

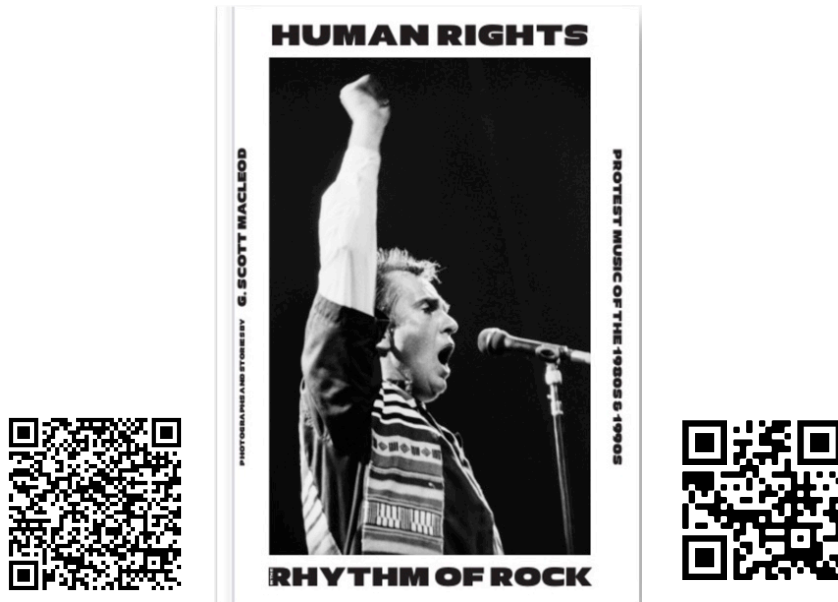


Press Kit

Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock Protest Music of the 1980s and 1990s

Book and photos by G. Scott MacLeod -

<https://www.lulu.com/shop/g-scott-macleod/human-rights-in-the-rhythm-of-rock/paperback/product-m2z5796.html>



<https://www.macleod9.com/ror/>

The book of photos and stories focuses on the *Human Rights Now!* concert in 1988, a six-week tour that raised awareness for the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights & Amnesty International's work in social justice.

Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock Protest Music of the 1980s and 1990s is an enlightening, enriching and entertaining exploration of the rise of socially conscious music of the 1980s & 1990s through some never-before-seen photos and accompanying text by photojournalist G. Scott MacLeod.

G. Scott MacLeod Photographing Leonard Cohen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrg2njHSrkQ>

Human Rights Now! 1988 Olympic Stadium Montreal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJMEF1Zf1DA>

Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock is an enriching look at an important era in music. It seemed to be a moment when we went from "sex, drugs & rock 'n roll" to socially conscious lyrics that had deeper meaning.

Christine Long
CTV Montreal Journalist



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All in a Weekend with Sonali Karnick



Book and Exhibition "Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock: Protest Music of the 1980s and 1990s "

10 mins

Dec. 14, 2025

Photojournalist G.Scott MacLeod tells us about his experience capturing some of the biggest names in music who were also raising awareness and funds for social causes, including Leonard Cohen, Sting and Sinead O'Connor, for the now-defunct Montreal Mirror.

He exhibit is at La Galerie Espace, from December 17th to 23rd and you can find info for the book here: <https://www.macleod9.com/ror/>

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<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-78-all-in-a-weekend/clip/16187592-book-exhibition-human-rights-rhythm-rock-protest-music>

Sonali Karnick
All in a Weekend CBC Montreal

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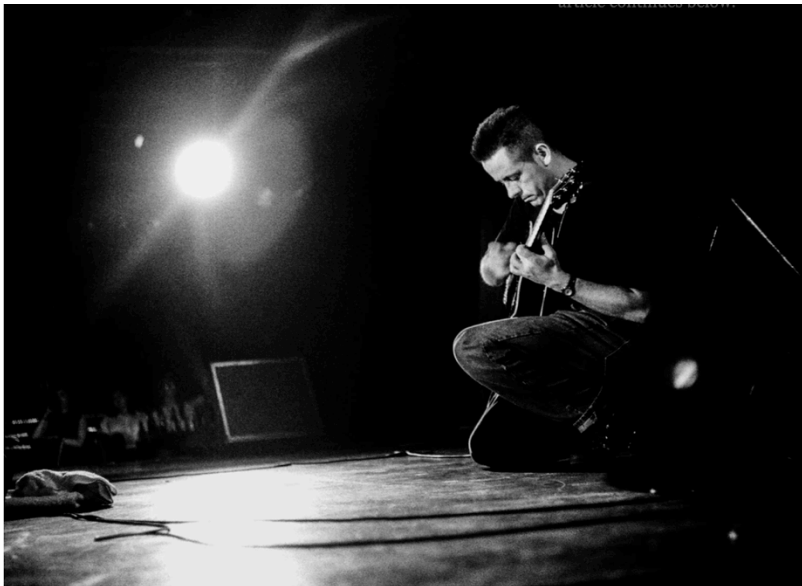
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Friday on My Mind: Parisian jazz singer Gabi Hartmann returns to tap into the energy of Montreal fans

Also this weekend: a documentary about the Coro de Manos Blancas, Newfoundland folk-rocker Alan Doyle, punk rockers Vulgaires Machins and a book-signing event with G. Scott MacLeod.

By Brendan Kelly • Montreal Gazette

Published Mar 13, 2026 Last updated 6 days ago 4 minute read



Luka Bloom performs at Club Soda in 1990 in a photo taken by G. Scott MacLeod, which is included in his book Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock: Protest Music of the 1980s and 1990s. Photo: G. Scott MacLeod

Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock (book signing and concert)

Saturday at Phoenix Books

G. Scott MacLeod, N.D.G.'s ultimate hyphenate artist, will be launching his latest book Saturday from 2 to 6 p.m. at Phoenix Books, the funky second-hand bookstore at 5928 Sherbrooke St. W. The book is Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock: Protest Music of the 1980s and 1990s, which features photos and words from MacLeod, who is also a musician and filmmaker. Montreal's Celtic folk-punk heroes The Bedlam Boys will be performing, though I'm not clear where they'll fit them in that tiny little shop. Free entry.

Information: librairiephoenix.com

bkelly@postmedia.com

https://montrealgazette.com/entertainment_life/friday-on-my-mind-gabi-hartmann-returns-to-tap-into-the-energy-of-montreal-fans

Brendan Kelly The Gazette



the same chairs covered in dormant and bare vines on the adjacent page. Snow is visible in one photo, but the ground is grassy in the next. Garlick plays with a temporal ambiguity that might feel familiar to anyone who has lived through Montreal's temperamental seasons. His selected photographs articulate the focus of his work: "the city and its constant state of transformation."

Garlick "challenges the viewer to be fascinated by the world, and invites them into the embrace of the alchemy of the mundane." By noticing what's often overlooked, these 100 sculptural circumstances are aesthetically satisfying while also celebrating all the *stuff* left around a city that's constantly working on itself.

Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock revisits moments in Montreal music history from the 1980s and 1990s through the lens of G. Scott MacLeod. MacLeod's self-published work compiles photographs and stories reflecting on his tenure as a photojournalist for the *Montreal Mirror*, a now-defunct English-language periodical. Amid the icons in MacLeod's archive, including never-before-seen images of some of the leading artists in the industry, he shares candid shots of Leonard Cohen walking down Prince Arthur and concert shots from Amnesty International's Human Rights



Now! Tour stop at the Olympic Stadium. He also recalls the time he was brave enough to ask Sinéad O'Connor what she called "a decent question" about progressive music in Ireland at the first press shoot he ever attended. His images are dynamic and unpolished. Pretty rock 'n' roll.

MacLeod delivers a nostalgic portrait of a time he perceives as more idealistic and politically active than today's mainstream pop music. At age sixty, he looks back at the "poetic, political, and historical spirit" of a period in his life when he "was witness to some meaningful performances" with his valued press pass in hand. Film grain, paired with accompanying text that

continued on page 25

MACLEOD continued from page 18

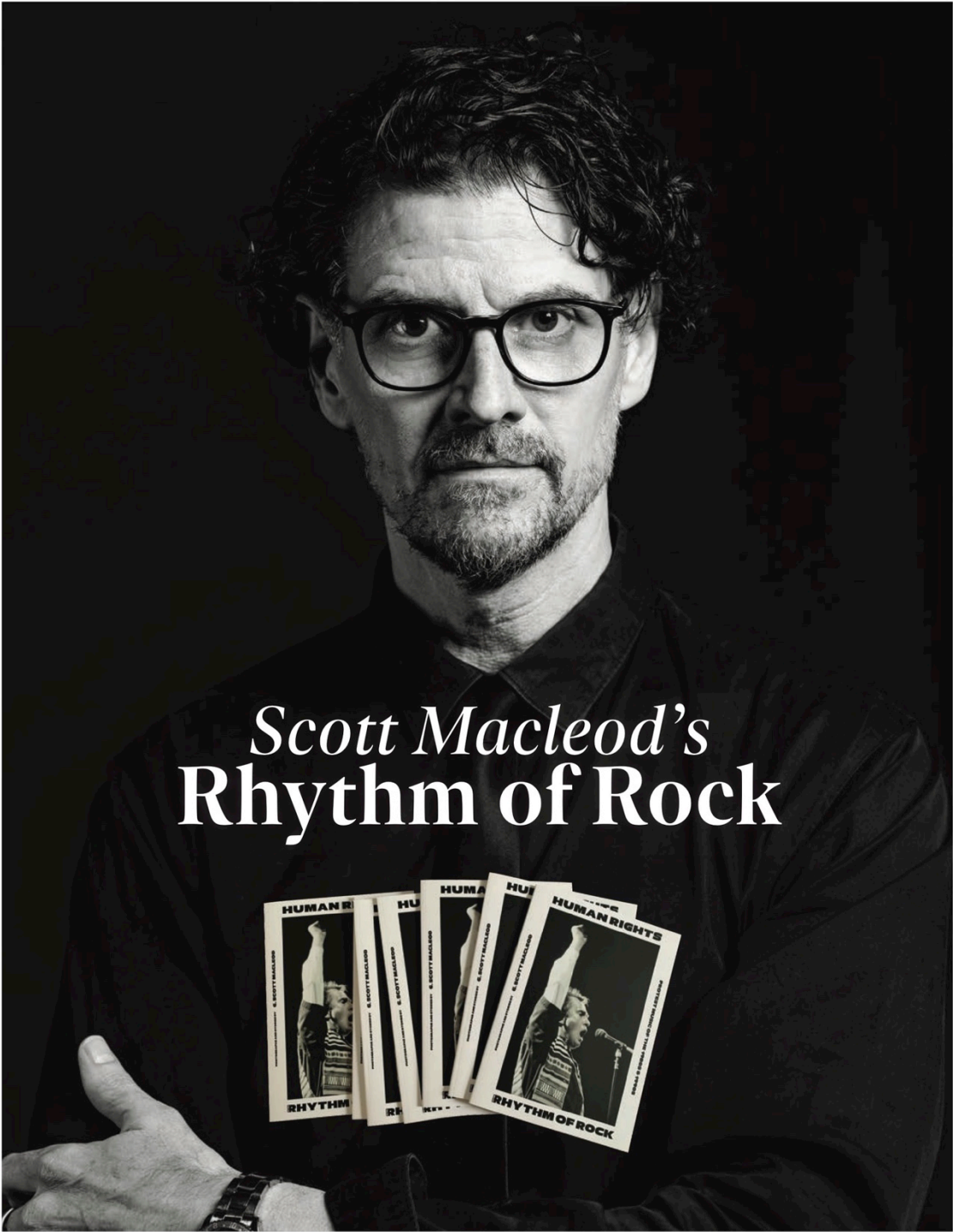
details his memories of being a young photographer, layer onto his romanticization.

As much as it was in the eighties and nineties as it is now, music is central to Montreal's spirit. Music has the power to unite us against oppression when it is harnessed as a tool of protest. Inspiring solidarity is crucial as we face human rights crises ongoing around the world, such as the atrocities in Palestine, Iran, and Lebanon. With MacLeod's foreword expressing hope that today's youth will create a better world than his generation could, *Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock* is a timely reminder that art carries political weight, and that we have a responsibility to act on it. ■

Oriana Confente is a writer and researcher based between Toronto and Montreal.

<https://mtlreviewofbooks.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026-06-18-mrb-summer-26-FINAL.pdf>

Montreal Review of Books p.18



Scott Macleod's
Rhythm of Rock

SPOTLIGHT

Scott Macleod's

Montreal artist Scott Macleod has long been connected to Celtic culture. Along with photography, filmmaking, music and other creative endeavours, he recently published a new book, *Human Rights in the Rhythm of Rock - Protest Music of the 1980s & 1990s*, featuring a number of renowned Celtic musical artists.

Sinead O'Connor



My first press conference shoot was of Sinéad O'Connor for her debut release, *The Lion and the Cobra*. Before Sinéad came out, we were told to not ask any questions about her shaved head and relationship to U2, to which one of the chippy journalists responded, "Perhaps I should ask her if it was U2 that shaved her head," which encouraged some laughter. I distinctly remember her beautiful demeanour and youthful vitality as she walked out and sat down in front of us. After I got my shots, I listened to a number of mundane questions and said to my mate, Paul Cassar, who worked in sales at the Montreal Mirror, "These journalists have no idea who she is and are belittling her. I'm going to ask her a question." I put up my hand like a keen schoolboy vying for attention and asked, "Sinéad, could you talk about the changing and progressive music scene in Ireland and why it is going through such a renaissance?" She smiled and said, "Finally, a decent question." The crowd of flaccid journalists turned to see who asked the question. I ignored their stares and focused on Sinéad. She gave a realistic description of

the challenging and flourishing music scene in Ireland, after which my mate Paul said, "I think she likes you." After the conference, I waved farewell to Sinéad as she left the conference up an escalator into the bright light of day and the beginning of what would become a remarkable and challenging life that inspired the next generation of women musicians. She was decades ahead of her time socially and politically, a unique female voice with such musical magic in a difficult industry that was ruthless to her gender. In her words, "They broke my heart and they killed me but I didn't die. They tried to bury me, they didn't realize I was a seed."

The Waterboys



The Waterboys were known to frequent The Quays Pub in Galway, Ireland and recorded their seminal 1988 album, *Fisherman's Blues*, at Spiddal House just outside of Galway and at the famous Windmill Lane Studio in Dublin. For a few years, I played Celtic music as a side gig in the Irish pubs of Montreal to make some extra income. I eventually tired of performing traditional pub tunes and decided to expand my repertoire. As I was a great fan of the album, I put "Fisherman's Blues" and "When Will We Be Married" in my pub repertoire. I had the pleasure of photographing The Waterboys live at Theatre St-Denis in 1990. Along with The Pogues, The Waterboys were one of the key Celtic-folk rock bands that opened up this genre of music to the greater public. As it was in vogue, many of us got on board to

reclaim our culture through the music and an economic boom that would be coined as *The Celtic Tiger* (Irish: An *Tíogar Ceilteach*), a term referring to the booming Irish economy of the mid-1990s to the late 2000s.

Hothouse Flowers

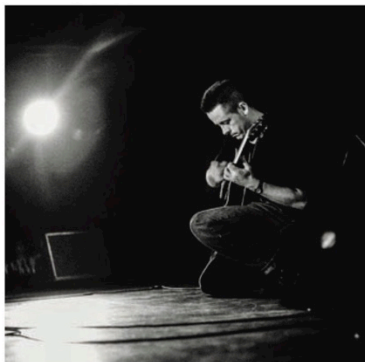


I had the pleasure of photographing the Hothouse Flowers' first formation, when they were an Irish rock band with traditional Celtic, soul, gospel and rock influences. The band formed in 1985 in Dublin and was first signed to U2's Mother Records label. They released their first album, *People*, in 1988, which reached #1 in Ireland and #2 in the UK charts, during the time I refer to as the Irish music renaissance. Later signed to PolyGram, the band toured internationally to considerable success with their following albums, *Home* (1990), and *Songs from the Rain* (1993). On their 1989-1990 tour, I met lead singer, Liam Ó Maonlaí, pre-show at The Spectrum in Montreal. He was leaning up against the bar while Luka Bloom performed as the opening act. I brought an Irish friend, Francis, who happened to be a Northside Dubliner from Raheny. Francis, Liam and I quickly fell into conversation and Liam posed many questions about being Irish in Canada. The three of us engaged in some great Irish word plays and humour. Liam was very accessible in his down to earth demeanour. As I loved their music and enjoyed Liam's curiosity of other's, I made sure to see the Flowers again in 1993 when they toured as part of the *Another Roadside*

Rhythm of Rock

Attraction Tour in Canada. The Hothouse Flowers collaborated with The Tragically Hip, Crash Vegas, Midnight Oil and Daniel Lanois on the single "Land", a protest song against the clearcutting of the rainforest on the Clayoquot Sound indigenous lands in the province of British Columbia, Canada. The recording was released in Canada in 1994, on the Montreal Label, Cargo Records, and a year later, in January 1995, on Columbia Records in Australia.

Luka Bloom



Sticking with my interest in the Irish music scene of the 1980s and 1990s, I remember discovering the wonderful Luka Bloom, the younger brother of legendary Irish folk singer Christy Moore. Choosing to rename himself, he took the first name "Luka" from American singer songwriter Susan Vega's song about child abuse and the surname "Bloom" from the principal character from James Joyce's novel, *Ulysses*. Prior to getting on stage, I walked up to Luka and said, "It's Barry right?" which suggested that I knew he was Christy's brother. He burst back, "No, it's Luka!" and walked past me. I had not meant to offend him. I am sure he was constantly asked about his stage name. I photographed Luka performing on one knee during one of his instrumental passages at Montreal's intimate Club Soda when it was on Parc Avenue around the release of his 1990 album, *Riverside*. Luka's solo performance had a bold and large strumming sound with clever lyrics. His enjoyable vocals and repartee with

the audience were memorable. Luka Bloom was a favorite of mine for many years as I admired the conviction of his writing and solo stage show. I would again see him when he opened up for the band. Hothouse Flowers.

An Emotional Fish



In 1990, the Dublin band, An Emotional Fish, released their debut album under the same name and went on a North American tour with a Montreal date. As I followed the Irish music scene from a distance through the music and political magazine, *Hot Press*, I discovered them and bought the album. I liked their music as it spoke to my rebel music sensibilities at the time. I suggested to a group of Irish lads I was working with to get some tickets for the show. At the time I was big brothering some of them through *The Bridge of Hope*, a make work program for Irish Catholic and Protestant youth from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The aim of this well-intentioned initiative was to get both Protestant and Catholic youth to work in various Canadian and American cities, in an effort to give them work experience and help them learn how to coexist peacefully in a neutral setting among the multicultural and diverse cities of North America like, Montreal, Toronto, New York and Chicago. We arrived at Club Soda and were not disappointed, when An Emotional Fish burst on stage with "Celebrate," "Lace Virginia," "All I Am," "Change," "That Demon Jive" and a slower number "Blue"

. Ger, Ken, Matt, my cousin Albert and I danced and pogoed up against each other full force, letting out our youthful angst to our cultural soundtrack of Irish pop music. Ger had brought an Irish flag with him and pulled it out and started waving it around in a U2 Bono "Live Aid" fashion, to which the lead singer Gerard Whelan said in the microphone, "It is not about flags" and I thought, 'oh shit this could go badly.' Then our Ger responded, "It's because I'm Irish!" When Whelan heard the Irish accent, he jumped off the stage and both Gerards hugged each other like brothers and brought the concert to another level. Despite our difficult diaspora past, including, famine shame and sectarian divides, we freely celebrated our collective Irish cultural identity in a time when it was finally fashionable to do so. Nonetheless, it was really about reclaiming our pride and eliminating the colonial, religious and political shame we all had inside. I personally suffered from imposter syndrome, given I had a Scottish last name, until years later when a family member and genealogist found out that the Gillespie side of my family were from Armagh in Northern Ireland. After being orphaned, rejected by family, locked out of my home, made to feel insecure in art school and the art world, I simply wanted to belong. And that night I belonged with my tribe and celebrated the music and culture with my Irish brothers. Indeed, a very emotional fish I was. We later had a drink with Whelan and chatted with some of the other band members, including guitarist David Frew and bassist Enda Wyatt. High from the fabulous flag-waving Irish rock evening, we returned victorious to our Irish Canadian Montreal neighbourhood of Notre-Dame-de-Grace. An Emotional Fish was an electric and outstanding band. They got their kick at the can in the Rock-n-Roll world thanks to U2's Mother Records and were signed to Warner Brothers and Atlantic records. After a three-album run they called it quits in 1999. In 2002, Whelan formed a new band called Jerry Fish & The Mudbug Club, no shortage of eccentric names and spirit which me and the lads would continue to enjoy.

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