

Artist says goodbye with Steve's Vinyl

Nearly 200 records owned by her brother on exhibit at Khyber fundraiser, giveaway

By **ELISSA BARNARD**
Arts Reporter

Halifax artist Cathy Busby is giving away her late brother's record collection as an art project, a fundraiser and a way to let go.

The celebration and vinyl giveaway, Saturday from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Khyber Centre for the Arts at 1588 Barrington St. in Halifax, is a fundraiser for the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia and the not-for-profit Khyber Arts Society.

Tickets are \$20 and \$15 and include an album and are available (cash only) at FRED, Lost and Found, Venus Envy and Taz Records.

When Busby's brother, Steve, five years her senior, died in 1983 of AIDS-related illness, she was left his collection of almost 200 records.

"I don't play vinyl and I've been carrying it around for 18 years," says Busby.

She wants to celebrate the memory of her brother.

"When he died, he was 40 years old, which is young. A lot of people who die young want to be remembered. That was one of his final wishes — 'Don't forget me, don't forget me' — which broke us up at the time."

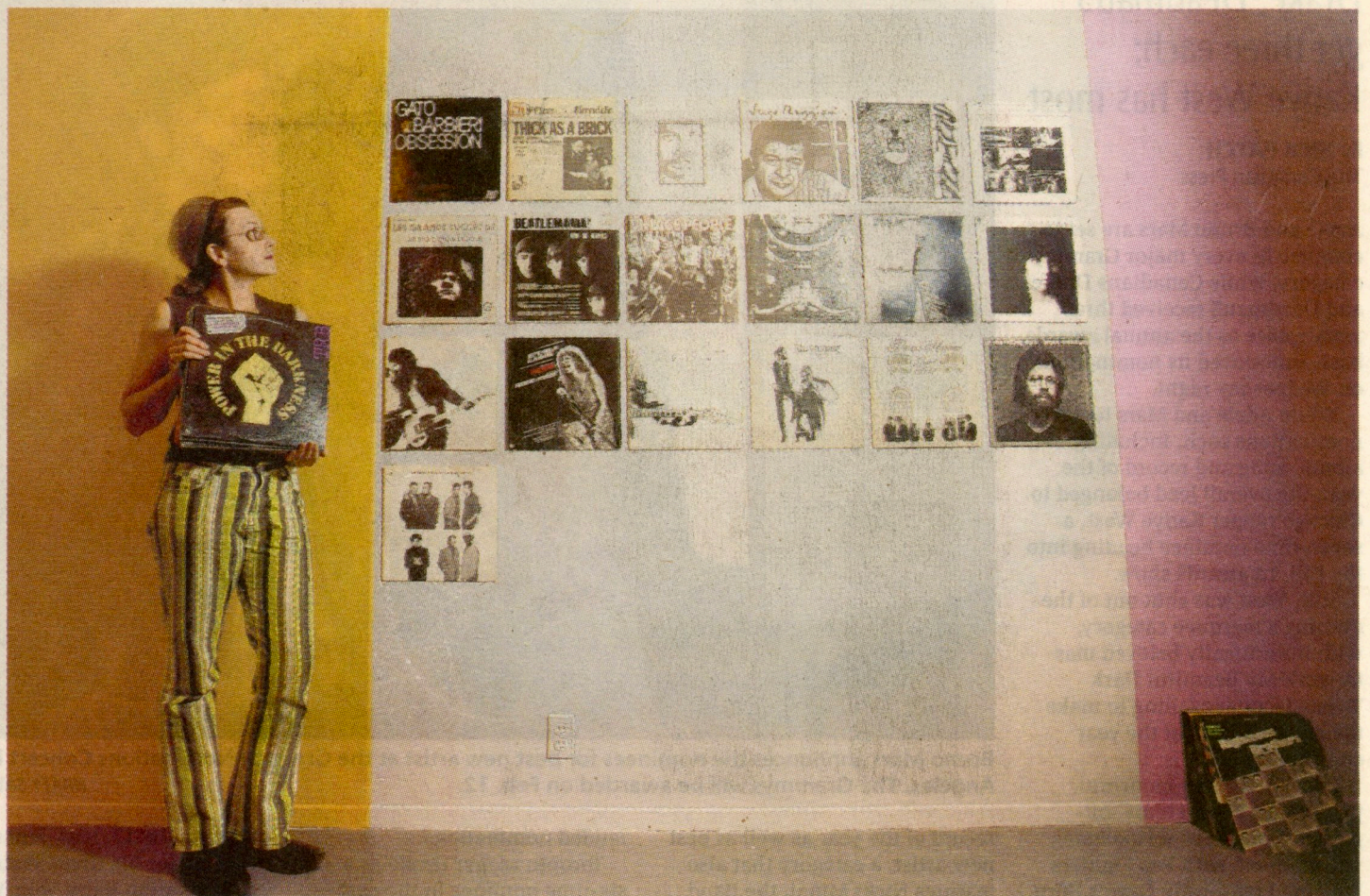
This collection is like a portrait, "even though most of the records are relatively familiar, like the Rolling Stones and the Beatles."

Since her brother lived in Montreal with a French partner, he bought French pop music.

"He played classical piano and loved classical music, so there's a lot of classical music."

The DJ, Al Barbour, who's helping her, informed her that Steve had a lot of "prog rock" and is setting up a separate listening room for that more cerebral music by the likes of Jethro Tull, the Moody Blues and King Crimson while people dance in Khyber's large ballroom gallery.

Busby and her partner, Garry Neill Kennedy, are painting the walls of the Khyber ballroom gallery in eight different colours and organizing the albums on the



Cathy Busby gets ready for Steve's Vinyl: A One-night-only Celebration and Album Giveaway at the Khyber ballroom at 1588 Barrington St. in Halifax on Saturday night. In honour of her late brother, Steve, she is giving away his collection of almost 200 albums as a fundraiser for the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia and the not-for-profit Khyber Arts Society. See cathybusby.ca for a complete list of the record collection. (CHRISTIAN LAFORCE / Staff)

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CATHY BUSBY

wall according to the predominant colour on each record's sleeve.

"I'm organizing them by colour, which I think will be beautiful. The graphics are pretty amazing. They are mainly late '60s, and '70s and '80s."

People pay \$15 (student) or \$20 to enter, and every half-hour, 20 tickets are drawn for people to take one album each off the wall.

"I like the idea of doing an art project that is a public event and a participatory kind of event," says Busby, who will also select one album for herself Saturday night.

As an artist, she works with collections. Her 2005 show, SORRY, at Saint Mary's

University Art Gallery in Halifax, was a collection of photographs of public figures saying sorry.

Saturday's celebration is also important to her personally.

"My brother and I were very close. This is a letting go, but it feels very supported because so many people know about it and all kinds of people have been offering to help."

Busby timed this event, hosted by DaPo-Po Theatre's Garry Williams, to be on the Saturday closest to World AIDS Day, which was Thursday.

She remembers when her brother came out to her.

"It was at Christmas time in 1974. I felt kind of honoured. I was the first person in the family he told.

"He and I talked about it and I said, 'I think you should talk to Mom and Dad.'

"For my parents, it was a struggle. Their feeling was, OK, isn't that too bad. That

was hard for my brother. I never thought it was too bad. I thought it was interesting. I was proud to have a gay brother."

Her brother left home in suburban Toronto to live in the city when he was 17. When Busby visited him, he took her to repertory cinema and later to gay clubs.

"It was in the 1970s. There might be three women and 100 men. We would dance.

"I felt very included."

Busby and her sister helped care for her brother as he was dying.

"Music was really important to him, and at the end of his life, he said he wanted to have his own funeral."

She and her siblings bought a bottle of Dom Perignon champagne and gathered round.

"He played Mozart's Amadeus, as well as some Cole Porter. It was just really heart-wrenching."

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