

Vishtën looking forward to live recording sessions at The Mack

Popular Acadian group looks to transfer the excitement from a live performance onto a new CD

BY Sally Cole, Stage Door, The GUARDIAN

The members of Vishtën have a reputation for whipping their audience into a frenzy during their lively concerts.

The high-energy East Coast act, which calls P.E.I. home, plays a mixture of Acadian, Irish and Scottish musical styles, with fiery fiddling and spicy step-dancing that get everyone's feet tapping.

But, when they try to capture that enthusiasm in the recording studio, it does not work.

"For the longest times, we've been told that our CDs don't represent nearly the energy that we put out on stage. We totally agree with that," says Emmanuelle LeBlanc, keyboard player for the band that also includes Pastelle LeBlanc, accordion, piano; Pascal Miousse, fiddle, mandolin, guitar and Elmer Deagle, mandolin.

So after pondering the situation they realized that changing their method might be the answer.

Instead of recording the CD in a controlled studio atmosphere where one track is laid on top of another, they opened themselves up to the unexpected.

They decided to record it in front of a live audience at The Mack in Charlottetown tonight and Saturday.

"We like the unpredictability of it. We've picked out the songs, all the arrangements are done, but anything could happen," says LeBlanc.

And they're inviting people to help them out.

"We're asking our P.E.I. friends and fans to support us and give us the energy that we need for the CD.

"We picked an hour and a half of our best material so we hope to pick out 50 to 60 minutes out of it," she says.

Miousse is looking forward to the recording sessions.

"We'll have the feeling of the crowd and their energy, which is totally different than the recording studio," says Miousse, who is bringing in a radio station crew from Îles de la Madeleine (his home) to broadcast live from the venue and add to the evening's energy.

The CD will contain old and new musical tracks.

They're recording everything from Joli Coeur to Mariez Moi, a song about a 19 year-old girl who wants to get married by the time she's 20.

"We'll also be doing some instrumentals and some songs from P.E.I. and, of course, some of our own compositions," says LeBlanc, adding that the as-of-yet-unnamed CD will be officially released in the fall.

Her sister is also excited about the project.

"I think it will be a good experience for us. It will give us the feeling of doing a CD all at once, instead of taking weeks to record it," says Pastelle.

The group, which formed in 2000, has just returned from touring Europe.

After their recording session, they will stay on P.E.I. to do some post-production work before heading down to the United States for a busy summer on the festival circuit.

"How do we keep our energy levels up? I'm not sure.

“But playing music is something that I’ve always wanted to do since I can remember. My sister and Pascal have the same passion. So I think because we love doing it, it’s easy for us to be excited about it,” says Pastelle.