

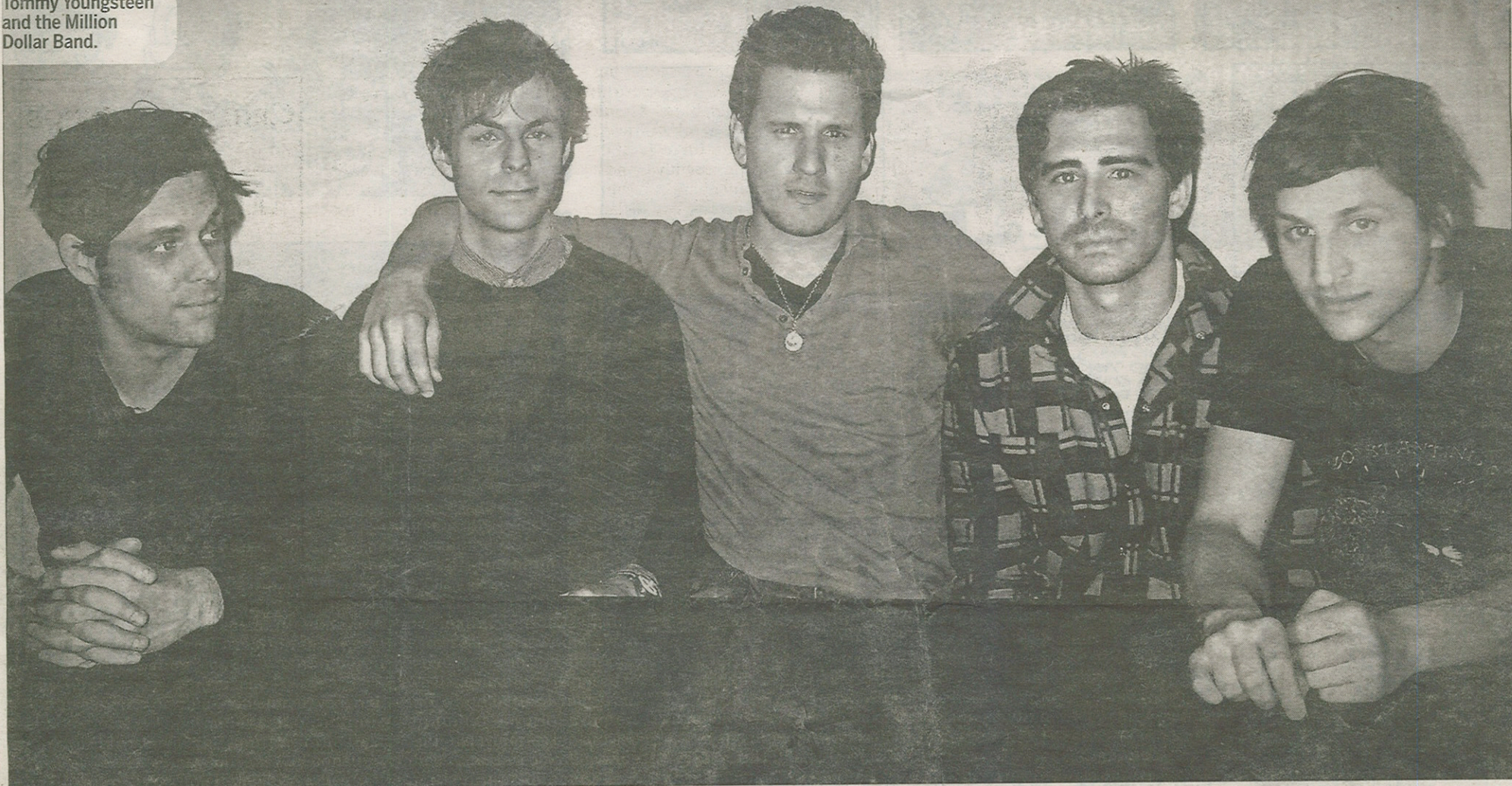
SUN SCENE

What's on ...

Melissa Etheridge plays the National Arts Centre Monday and 8 p.m. See what else is on in town in our listings. **Page 31**



Tommy Youngsteen and the Million Dollar Band.



Stars align for great rock

Tommy Youngsteen covers classics, but don't call it a tribute band

Ordinarily, a band playing nothing but classic rock covers wouldn't get the time of day here in The Scene.

See, most cover bands are the bottom-feeders of popular music, living off the hard work of those who went before them.

Which is why's Stars' guitarist Alan Snoddy is being so careful about his latest side project, Tommy Youngsteen and the Million Dollar Band, being labelled a tribute band like other lame and tasteless musical tributes such as When Pigs Fly — the Pink Floyd



DENIS ARMSTRONG

Experience or Alice Copper.

On a break from Stars (while singer Amy Millan has a baby), Snoddy and his buddies Greg Paquet from The Stills and Sam Roberts' drummer Josh Trager started jamming over beers.

Eventually, the three discovered a mutual, yet previously unspoken love for Tom

Petty, Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen's anthem rock.

Serendipitously, an invitation to play a fundraiser in Montreal and Toronto led to Tommy Youngsteen's birth by fire, adding members of the Arkells, Benjamin Gerlis (harmonica), Alec McElcheran (bass), Erik Hove (alto sax) and Mike Evin (piano) along the way.

"We're not a tribute band," Snoddy insists from Montreal.

"We don't try to recreate the band on stage. We don't act or dress like them. We just

play great songs that everyone knows."

'Big sound'

Won't Back Down, *Great Wide Open*, *Cinnamon Girl*, *Down By the River* and *Born To Run* are among the 20-plus tunes — all covers — played by the funky, Million Dollar eight-piece band, and as odd as it might seem — that members of Montreal's trendiest bands would cover material as bombastic, and potentially cheesy as this — the truth is that the band who grew up on guitar rock, love it.

SCENE SETTER

Tommy Youngsteen and the Million Dollar Band

■ **Where:** Babylon, 317 Bank St.

■ **When:** Thursday, 9 p.m., \$10 in advance.

"It's a big sound on a smaller stage," says Snoddy.

"Fans are curious to see the other side of those bands. We rarely play our own music when we're hanging out. Tom Petty, Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen are the best of that generation of singer-songwriters. They're decep-

tively simple songs. No fat on them. Most times, I don't have to sing because the audience is singing so loud."

The Tommy Youngsteen experience — coming to Babylon on Thursday — has taken on a life of its own and Snoddy is already thinking about his next band cover night.

"We should do something really cheesy, like a Bon Jovi night," he giggles.

"I could really get into that."

Tickets are on sale \$10 in advance at Compact Music Glebe, Compact Music Laurier, and The Record Shaap on Gilmour under Aunt Olive's store. Doors are at 9 p.m.

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