

Winchester shows he was missed

By JOHN GRIFFIN
of The Gazette

He looked mighty small as he walked out on stage last night, but with the very first notes he played, Jesse Winchester had the cavernous expanses of Le Club Montreal and the large crowd it contained in the palm of his hand.

His solo concert at Le Club marked a homecoming of sorts for Winchester, who though a resident of Montreal, has not played here in almost four years. His electrifying performance last night served as an apt reminder of how much this city has missed the man and his music.

With only his acoustic guitar and sweet tenor voice for accompaniment, Winchester played songs that brought back memories of the days when this one-time native of Memphis, Tennessee, could be found playing in bars and cafes all over the city.

The music he played then — *Brand New Tennessee Waltz*, *Yankee Lady*, and the heart-rending *Twigs And Seeds* — is permanently engraved on the minds of many who were growing up at the time.

Winchester's special gift, and one that

came into sharp focus last night, is his ability to create memories with every song he writes.

There is something so personal, so intense and honest about the man that he builds and a bond of intimacy with his audience that transcends petty differences like language or political persuasion.

Yet if there is a certain fragility in his persona, there is an equal measure of strength — along with a healthy dose of humor and careful cynicism.

He sang *Nothing But A Breeze* as a gently rolling song with a southern feel, gave the Everly Brothers' *Bowling Green* some fancy neo-classical licks on the guitar, and broke a few hearts with the ballad *Little Glass of Wine*.

Winchester has never sounded better. He has developed a falsetto to augment his satin-smooth voice, and it lends his music another dimension. His guitar playing seems as natural as drawing another breath, and his rapport with the crowd was strictly one-to-one.

Jesse Winchester is back, and it's like he never went away.



JESSE WINCHESTER
Brought back memories

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