

Beat is building towards the Junos

Toronto has been transformed into a live-music lover's paradise for Canadian Music Week, Canada's largest new music showcase and for Sunday's Juno Awards.

by SHAWN OHLER
Southam Newspapers
TORONTO — Throw The Impotent Sea Snakes and Three Impotent Males in a Trunk with Barenaked Ladies and what do you get?
Nothing naughty, just three of the 350 bands playing here this week during Canada's largest new music showcase, Canadian Music Week.
Toronto has been transformed into a live-music lover's paradise for the festival, which culminates Sunday night in Hamilton with the 1996 Juno Awards.
More than 30 of Toronto's hottest clubs will host as many as 11 gigs a day during the week. The festival also in-

Peculiarly-named bands

Some of the more peculiar names of bands playing Canadian Music Week:

— The Impotent Sea Snakes — An Atlanta, Ga., shock-rock, gender-bending group whose most notorious song is called I Caught AIDS From a Dead Man.

— Scallywag Zag — Hamilton, Ont., rock act that got some local

airplay with a song titled I'm On Welfare.

— Pancreas Songbirds — According to their bio, this Toronto band's first tune was called Satan Ate Your Mother.

— Honorable mention goes to Five Knuckle Chuckle, Grand Theft Canoe and Hockey Teeth.

cludes a huge downtown multimedia show and a music-bigwig conference boasting keynote speakers ranging from Arista Records president Clive Davis to ex-Black Flag leader and spoken-word star Henry Rollins.

But the week's real focus is the mind-boggling collection of new Canadian talent on display.

Alternative addicts will be able to catch acts from The Super Friendz to Superdrag to Supergarage, to little-known acts Tribal Frenzy and Tribal

Stomp, to two bands from opposite sides of the country who share the same name — Freeloader.

Bigger acts, like the aforementioned Ladies, American funk-punk fusion group Fishbone and England's Echobelly, will share the stage and spotlight with the up-and-comers.

"It is a fantastic opportunity for a band to be seen by a lot of people who normally wouldn't get to see them," says Steve Waxman, Warner Music Canada's Toronto-based national pub-

licity manager.

"It is possible for a band to come here with a big buzz, do well at their show, and, in turn, reap some big rewards. That's not to say that these are going to be make-or-break shows for these bands. It's tough for a band to cut through all the noise. But if they do, it can really help."

Steve Jordan, who scouts new talent for Warner, says many bands playing here this week have "tons of potential," though he's wary of naming names.

"If I say I have my eye on somebody, then another guy from another label will try to get in on the band and I'll be screwed," Jordan says.

When pressed, though, Jordan allows that he really wants to catch Blue Bottle Fly, a St. Catharines, Ont., band playing on Friday, and Toronto's Made, which is playing Saturday.

Both Jordan and Waxman, though, point out that positive interest from a record company doesn't necessarily translate into a deal.

Bands can — and most often do — spend all kinds of money to make the Toronto trip and return home with nothing more than a few encouraging words.

The 25th Junos

The Junos will be carried live by CBC at 8 p.m. EST Sunday from Hamilton's Copps Coliseum.

Anne Murray, as well as hosting, will sing on the show along with Gordon Lightfoot, k.d. lang, Our Lady Peace, The Rankin Family, Tom Cochrane and recent Grammy winners Shania Twain and Alanis Morissette.

Awards, voted on by members of the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, will be given in a wide range of categories, including group of the year, entertainer of the year and best male and female vocalists.

Hall of Fame awards will be handed out to David Clayton Thomas, Denny Doherty of the Mamas and Papas, John Kay of Steppenwolf, Zal Yanovsky of The Lovin' Spoonful and Domenic Troiana.

Rocker Ronnie Hawkins will receive the Walt Grealis lifetime achievement award.



Sylvia McCann poses in her home office in Bakersfield, Vt., with her collection of magazine covers and posters featuring actor Keanu Reeves

She's the guru of Keanuology

by ANNE WALLACE

BAKERSFIELD, Vt. (AP) — Two years ago, Sylvie McCann couldn't pronounce Keanu Reeves's name — "I used to say 'KEE-new,'" she says.

But now she knows all about the movies he has made and the scripts he has rejected. She knows where he has been and where he's going. She has seen him three times, live, including once in Winnipeg, in January.

But she's never met him.
They came close once — within three metres at a concert.

She had another chance in Winnipeg but she didn't line up for an autograph.

"I'm not going to follow this guy on the street," says McCann. "Besides in was minus 30 out."

She has also learned to pronounce his name (Kee-AH-new).

To McCann, 34, Reeves is more than a buffed up idol of the silver screen. He's an artist, a mystery, and a font of self-discovery.

"Because he's very introspective," she says. "He makes you think about yourself. Other people feel that way too. He has awakened things in my life."

McCann has become a guru of Keanuology.

With Zero Distortion, a monthly newsletter McCann publishes from her home, she spreads Keanu news to 130 subscribers in the United States and beyond.

Her office (802-827-3600 and e-mail RZGK84A(at)PRODIGY.com), which is papered with portraits of the handsome, pensive-looking Reeves, is crowded with letters from fans who want more information or have tips to share.

The style is chatty and informal, but not gossip. No juicy tidbits about Reeves's private life in Zero Distortion and look elsewhere for rumors that he's gay.

"We'll never know — and who cares, really?" McCann said. "He wouldn't be attracted to me anyway."

McCann's fascination with Reeves began in 1994 after she saw him in the action movie Speed.

"First of all, he was gorgeous," said McCann. It wasn't just good looks; he also had presence. "Wherever in a scene he was, your eyes went there."

But a search for more information about this quirky star revealed little.

Tabloid gossip wasn't what she was after,

and when she mustered the courage to ask his agency how to get in touch with his fan club, she was told "there was no fan club — his lawyers don't want one."

So Zero Distortion was born.
From the start, the newsletter's editorial direction focused on celebrating Reeves's mystique, his nomadic spirit, and his "romantic mixture of vulnerability and exoticism."

"Take a bow, Keanu," McCann wrote in the first issue about the star's appearance last year as Hamlet at the Manitoba Theatre Centre.

"Your off-stage performance has already enlightened us with the essence of Shakespeare."

From interviews and films, she has gleaned this concept of Reeves:

He is introspective and independent. He stands up for what he believes is right, eschews the movie-star glitz of Hollywood, and works hard to perfect his art. He's kind and respectful toward his co-workers and his fans. He's poetic in his language and his daily deeds.

"I don't know if it's a real picture," McCann said.

"My opinion is that he's very mysterious."



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Cruise consultants at your service: From left) Wendy Parolin, Stella Meger, Lisa Boucher, Denise Schattenkirk, Vince Schattenkirk.

"The cruise lines have overbuilt and for the next 18 months the consumer is going to reap the benefits," says managing partner of Northern CruiseShipCentres in Prince George Vince Schattenkirk.

"It's basic economics," he adds. "When supply exceeds demand, the price has to drop."

According to Schattenkirk, there are 22 ships on the water and more will be built over the next 30 months.

"As a travel agent it's a great position to be in because all the lines are discounting. We get several new specials faxed to us each day. It's at the point where we are keeping lists of clients and phoning each one as the specials roll in," comments Schattenkirk.

When asked about complacency in the travel industry, he responds openly. "Sure, we've all heard the stories about the travel agent who never calls you back. But every industry has its black sheep. I think the travels in town do a great job but there definitely is opportunity here."

Opportunity that Schattenkirk and his two partners, Doug Skeates and Doug Coletti recognized and took advantage of last November. Since then, their company (part of a 38-franchise chain) has experienced an incredible start-up period.

"We're having a lot of fun. Our clients have been wonderful, very receptive to our way of doing things. We do call you back and when we do you can tell we've done our homework," states Schattenkirk.

He says that on average, two hours of research go into any travel holiday package sold.

"Anyone can quote you a price, we take the time to find out what you don't want in a holiday and what you do want - then we go about finding it at the best price available."

"When asked what message he would most like to get out to potential customers, Schattenkirk was quick to respond. "We want people to understand Northern CruiseShipCentre can handle all forms of vacation travel. Our emphasis will always be on cruising, we are the cruise experts but not everyone is ready to go on a cruise. Some people just want to get away to Mexico, Hawaii or Europe. There is so much of the world to see and with prices, both for cruises and conventional holiday packages being discounted, now is definitely the time to see it."

Northern CruiseShipCentre is centrally located at Seventh and Brunswick in Prince George.

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