



## On the Road Again Live Reviews:

### NORTH BY NORTHEAST 1999

#### *Featuring: The Flashing Lights*

June 12, 1999

The Horseshoe, Toronto, Ontario

Crunchy chords, power licks and high kicks were the order of the day as festival-goers crammed into the Legendary Shoehorn (read: it was fucking packed, baby!) Saturday night to get a dose of The Flashing Lights. Matt Murphy & Co. gave them all that and more.

Featuring many of the infectious songs from their excellent debut CD *Where the Change Is*, the band whipped the crowd into a frenzy with their crisp and crunchy melodic rock 'n' roll — drawn from mid-60s mod sounds and grand pop gestures. Murphy is a sight to behold: adopting a matador's bearing in his stand-off against entropy, prancing out the power riffs one minute, windmilling chords the next, arm raised after delivering the coup de grace, the effect heightened by his recently bleached white mop of hair.

The choppy chords and licks are rounded out by deliciously cheesy-sounding organ fills, rambunctious drumming and the chocolate bubbles from Henri Sangalang's bass. It's the kind of music where the tambourine is as essential an instrument as any other.

The stand-out songs included the melody-laden "Highschool," "Half The Time" and "Where Do The Days Go?" Another highlight was "Gone are the Good Times," a stately ballad a la mid-60s Rolling Stones — we're talkin' "Ruby Tuesday" territory here. They also threw in a fine new song called "It's Alright," which hung its hat on a melody reminiscent of the Small Faces.

And of course, none of their shows would be complete without Murphy leading the crowd in the usual refrain of "Flashing Lights! Flashing Lights!" with all the verve of a tent-show preacher. From that point on, it just became a complete rave-out, with festival icon Beatle Bob (see the April 1999 issue of *Chart*) joining them onstage to do the Frugg (!).



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Flashing Lights are mining a rich vein from a time when pop and rock danced on the cutting edge of new sonic vistas. But what does it mean today? It means fabulous music, great rock 'n' roll as fresh and invigorating as anything else. Does it need to mean anything more than that? If it does, then you're missing out, my friends. Be sure to catch these guys if...nay, when — they come to your town. "FLASHING LIGHTS! FLASHING LIGHTS!"

— review by Jim Kelly

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