



Halifax bar owner Mike Campbell has been a big Tom Petty fan since 1976. Campbell, showing off some of his Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers memorabilia, will be at Thursday's show in the Halifax Metro Centre. (INGRID BULMER / Staff)

Halifax's Heartbreakers Kid

Carleton owner and Petty fan Campbell super-stoked for upcoming show

By **STEPHEN COOKE**
Entertainment Reporter

IF THERE'S ANYONE who's more stoked than Mike Campbell about Thursday night's Halifax Metro Centre appearance by American rock legends Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, they'll have to take a lie detector test to prove it.

And by Mike Campbell I mean the Halifax man behind the Carleton Music Bar and Grill and former MuchMusic host, not the Heartbreakers' lead guitarist of the same name.

It's a happy coincidence, to be sure. The affable bar owner admits to meeting his namesake when he tried to crash the band's Maple Leaf Gardens show after-party during the Damn the Torpedoes tour. He showed him his driver's licence just to prove that they had a connection.

But it's always been about the music with Campbell, a fan of Petty and the Heartbreakers since he found their 1976 self-titled debut in a record store miscellaneous bin. He is still finding it

'For my money, they're the best touring band on the planet, I'm pretty sure I've seen everybody else. Springsteen's band is really good, but they've got nothing on the Heartbreakers, and I never thought I'd live long enough to see them come here.'

MIKE CAMPBELL
Tom Petty fan

hard to believe that his favourite band is performing this week only a block away from the business that's his second home.

Sitting at his first home, behind the bar of his backyard Tiki Lounge — his friends refer to it simply as The Tiki — Campbell points to a signed copy of the Heartbreakers' second LP, *You're Gonna Get It*, autographed by Petty "To Mike Cambo," that is sitting on a mirrored shelf.

It's one of numerous collectibles, including a photo showing the blond rocker and a mullet-headed Campbell backstage at Maple Leaf Gardens after the *Into the Great Wide Open* tour stop. It also includes a collage of various photos and ticket stubs, including one for the concert that

changed his life.

In the fall of 1977, Campbell was working in an Ottawa record store. While thumbing through a copy of the *Village Voice*, he saw an ad for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers at the famed Bottom Line in Greenwich Village. At that point, he had been playing the first album non-stop for months. He had even given away copies to friends, replacing his with new ones bought with his employee discount.

"There was no question, we had to go," he recalls. "We'd never been to New York before or anything. In those days kids didn't have credit cards or anything. . . . We just called The Bottom Line and they thought we were crazy.

"Where are you callin' from? What?" He was doing two shows in one night, some band called the Dingos were opening and tickets were \$5 for each show. So me and my friends sent them a money order for US\$40 and then phoned them every three days to see if they had gotten it yet."

So the 20-something rock fan and three friends rented a car, drove to New York, leaving one pal, Ron, behind at the border to hitchhike home after failing to report an arrest for a youthful indiscretion in his teens. They got to The Bottom Line as the first show was starting.

The trio got some ribbing at the box office from an attendant who pretended not to have their tickets, until he finally laughed and said, "You're the guys from Ottawa! We've been waiting to see what you would look like."

The 400-seat room was full and they had to make do with so-so seats, "but it was a killer show. "Then they're emptying the room to flip it for the second show, and

See **CAMPBELL / E2**

INSIDE

Queer Acts Theatre Festival announces summer lineup/ **B2**

Pete Lockett savours spring with asparagus, rhubarb / **B3**



Quilt enthusiasts celebrate art at national meeting in Halifax / **B4**

Campbell

continued from / E1

we're filing out, and the doorman says, 'Uh-huh, these guys can stay,' and then they sit us down at the front table.

"So the stage is right there. Petty's only a few feet away. And by the second half of the show we're getting his sweat on us."

After the show, Campbell talked to one of the roadies to see about giving Tom a hand-painted shirt he'd made of the Heartbreakers' logo. He was directed behind the

curtain at the side of the stage.

"I walk through like an idiot, my hands are shaking, I'm like, 'I drew this for you,'" he says in a quavering Jerry Lewis-esque voice.

"We got Ron's tickets signed for him, since they didn't get used and then we ran around the club stealing display copies of the album because it had 'PROMO' stamped on it in gold. Unbelievable."

Tonight Campbell has a box full of Tom Petty promo swag that he's giving away during a show featuring West Coast singer-songwriter Leeroy Stagger and P.E.I.'s Dennis Ellsworth.

The in-house iTunes will be playing everything from that self-titled album through 2010's *Mojo*, plus Petty's solo projects and live recordings, and maybe even some *Traveling Wilburys* just to spice things up a bit.

And who knows, maybe his namesake or Petty's longtime keyboardist Benmont Tench or even the man himself might come by to check out the place since it's only a block away from the venue where they'll play to a packed house of roughly 10,000 fans.

It's a long way from the 400-seat Bottom Line and a 1977 road trip that Campbell

will never forget.

"It was such an adventure and such a great show. After that I was a complete stone-cold Petty freak and went to every show I could get to. On my dining room wall I've got photos taken when I saw him at the Seneca College Field House on the *You're Gonna Get It* tour.

"For my money, they're the best touring band on the planet, I'm pretty sure I've seen everybody else. Springsteen's band is really good, but they've got nothing on the Heartbreakers, and I never thought I'd live long enough to see them come here."

(scooke@herald.ca)