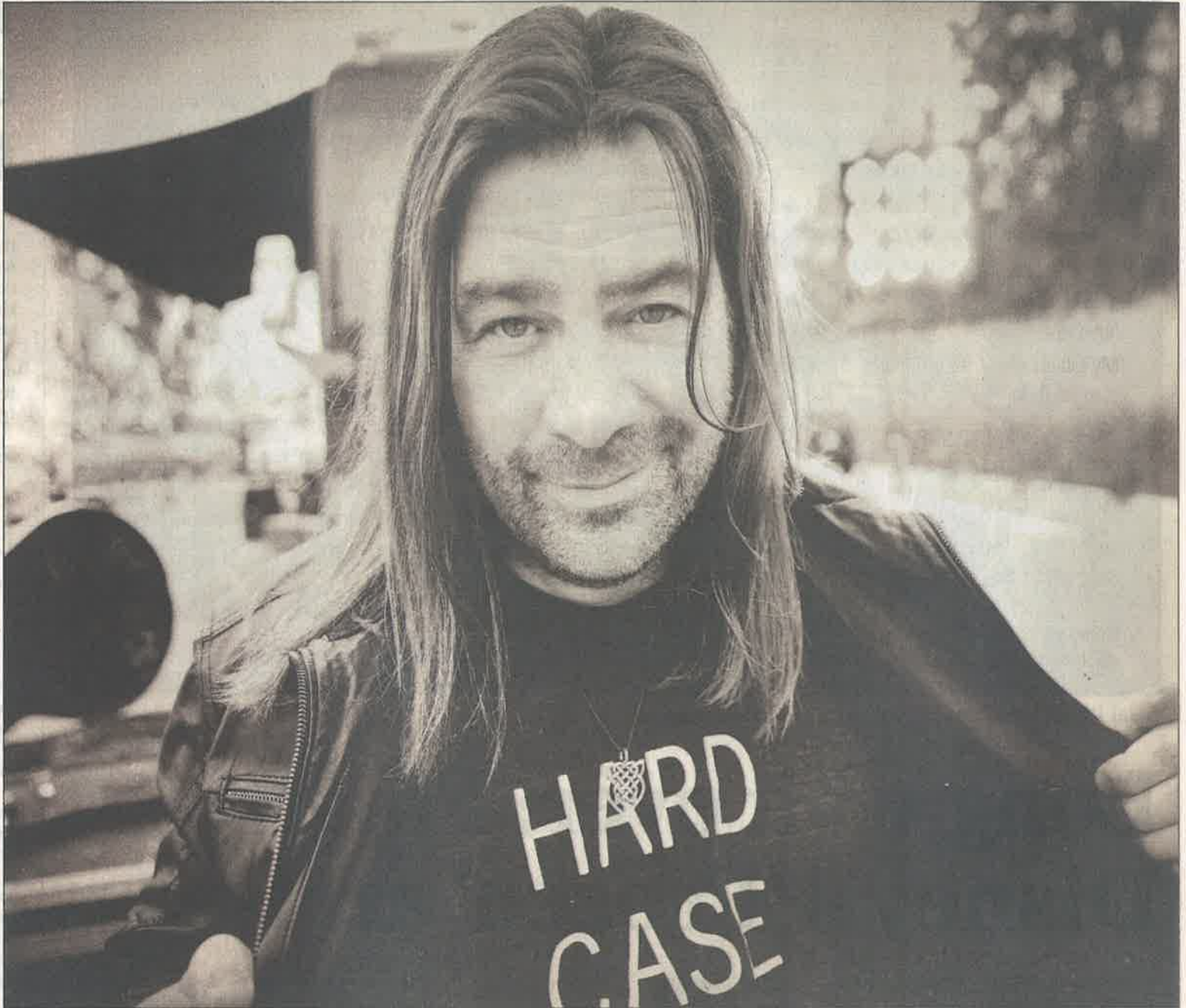


Photo by Margaret Malandrucolo

Alan Doyle, spirited folk-rock musician and songwriter, will be at The Kate.

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For Alan Doyle, luck's got nothing to do with it

Newfoundlander to raise the rafters at The Kate April 15

By Lisa Reisman

OLD SAYBROOK — Newfoundland's Alan Doyle, the spirited folk-rock musician and song-



"I want to give everyone the greatest night out of their life."

Alan Doyle

writer who will be appearing at The Kate on Sunday, April 15, counts himself the luckiest guy in the world.

Just listen to him sing about it.

Take "Somewhere in a Song," a tribute to his parents, on his latest album, "A Week at the Warehouse." The song's opening line comes directly from his father when asked how the elder Doyles had gotten together.

"My father answered, 'that's simple I suppose, she could play and I could sing,'" said Doyle, in a recent interview from Newfoundland, adding he didn't realize until he was an adult that his family had been poor.

"It is notable that when I was a kid, we had a piano, an accordion, and a guitar, but we did not have a fully functioning bathroom or a car," he said. "The song is a celebration of my mom and dad's attitude that you spend exactly none of your time worrying about the stuff you don't have and exactly all your time making the most of what you do have."

Then there's "Summer, Summer Night," an upbeat Celtic country number about summer nights in Petty Harbour, a fishing village in Newfoundland, when he was a young adult, playing guitar and singing with his friends around a bonfire on the beach.

And "Bully Boys," a rousing sea shanty that the 48-year-old adapted for Ridley Scott's 2010 film version of "Robin Hood" starring Russell Crowe; he and Crowe have also toured together. Like "Summer, Summer Night," it's a song rooted in Doyle's own history. It's also guaranteed to "make you want to push back the furniture and dance your partner around the room," as music critic Doug Gallant put it.

Listen closely to the end of the track and you'll hear a bark of laughter that betrays a live perfor-



Contributed photo

The cover of his latest album, *A Week At The Warehouse*

mance. To hear Doyle, tell it, he and his band went into the studio with the idea they would be doing pre-production demos for the record.

Enter legendary producer Bob Rock, who's helmed projects for everyone from Bryan Adams to Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, and Metallica, and co-founded the pop-punk band The Payola\$. He deemed Doyle's group "so prepared, so ready to go that they recorded the album on the spot," Gallant recounted.

"It was an old-school way to make music: put a band in a really good room, set them up, press the red button and have them play stuff from beginning to end," Doyle told the Montreal Gazette.

"When you look at the high-end, world-class guys, there's not many left who are doing it that way," he added. Bob Rock was one of them. "And it was just great luck that he was eager and

willing to do it, that we found the right combination of time and studio, and threw everybody in there and hoped for some lightning to strike."

Doubtless the famed Warehouse Studio — the Bryan-Adams-owned music recording facility based in the oldest brick building in Vancouver—helped the album "capture the immediacy and the energy of the moment," as the Guardian put it.

As did his band. "I was lucky to have met Sean and Bob and Darrell as soon as I got out of university," Doyle said, referring to the members of Great Big Sea, the platinum-selling Canadian group that fused traditional Newfoundland music with their own pop sensibilities.

"They were people with completely different skill sets than mine off the stage, so we could get stuff done."

Then, in 2015, Great Big Sea

Alan Doyle

"happily retired," as Doyle put it. Determined to pursue a solo career, he "had a wish list of friends of mine who I met over the last decade or more," he told music writer Jordan Zivitz.

"I am the worst person by far," he added, of The Beautiful Band that includes fiddler Kendel Carson, Cory Tetford on guitar, drummer Kris MacFarlane, Todd Lumley on keyboard and accordion, and bassist Shehab Illyas. "I wish I was being modest. They're an incredible band to sing with every night. I look around the stage and I can't believe my luck."

The result on "Week at the Warehouse": "an infectious blend of old and new styles that deftly combines facets of folk, rock, country and even traditional maritime shanties," writes music critic Greg Yost of New Depression, a journal of roots music.

The mission on stage, according to Doyle, who the Ottawa Citizen called "ever the master storyteller, telling some of the tall tales behind his best-loved tunes," is similar.

"I want to give everyone the greatest night out of their life. I can honestly see no other way to approach a performance. I'm all in every single time the curtain calls."

No luck to that.

Alan Doyle, featuring The Beautiful Band, appears at the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center at 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 15 at 300 Main St., Old Saybrook. For tickets and information, visit www.katharinehepburntheater.org or call 877-503-1286. Fortunate Ones will open.

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