

No way Josee will slow down

Mari Sasano, Freelance

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MARIE-JOSEE HOULE,

Blue Chair Cafe, 9624 76th Ave., tonight at 8:30,

tix/info: donations; 989-2861

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Marie-Josée Houle was known in Edmonton primarily as a bass player in Pangina and The Elevators. But when she left to go back to school, she had no idea that eventually she would return home in more ways than one: while away, she rediscovered her first musical instrument, the accordion. Drawing from a number of sources (jazz, Latin, Eastern European and French), she finally makes it back, literally, to show us what she's been up to.

MS: You're coming home!

MJH: I am! I'm very excited. It's gonna be my first show with my accordion in Edmonton.

MS: Why on Earth would anyone leave?

MJH: I left to do my master's degree in Halifax, and I think it was time for me to leave. I didn't have stable employment at the time and I was working for my mother's company. It was a time for personal growth.

MS: Did you pick up your accordion again in Halifax?

MJH: No, not at all! I went to Halifax and tried to hook up with some musicians, to play bass. I used to play bass with Pangina and The Elevators in Edmonton. But every city goes through ebbs and flows, and it was not happening in Halifax at the time, and I didn't want to get trapped in the whole Celtic band thing. But when I moved to Ottawa, I saw an accordion being played in a jazz band and I started appreciating the diversity of the instrument.

MS: What held you back before?

MJH: I was introduced to music through the accordion basically because we were too poor to afford a piano. It's too much of a spectacle. It's not socially acceptable. Too much "grandpa's wedding music."

MS: What do you like about it now?

MJH: I can finally perform and not be dependent on a band. I can pare it down or have a band accompany me. I can do whatever I want. It's a showy instrument, and I have flaming red hair -- I like the theatricality of it, the flamboyance.