

BY IAN MENZIES

# MUSICAL MILESTONES

**I**t was the end of a decade. A decade of pet rocks and streakers, of Tories losing seats and Habs winning cups.

From "American Woman" to "Echo Beach", our music had changed as often as a worn out mood ring and by 1979, the scene was ripe with talent. Groups like Rush, April Wine, Triumph and solo artists like Neil Young, Gino Vannelli and Gordon Lightfoot were all at high watermarks in their careers. Canuck rock was on a roll and a new publication was launched to help keep it moving.

When *Canadian Musician* was born in 1979, disco died. To prove it, Anne Murray won her first Grammy Award; beating out Donna Summer, Diana Ross and Olivia Newton-John. In Vancouver, The Payola\$ and Doug and the Slugs were putting out independent singles that

TRIUMPH



RUSH



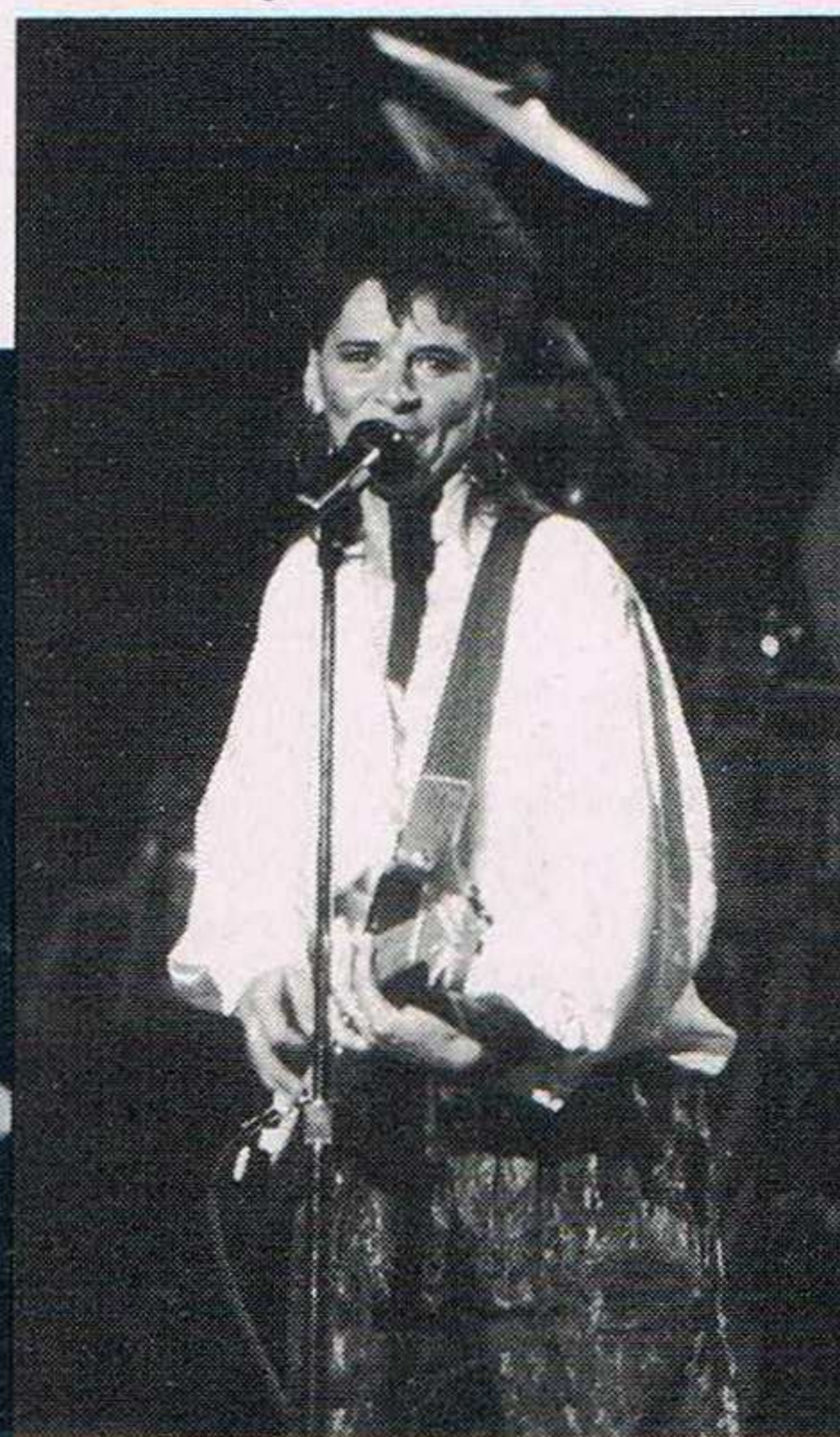
would launch their careers. Streetheart was most promising group at the Junos and Trooper's *Hot Shots* was our highest charting album at #11, the first ever domestic release to go four times platinum. Perhaps the zeitgeist was best illustrated by the concert event of that year. To make reparations for an airport drug bust two years earlier, Keith Richards and the Stones — on a bill with April Wine — played two benefit shows at Toronto's El Mocambo. Yes, the times they were a changing, but the heart of rock and roll was still beating.

With the coming of the eighties, so came 'New Wave'. Martha and the Muffins' "Echo Beach" finished the year at #16 and Rough Trade's Carole Pope was the Juno's most promising female vocalist. But Rush made it clear that the old wave was still king as *Permanent Waves* topped the domestic album charts and debuts from Powder Blues, Toronto, Luba, Red Rider and Bryan Adams made it official. Stateside, as a forgetful right-wing actor moved into the White House, Pat Benetar was belting out her first big smash, "Hit Me With Your Best Shot", putting Canadian songwriter Eddy Schwartz on the map. When Prism became group of the year by singing of "Armageddon", little did they know it would soon be the end of the world

NASH the SLASH



Lorraine Segato



Gordon Lightfoot



for millions of hardcore Beatles fans. On December 8, 1980, John Lennon was shot dead.

The next year saw Canadians excel in the silly and the heroic. Our world famous sense of humour got the better of us when The Rovers' "Wasn't That A Party" became top domestic single and the ultimate hoser anthem was born as Rush joined forces with Bob & Doug McKenzie. While "Take Off" climbed the country's charts, a little-known Winnipeg diplomat named Ken Taylor was helping free American hostages in Iran. Promising newcomers like the Spoons and the Headpins were overshadowed by Loverboy, whose killer debut went on to win a Juno for album of the year. *Moving Pictures* proved that Geddy, Neil and Alex were still the best band in the land, but south of the border, a new TV station was about to use moving pictures to change the look of music forever. MTV went on the air.

Industry and artists alike welcomed 1982 with something to celebrate. We said goodbye to an old institution when the Who played their final performance at Maple Leaf Gardens and said hello to a new one — dollar signs in our eyes — as FACTOR was created. Rush found themselves on familiar ground with *Signals* making top album and "New World



Man" top single. Carole Pope made good on her 1980 Juno by taking home the hardware for Best Female Vocalist and other statue holders were the Payolas\$(twice), Loverboy again and Kim Mitchell for his promising voice. It was also a big year for bands like Chilliwack ("Gone, Gone, Gone"), Toronto ("Your Daddy Don't Know") and Aldo Nova ("Fantasy"), but a recession was about to knock the wind out of our sails, setting the tone for the rest of the decade.

1983 saw record companies scrambling for a dwindling market. Sales had plummeted and the cost of doing business was skyrocketing — in part, due to a lack of success south of the border and the new cost of making videos. Still, strong debuts by The Parachute Club and Men Without Hats belied the recession and stalwarts like Rough Trade (*Weapons*), Bruce Cockburn (*The Trouble With Normal*) and Neil Young (*Trans and Everybody's Rockin'*) all had good years. But the big news was out of Vancouver. The CBC launched their video showcase *Good Rockin' Tonight* and *Cuts Like A Knife* (Juno album of the year) made Bryan Adams a household name, with three singles — the title track, "This Time" and "Straight From The Heart" — becoming international hits. Once again, Loverboy was group of the year and their song "Hot Girls In Love" was the highest charting single. Meanwhile, a quiet revolution had begun that would single-handedly save the business. The first CDs were issued by Phillips and Sony.

With the introduction of MuchMusic in 1984 (and *Video Hits* on CBC), many Canadian artists were quick to jump on the Betamax bandwagon. Debuts from Honeymoon Suite and Platinum Blonde both broke big because of the new medium, but Corey Hart was the first to make the small screen his own. "Sunglasses At Night" became a huge hit on MuchMusic and MTV and won a Juno in the newly-created category for best video. Hamilton's Daniel Lanois emerged as an international talent, producing U2's *Unforgettable Fire* and Kim Mitchell established himself solo with *Akimbo Alogo*. *Grace Under Pressure* put Rush on top of the charts again and another Brian gained nation-wide popularity becoming our new Prime

Minister.

By the middle of the eighties, the Canadian scene was still unsteady, but a wave of altruism was starting to rock the world. In London, Bob Geldof brought us Live Aid and "Do They Know It's Christmas". Down south, Mikey and his friends sang "We Are The World" and back home we declared "Tears Are Not Enough". The collaborative single — featuring most of Canada's major artists — finished the year at #2, the highest posting for a Canadian release since Terry Jacks' "Seasons In The Sun" in 1974. On the lighter side, k.d. lang accepted her Juno for most promising female vocalist in a wedding dress and cowboy boots. Also deemed most promising were west coasters Paul Janz and Idle Eyes, but fellow neophytes Strange Advance and Gowan weren't so lucky. Luba, Bryan Adams and The Parachute Club took home the big hardware for best female, male and group respectively. Ironically, in a year of such unprecedented giving, something precious was being taken away. Freedom of speech took a shot in the kisser as an ad hoc committee of Senators' wives called the PMRC began stateside hearings into 'explicit' rock lyrics.

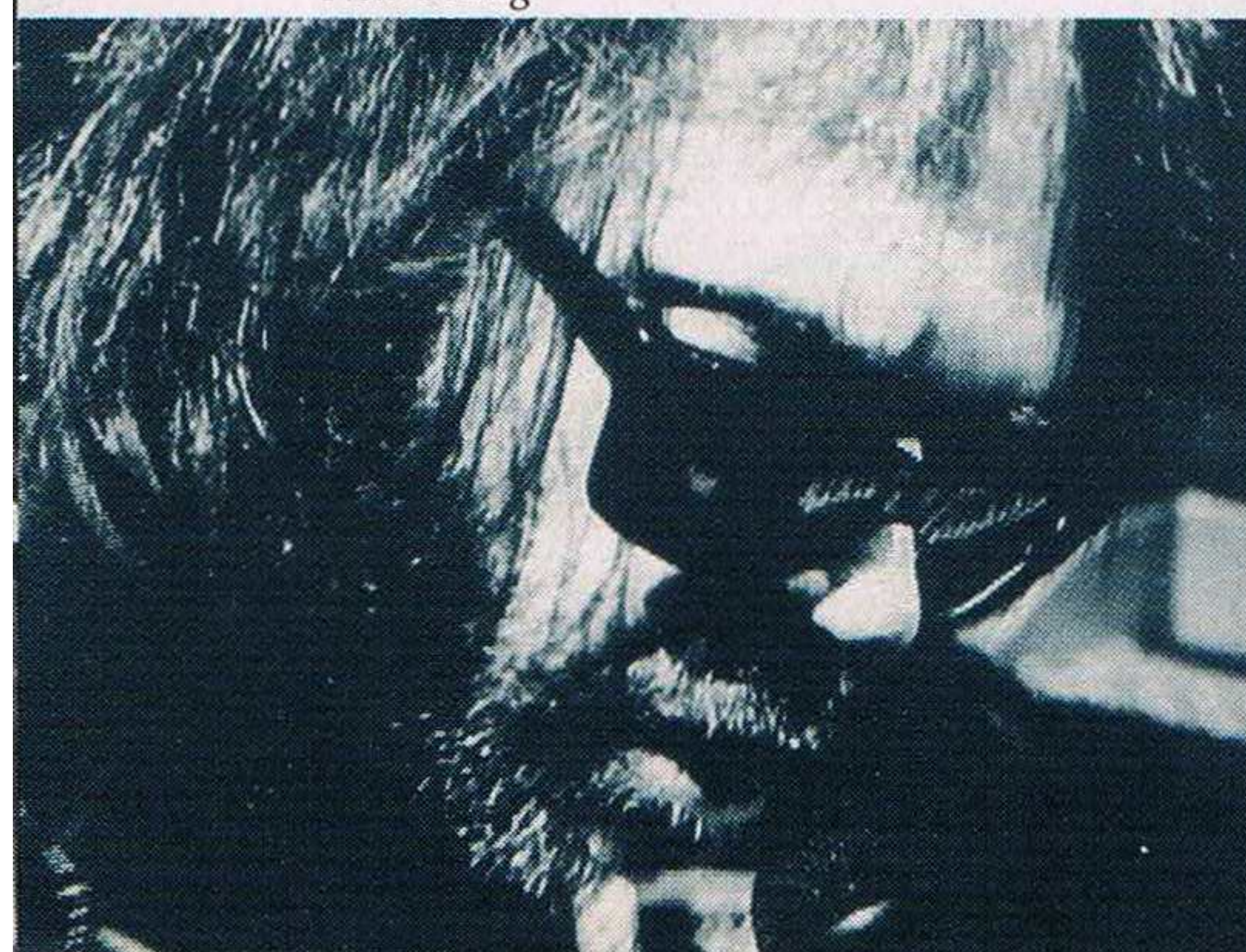
On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Columbia blew up. As CNN replayed the scene over and over, a new crop of talent was making its mark. Strong debuts from the Partland Brothers, Chalk Circle and The Box led a pack of prototypes like Eight Seconds, Haywire and Cats Can Fly. But a #5 single and three Junos made Glass Tiger the freshmen of the year. Other Junos went to Luba, Bryan Adams and Honeymoon Suite, and Daniel Lanois got his first Grammy for producing Peter Gabriel's *So*. The Mulroney government pitched in \$5 million a year for the Sound Recording Development Program, but for one artist, money wasn't everything. In what was surely the flash point for Canada's recent indie explosion, former Edmontonian Moe Berg saw his low-budget street-smart video for "I'm An Adult Now" invade the living rooms of the nation. As The Pursuit Of Happiness got closer to their goal, a fallen angel left his behind. Richard Manuel of

The Band took his own life in a Florida hotel room.

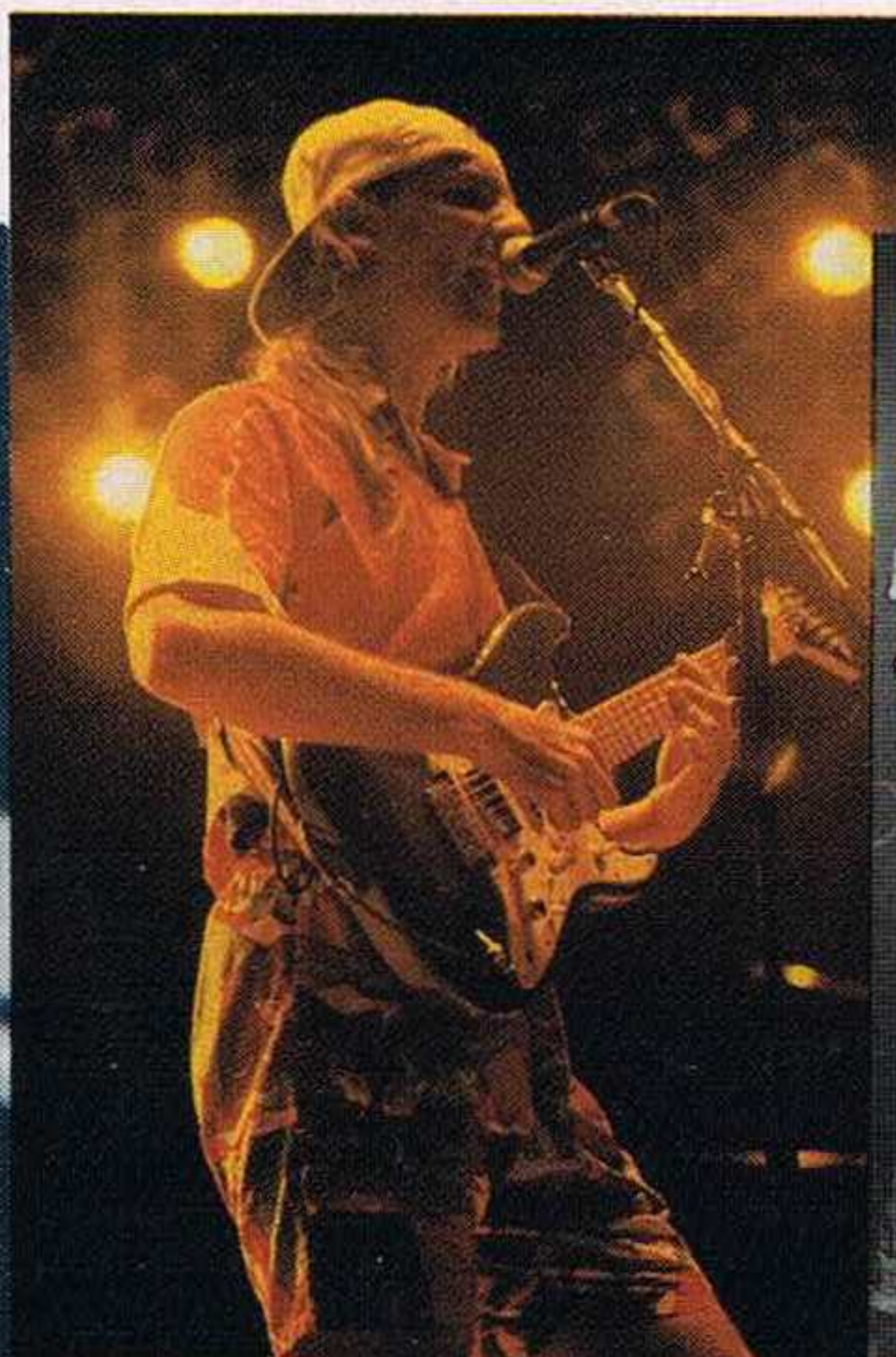
If TPOH was the indie spark of '86, then a quiet, quirky family band were about to become its torch-bearer for '87. With one microphone in a Toronto church basement, the Cowboy Junkies made music history. *The Trinity Sessions* (at a cost of \$200) eventually secured the Timmins clan an American deal and went on to become a multi-platinum smash. Bryan Adams was also mining ore — *Into The Fire* was the top charting album (#25) and featured the top single, "Heat Of The Night" (#10). A blast of fresh wax from Blue Rodeo, the Jitters and the Northern Pikes showed promise while newcomers Tim Feehan, Frozen Ghost and Rita MacNeil all took home Junos. k. d. lang broke a seven-year run by Anne Murray to take country female vocalist of the year, and others called to the podium included Kim Mitchell, Red Rider, Glass Tiger, Prairie Oyster and Bryan Adams — who won the newly-created Entertainer of the Year Award. In New York City, *Rolling Stone* magazine was celebrating its twentieth anniversary, but only two Canadian artists made the magazine's list for top 100 albums of all time — The Band (*Music From Big Pink*) and Joni Mitchell (*Blue*).

Distinguishing itself as the year there were no Junos, 1988 was a turning point for the country's record retailers. For the first time since their introduction, CDs outsold LPs and HMV opened their first 30 locations in Canada. Great debuts from Colin James, The Jeff Healey Band and Barney Bentall were complemented by the re-emergence of Robbie Robertson as a solo artist. Ironically, while Neil Young was giving the proverbial raspberry to corporate sponsorship in "This Note's For You", a song best known as a Club Med commercial was climbing up the domestic charts. "Hands Up" finished the year at #48.

1989 saw the fall of the Berlin wall — finally rock and roll



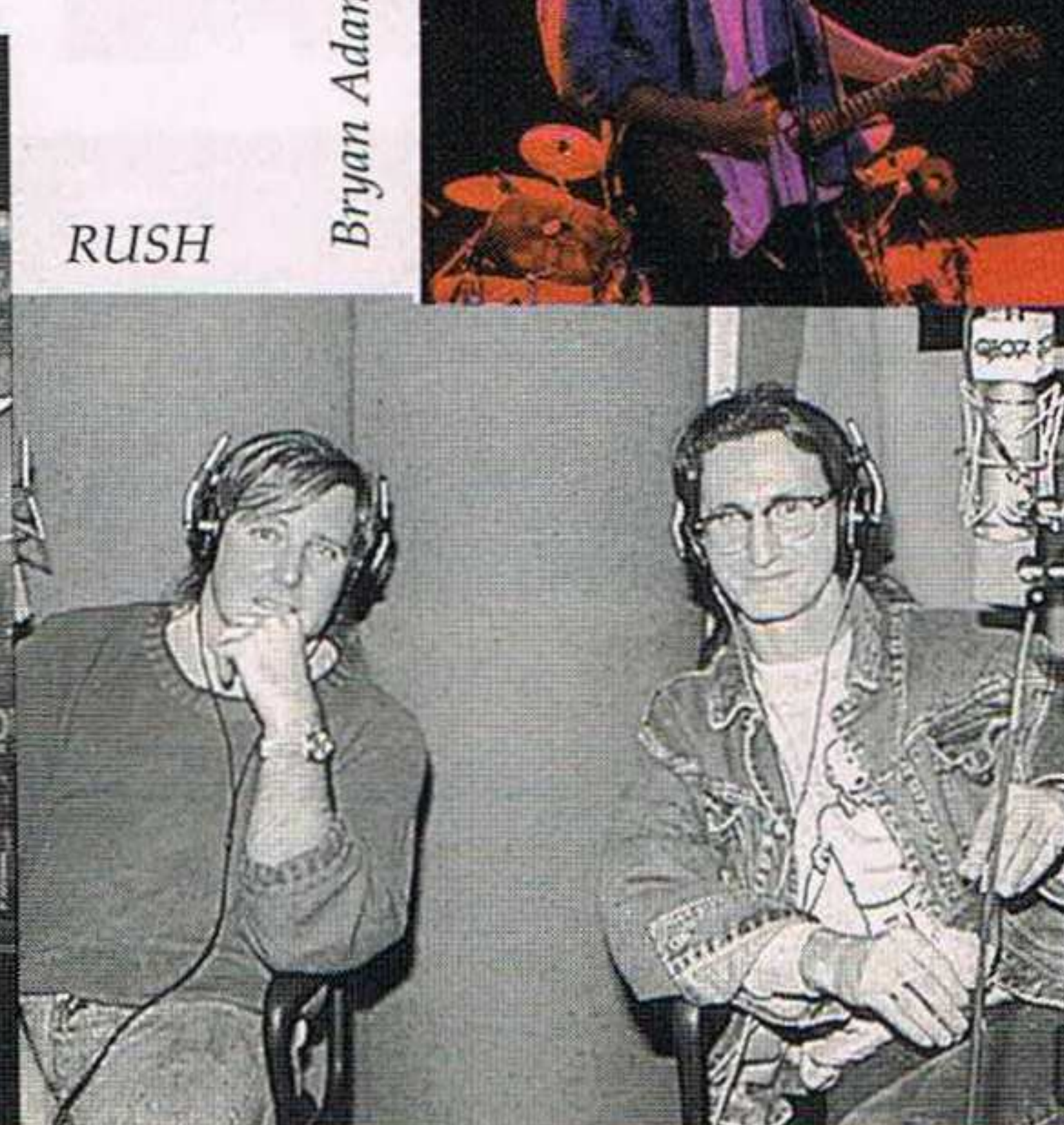
Neil Young



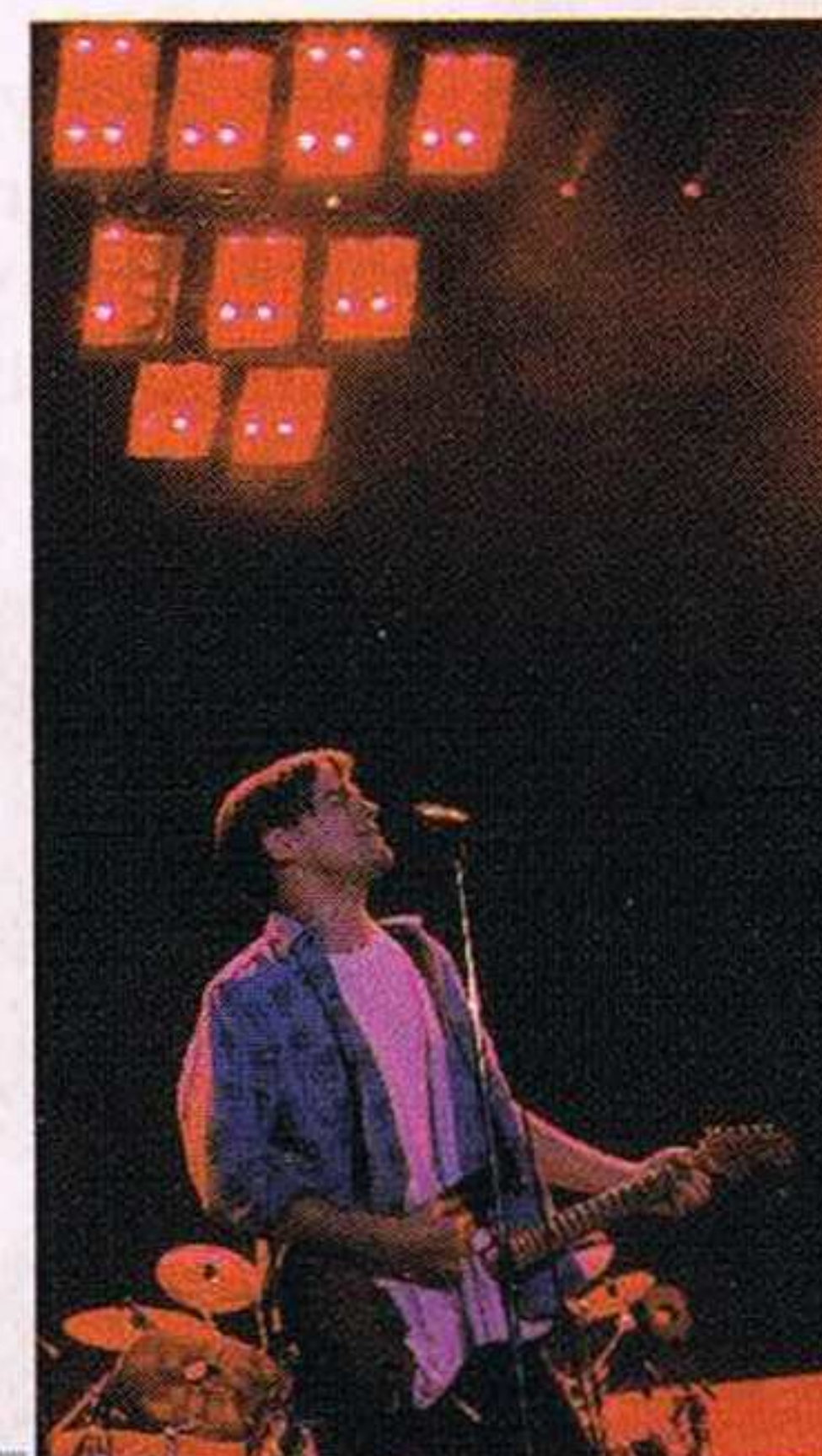
Kim Mitchell



Colin James



RUSH



Bryan Adams





# FIFTEEN YEARS OF GREAT CANADIAN SPINS

**Ask**  
**Canada's**  
**finest what their**  
**favourite**  
**Canadian album**  
**from the past 15**  
**years is and**  
**you're sure to**  
**get an**  
**interesting**  
**collection of**  
**responses . . .**



## Rik Emmett

"No fair! The Canadian music scene — hell, the international music business changes so dramatically and quickly that the basis for comparison is unfair. The broad range of styles that appeal both personally and publicly make a single choice . . . frustratingly unfair! Still, I'll play along — *with* modifications."

### Favourite Album: *Ingenue* — k.d. lang

"It is brilliantly conceived and executed, a beautiful marriage of artistic sensibilities and emotional aesthetics

with commercial art and craft. There are other worthy candidates that doubtless will show up in your survey — Rush, Adams and Dion spring to mind for their professional, artistic maturity. But I find *Ingenue* the most touching, the most compelling, the most moving Canadian album of my RECENT collection.

"Now for the modifications . . ."

### Best Canadian Rock Album From 15 Years Ago: *High Class in Borrowed Shoes* — Max Webster

"Okay, it was



Rik Emmett

released in '77 but it was still alive and kicking butt in January of '79."

### Most Influential Canadian Recording Artist From The Last 3 Decades: Bruce Cockburn

"Hands down."

### Favourite Classic Canadian Album From My Youth: *The Way I Feel* — Gordon Lightfoot

"'67!!! See what I mean about the arbitrary 15 year cutoff? I still have, and probably will



Lee Aaron



always have deep connections to this artist, and particularly this recording."

**Honourable Mention/  
Favourite  
Totally Underrated  
(and almost forgotten) Song From  
A Canadian Artist In  
The Last 15 Years  
That I Rediscovered  
When Perusing My  
Old Album Collection  
In Order To Answer  
Your Original  
Question:**  
*The Haunting (Jimmy Loves Mary-Ann)* – The Front

**Canadian Guitarists  
Who Deserve a Plug  
for Tasty Recent  
Releases:**  
Colin Linden and Colin James

"That's it. Happy 15th Anniversary."

## Lee Aaron

"It's so hard to choose just one because I really do have a lot of favourites; however, my greatest reverence goes to artists that have weathered the peaks and valleys of being in this business and achieved longevity. For this reason, I've chosen two more recent releases by some of Canada's most established writers/performers.

**Favourite Album:**  
*Harvest Moon* – Neil Young  
"I've fallen in love with this album and think it has the makings of a classic. Pure, simple, great songwriting. It inspires me to give up the trappings of urban living, build a little log cabin/



Doughboys



Sue Medley

studio in the mountains where my dogs have room to run and get back to simple things. I respect his personal honesty and can identify with his perspective on life. Neil

Young reminds me about what is important."

**Favourite Album:**  
*Counterparts* – Rush

"I was blown away when I heard a track from *Counterparts* on the radio for the first time. I went out and got the album right away. The production quality is amazing and, once again, Rush has managed to sound current without sacrificing an ounce of musical integrity. I think Rush has set a standard for rock acts, not only in Canada, but worldwide and *Counterparts* continues that tradition. This is a great album."

**David Wall (vocalist,  
Bourbon Tabernacle  
Choir)**

**Favourite Album:**  
*In Her Dream* – Bob Wiseman

"It's the perfect ingenious mix of moving, heart-wrenching songs with spontaneous lunacy."

**Rob Lulic (Rymes  
With Orange)**

**Favourite Album:**  
*Moving Pictures* – Rush

"Great album. Cool artwork."

**ONE HORSE BLUE**

**Rocko Vaugeois  
(vocals, drums)**

**Favourite  
Album:**  
*Sundown* –  
Gordon Light-  
foot

"I think this album may be a little more than 15 years old, but for me, *Sundown* by

Though this recording was completed on state-of-the-art digital and laser equipment, certain hissies and noise were later intentionally recorded onto some of the songs in certain places so that it would give the listener that it-musta-been-done-on-an-old-eight-track-with-cheap-microphones feeling.

Gordon Lightfoot is one I feel has probably had the most influence on me as a songwriter. Then, of course, we built a studio, called it "Sundown Recorders" and before you knew it, One Horse Blue was born!"

**Michael Shellard  
(vocals, acoustic  
guitar, harmonica)**

**Favourite Album:**  
*Wanna Be A Star* – Chilli-wack

"I would have to say *Wanna Be A Star* by Chilli-wack with songs like "My Girl" and "I Believe" and the technical and musical brilliance of the production. It's quite amazing."

**Gord Maxwell  
(vocals, bass)**

**Favourite Album:**  
*Mama Let Him Play* – Jerry Doucette

"I think *Mama Let Him Play* has got to be one of my favourites. I really thought there were some great songs and production on that record, not to mention some classic guitar riffs."



**Larry Pink  
(keyboards)**  
**Favourite Album:**  
*Silent Witness* – Skywalk  
"Just for the depth of the writing and impeccable musicianship."

**Jim Foster (lead  
guitar)**

**Favourite Album:**  
*I'm Your Man* – Leonard Cohen

"For one reason or another, it seems I listen to that one more than anything else I have. One great song after another by a truly great artist."

**Sue Medley**

**Favourite Album:**  
*Humans* – Bruce Cockburn  
"or anything else by him."

**Favourite Album:**  
*Court & Spark* – Joni Mitchell

"... although it was done in 1974."



Bruce Cockburn

