

Ron Hynes: “St. John’s Waltz”

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St. John’s-born Ron Hynes is widely acknowledged as one of Canada’s premiere singer-songwriters, with a career that spans more than 30 years and more honours than you can shake an Ugly Stick at. Written while on a theatre tour with the Mummers Troupe in 1976, Hynes’ best known song, “Sonny’s Dream,” quickly became a folk classic, and Hynes’ songs have been covered by artists around the world. He has released six award-winning albums: *Cryer’s Paradise* (1993, EMI Music Canada), *Face to the Gale* (1997, EMI Music Canada), *11:11 Nfld. Women Sing* (1996, songs written and produced with Connie Hynes), *Standing in Line in the Rain* (1998, independent), *The Sandcastle Sessions* (2001), *Get Back Change* (2003, Borealis), *Ron Hynes* (2006). Twenty-six of Hynes’

songs arranged for vocal and guitar are featured in a songbook entitled *Ron Hynes–Volume 1* (2005).

In addition to his songwriting, Newfoundland’s beloved songwriter moonlighted as an actor throughout the 1990s, appearing in several theatre productions, on television, and in film. He has also been the subject of two full-length documentaries. The first documentary, *Ron Hynes: The Irish Tour* (2000), follows Hynes on a trip to Ireland and traces the dissemination and influence of his song “Sonny’s Dream”; the second film, *The Man of a Thousand Songs*, which was released in 2010, explores Hynes’ life and creative process.

For more on Ron Hynes please visit his website: www.hynesite.org.

St. John’s Waltz

Ron Hynes, *Face to the Gale* (1997)



VERSE

Oh, the har-bour lights are glea-min', and the eve-nings still and dark And the

9 sea-gulls are all drea-min - g, sea-gull dre-am - s on Am-herst Rock - And the

17 mist is slow - ly drif-ting As the shore front lights go dim, And the

25 moon is gen-tly - lif-tin', As the last ships, the last ships, comin' in. CHORUS

33 sai-lors - got a sto-ry - Some are tr-ue and so-me are false; But they're

41 at-ways wrecked and they're up on the deck, And dan-cin' the St. John's Waltz.

Verse 2:

And we've had our share of history,
We've seen nations come and go;
We've seen battles rage over land and stage,
Two hundred years and more.
For glory or for freedom,
Or for country or for King;
Or for money or fame, but there are no names,
On the graves where men lie sleeping.

Chorus 2:

All the nine-to-fives survive the day,
With a sigh and a dose of salts;
They're parkin' their cars and packin' the bars,
Dancin' the St. John's Waltz.

Verse 3:

Oh, my heart is on the highway,
And I'm sold on goin' to sea;
All the planes fill the skyway,
All the trains run swift and free.
So leave the wayward free to wander,
Leave the restless free to roam;
If there's rocks in the bay, if it's old cliché,
You'll find your way back home.

Chorus 3:

But don't question or inquire,
What's been gained, or what's been lost;
In a world of romance, don't miss out on the chance,
To be dancin' the St. John's Waltz.

Transcription by Meghan Forsyth

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