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A humble request from Buffalo to Gord Downie and the Hip

By Jeff Miers, Pop Music Critic



Gord Downie fronts Tragically Hip during the band's iconic Outer Harbor show in 2013. (Matthew Masin/Buffalo News file photo)

Dear Gord Downie, Rob Baker, Paul Langlois, Johnny Fay and Gord Sinclair:

Like all Tragically Hip fans, your families and your friends, we here in Buffalo are gutted by the news of Gord Downie's cancer diagnosis.

We have nothing but our love and gratitude to send your way, and so we send them, in abundance.

| Pulitzer Prize Entry |

We can't help but rail against the injustice of it all – that a man so gifted, so kind, so intelligent, humorous and generous of spirit would be faced with such a mountain to climb. It isn't fair. Life rarely is.

We feel we know you, Gord, and some among us do, through personal interactions that left indelible impressions. Even those who don't, have been touched by the generosity you've displayed in your artistry and through your intense, playful, compelling and sometimes shamanistic performances on Buffalo stages over the past quarter century.

Music, we know, is a conduit between spirits, one that transcends language. We experience it so personally, so subjectively, our emotions fully open, the hair on our arms standing at attention. It's *intense*, this communal transference of energy and soulfulness. So it follows that we feel a connection with you, who have been our gateway to music's garden of earthly delights on so many occasions. When you named one of your finest albums "We Are the Same," we felt this was a nod to us, somehow.

We don't know you. But we *know* you. You know?

We have always felt that our city was your city, too, a place where we wanted you to feel welcome and at home. You responded in kind. Whether the venue was our waterfront stage at Canalside; the Outer Harbor, where you endured what sure felt and looked like a tsunami (<http://www.buffalonews.com/gusto-concert-reviews-tragically-hip-defies-the-rain-delivers-fan-pleasing-reprise-performance-20130803>) until you couldn't any longer, and then you came back later, to finish the job; those two unforgettable nights at the Town Ballroom, (http://www.buffalonews.com/Brilliantly_compelling_Hip.html) and those four in a row at Artpark; (http://www.buffalonews.com/Tragically_Hip_makes_tail_feathers_shiver.html) in our own hockey arena, (<http://buffalo.com/2015/04/18/news/music/concert-reviews/fans-treated-to-a-fully-completely-epic-hip-show/>) or at the amphitheater at Darien Lake – you gave us performances that demand to be described as epic.

Sure, these were temporary respites from harsh realities, an ephemeral – yet-majestic cathedral made of smoke that dissolved soon after you left the stage. But we know that, when it comes to music, "nothing is but believing makes it so," and we felt changed, transformed by something that we experienced as incredibly *real*.

And we want to feel it again.

We've no right, after all you've given and considering all that you're going through right now, to ask you for anything. When you announced that the Hip would be doing a short summer tour, (<http://buffalo.com/2016/05/25/news/music/just-announced/tragically-hip-tour-dates-announced/>)we were more than moved by the selflessness and bravery of the act, the deep bonds of brotherhood between you as musicians and friends, and the obvious love you feel for your fans.

We understand that your first priority is to your fans in Canada, your home, a country that has properly and sagely declared you a national treasure. But we here in Buffalo, your second home, would love to see you again, too.

We are the same. And we'd love to share our love and gratitude in person.

Gratefully,

Jeff Miers

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