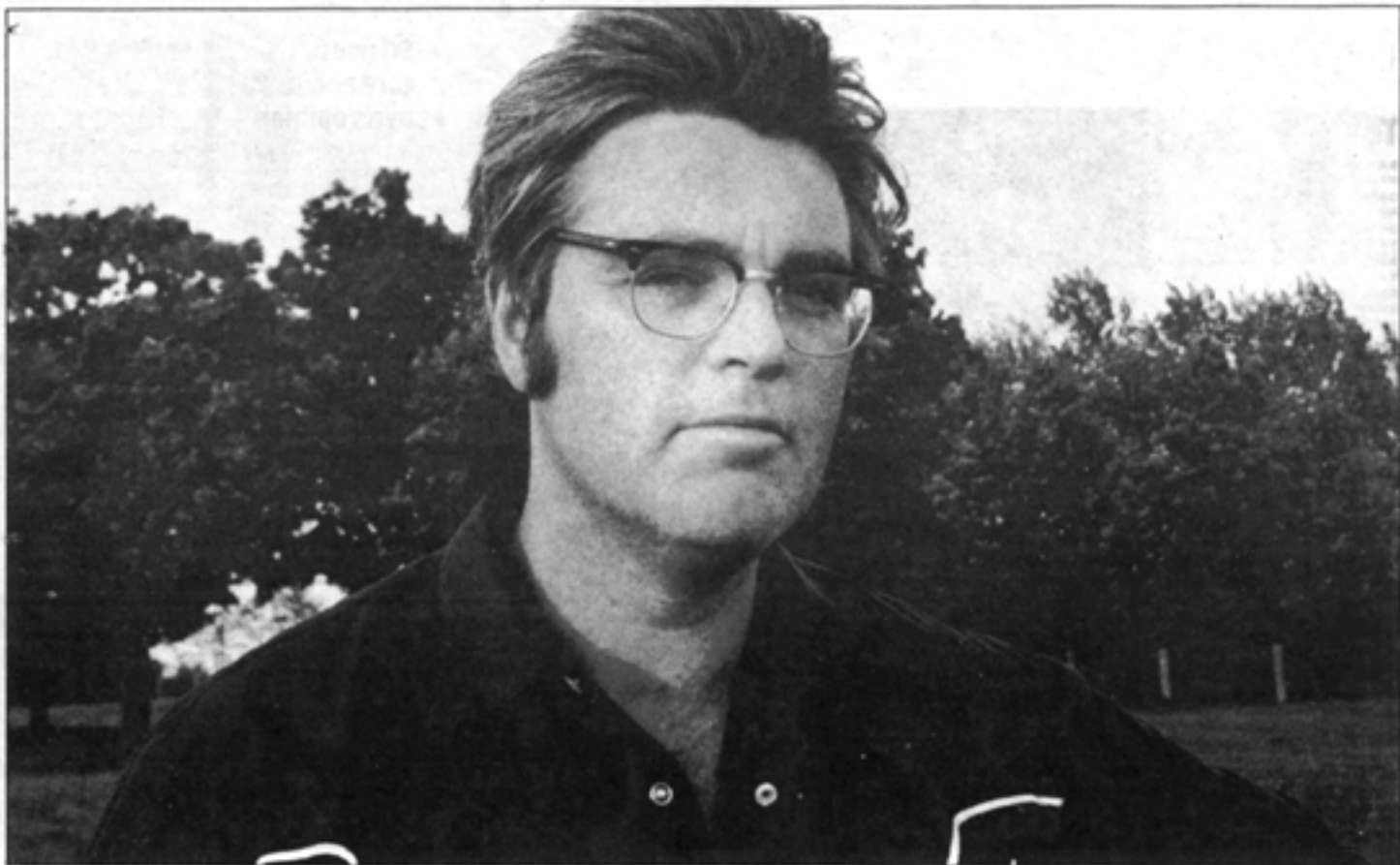


# Weekend Clubwatch

TORONTO'S BEST GUIDE  
FOR CLUBBING AROUND TOWN



Cape Breton native Michael Brennan's followup album, *Cautious Man*, is a mix of traditional country with rockabilly, pop and blues.

## He's a family Man

MARY DICKIE  
Toronto Sun

Brennan's album reflects his new reality as husband, father

Michael Brennan left Cape Breton for Toronto many years ago, but there's no denying its continuing influence on his music — an urban country-rock hybrid with echoes of the kitchen parties and front porch strumming sessions of his East Coast youth.

Brennan first came to the attention of local country music fans in the '90s with his band The Wayward Angels. Their self-titled debut was full of songs about the difficulties of leaving home to work in cold hard Toronto.

But six years have passed, and the songs on Brennan's long-awaited followup, *Cau-*

*tious Man*, reflect a new reality — his busy Torontonion life as a husband, father and teacher.

"Yeah, newer ones like *Time For A Change* and *How I Missed Ya* are definitely different," Brennan said in a phone interview last week. "Unfortunately, there's not a lot of Cape Breton in there. But my life is different now.

"There are times when I'm writing in the basement, and the kids rush down. I try to keep going, but I don't get a lot done. I pretty much have to shut myself away. The song *Spiritual Advice* was started a long time ago, but I didn't finish it until I had five or six

hours alone in a cabin. It was nice, but those chances are few and far between."

The songs mix traditional country with rockabilly, pop and blues, anchored by Brennan's rich voice and the able playing of his band — Dave Tufford, Dennis Pinhorn and John Adames.

Among the highlights are the old-fashioned *Dreams Always Lie*, *Lights Of The Town* and *Tender Love*, a nostalgic memory of his family's musical nights.

"That's about my grandfather," Brennan explained.

"He was an amateur part-time singer in Cape Breton. I'd sit on the front porch with him, with the uncles and the grandkids, and he'd just break into song."

**Michael Brennan**

Tonight  
Rivoli  
416-596-1908

Brennan tested out the songs at his Sunday afternoon Graffiti's residency before going into the studio with producer Chad Irshick.

"He's a great musician with a great ear and a real sense for getting the best out of the band," Brennan said.

"There were a few songs that he edited and tightened up. Plus, it was the best time

I've ever had recording my vocal. And he suggested bringing in the harmonica player, Boly Platt, who played with Matt Minglewood, one of my heroes."

Brennan has already played two CD release shows with different lineups this week.

Tonight at the Rivoli is your last chance to catch him with the full band, plus keyboard player.

**HAMMERS AND ANGELS:** Also tonight, The Road Hammers — the truck-driving, southern-rock side project of country singer Jason McCoy — play the Horseshoe, while Austin

psych-rock sextet the Black Angels are at the Silver Dollar. Tomorrow, Ottawa blues singer Sue Foley is at Healey's, and Action Makes and The Mark Inside play the Boat.

**BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITIES:** On Saturday, UKULA's Bright Lights festival presents England's Elbow and Duke Spirit, Montreal's Islands — featuring former Unicorns — and The Call Up and Toronto's Meligrove Band, Stirling and The Coast at the Stone Distillery, while the fabulous Holmes Brothers bring their soul-gospel-rock-blues mix to the Horseshoe and Vancouver pistol Bif Naked plays the Phoenix.