

Mother Earth goes big time

It was just an average day in Edwin's life. He was sitting around contemplating the next album for his band, I Mother Earth, when suddenly he was struck with a turn of events that made him feel like a six-year-old might if he were told he had been made manager of the candy store. Even now, right through the telephone, you can hear the grin on his face.

It started with a phone call from Alex Lifeson's (guitar player for Rush) manager. Alex was making a solo album and would Edwin like to sing on it?

"I pulled the phone away and just looked at it," Edwin (no last name supplied) says. "Phone Alex Lifeson! I was shaking so I did my deep breathing exercises to relax and build up my confidence. When we did hook up it was like we'd known each other for a long time. It was totally unexpected for me. I expected some bit of a rock star attitude, some bit of a real control freak, but it was not like that at all. He was so accommodating and relaxed."

The rock star attitude is what one might expect from Edwin himself. He's the front man for one of the most internationally successful Canadian bands in the last four years, and one that's got a lot of industry connection. Their first



Edwin: 'As soon as we did the demo everything changed.'

album, produced by Guns 'n' Roses producer Mike Clink, sold well over 100,000 copies in the States, and stamped them firmly on the tour circuit here in Canada. But Edwin doesn't cop any status at all and he's astonishingly gregarious.

"For me personally it (the 'Victor' project with Lifeson) was a huge growing experience," he concedes. "It was a big confidence builder for me. Not cocky confidence, but sort of a quiet exuberance - 'Wow! I just did something with Alex Lifeson!'"

I Mother Earth was starting to work on their new album - the recently released 'Scenery & Fish' - at the same time. Edwin had to reign in his enthusiasm.

"I didn't want to come into the band and go 'Alex this, and Alex that.' I didn't want to do that. The band

didn't need that sort of attitude from me, but I don't think I could hide it at times, I was so excited inside."

Now the band has the new album out and initial sales are very fast. 'Scenery & Fish' has just been released in Europe, and a U.S. release is coming soon. It was the States, in fact, that signed the band first, even though Canadian companies were given first dibs. I Mother Earth was a live act around Toronto for a couple of years, and it wasn't working for them. So they made a demo, bought some stamps, and the rest is recent history.

"As soon as we did the demo everything changed," says Edwin. "Our management sent it to every Canadian record company but also every American record company. The Canadian

ones said 'I don't get it.' The Americans said 'Holy (crap) we have to see this band, you have to set up a show!' We had 13 record companies interested in checking us out. Instead of doing 13 different shows, we invited all 13 to one big show so they could look across the room and say 'Oh no, they're interested too.' In retrospect it was a nice position to be in, but at the time it was nerve-wracking - you're whole career riding on one show!"

The next thing you know, the four of them are in LA working on a major release, Edwin is taking lessons from Axel Rose's vocal coach (in opera technique!), and the band wagon is becoming a wagon train. It wheels into the Generator on Tuesday night (May 28) with opening guests The Killjoys.

Kids have healthy image of their city

For the second year in a row elementary students in Prince George have created their version of a PG city map. "Kidsmap" is an initiative that is tied to the recent Healthy Communities week. Greg Halseth, an assistant professor of geography at UNBC, organized this poster challenge.

"This does two things," says Mr. Halseth. "It gives kids a chance to convey their image of a healthy Prince George. The other important thing it does is get college and university faculty into the schools so the students can see that we're not strange."

"Besides, it's a heck of a lot of fun to meet the kids and see what they come up with."

Halseth, and other geography faculty from the two post-secondary facilities in the city, went into six schools to talk to about 250 kids about the poster challenge. Their mission was to talk to the students about maps in general, healthy communities in general, and then focus them on Prince George in particular. The kids then let their pencil crayons do the talking.

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