



Spirit Ship II, by Fine Arts student Scott MacLeod. He will be performing *A Brief Canadian History* at Hurley's Irish Pub, located at 1225 Crescent St, this Thursday, March 14, 6-8:30 p.m.

Scott MacLeod picks up the pieces

BY ANNA BRATULIC

One day in 1989, Scott MacLeod, devastated by a personal tragedy, walked out of Concordia and flunked out of university. He had been pursuing a Fine Arts degree with a specialization in printmaking and was close to completing it when his father's death in a plane crash made coping with the occupations of student life seem trivial.

MacLeod spent the next 12 years making his living singing, playing guitar in pubs and selling his paintings — mostly landscapes, which he doesn't seem particularly fond of doing, but that's what people seem to want, he says. He has assembled quite a CV list of exhibits and art residencies around the world, including Spain, Ireland, Austria and Italy. It wasn't always easy; he admits to having had to go to food banks.

Last fall, he returned to Concordia to finish

his Fine Arts degree. At 37, MacLeod seems like a keen student, the kind who often chats with his professors after class.

"Many teachers had said to me, 'Scott, just get the BA, it's always a stepping stone.' In my experience, I can't stress enough the importance of having an undergraduate degree. I think it really is a necessary tool in your kit. I know it wasn't the attitude I had at the time. Maybe that's the good thing about getting older. You start to see the purpose in things, whereas when you're young, you're a little more reckless about your future.

"I'll never say 'should have, could have, would have.' I'm just doing it and it's been a real pleasure to come back here, because a lot of the academic courses I'm doing now, electives like Early Medieval History and Irish History, relate to my research," he said.

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The renaissance of Scott MacLeod

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MacLeod's work, both as a musician and as a painter, is heavy with history. He credits his grandfather, a history teacher and Scottish culture buff who found out that the Scottish name MacLeod is actually of Norse descent, for the genesis of his latest project.

Ancestral Homes is a series of paintings that traces his lineage from Scandinavia to the Hebrides of Scotland to Cape Breton, where his ancestors settled in the 1800s. The works will be exhibited this summer as part of a travelling exhibit at the Swedish American Museum Centre in Chicago, and then at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle early next year.

MacLeod also recently recorded *A Brief Canadian History*, a CD with catchy songs about many aspects of Canadiana, from the life of Louis Riel to Quebec's language laws. The CD is part of a larger educational package that takes MacLeod to schools to perform the songs and answer questions.

While he mulls over whether to pursue a master's, he doesn't think he's spreading himself too thin.

"I'm a believer in the Renaissance approach. I think you can do many things and they support each other. If you look at Da Vinci, he was an architect, a painter, a scientist — he had all kinds of interests. And I don't think that's reserved for just great men and women."

Scott MacLeod's website is www.macleod9.com.