Beat: Music

Tragically Hip Remembers Gord Downie

" Shot A Movie Once In Your Hometown"

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Brian MacKenzie Teepell/USPA 24 News - On Saturday, August 22nd, 2016, our nation paused and time seemed still as the Tragically Hip played the last show in their hometown of Kingston. Just like the passing of JFK and Elvis, most Canadians can recall exactly where they were when the audience gave Gord one final salute.
I was very fortunate to have met Gord Downie at HMV when I was employed there back in the 90's. We shook hands and chatted like we were old friends, when in reality we'd just met. He was a kind and gentle soul.
I can't help but think of Don MacLean's American Pie, "The day the music died!" Gord and the Tragically Hip earned their stripes as "Canada's Band" and along with the Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Maple Leafs, and RCAF Snowbirds, the HIP became a True Canadian Icon.

The Tragically Hip are being celebrated for their enduring impact on Canadian music as they are inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, part of the esteemed 2026 class, in recognition of their remarkable songwriting legacy that has become an integral part of Canada's cultural fabric. They will be honored alongside Leslie Feist, Loverboy songwriters Mike Reno and Paul Dean, and Roch Voisine at a ceremony on September 26th at Toronto's iconic Massey Hall.

On August 20th, 2016, Gord Downie and The Hip took the stage for the final stop of their Man Machine Poem tour, sparking a nationwide celebration that transcended music and ignited a sense of unity and pride across Canada.

I don’t think anyone anticipated the far-reaching impact of our project, with big screens popping up in small towns, campgrounds, and even backyards,” guitarist Paul Langlois reflects. “In the days that followed, it dawned on us that we had created something much bigger than we initially thought, and that realization was truly empowering."

As I took a moment to reflect, a wave of exhilaration washed over me, knowing this was the final show. The reality of this milestone was sinking in, and I felt a growing sense of expectation. Then Gord walked in, absorbed the electric atmosphere of the arena, and declared, "This is going to be truly unforgettable."

It's heartwarming to see the Tragically Hip's devoted fan base come together to honor Gord Downie's life, legacy, and beloved music. Many people I spoke with are planning to attend gatherings and rewatch the iconic final concert that united the country a decade ago. It's inspiring to see Canadians continue to celebrate the Hip's enduring impact. Amidst these challenging times, Gord Downie's vision of a more inclusive and compassionate Canada remains a powerful catalyst for positive change, bringing people together in a shared spirit of hope and unity.
The divisive political upheaval of the day does just the opposite and our self-serving politicians could not walk a mile in Gord's shoes.

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