

Taking pride in Collins' CD

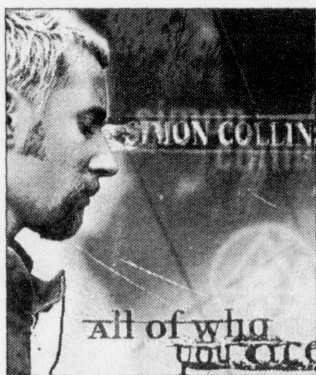
Prince George plays part in first single from singer with famous father

The debut single from Simon Collins' debut album can also be claimed as the pride of Prince George. From the CD *All of Who You Are*, the song 'Pride' was released on May 18 by Warner Music Canada and is now climbing the national charts. It is in medium rotation at Z95.3-FM in Vancouver and the video will soon be seen on MuchMusic.

It can't be ignored that Simon Collins is the Canadian son of pop superstar Phil Collins, but the younger one is making his own distinctive mark in music. He is one of the leaders in the emerging field of techno-pop. 'Pride' is perfectly indicative of the Simon Collins touch, an electronica tapestry with real instruments stitched in. In this case the instruments are Celtic traditionalists: bagpipes and bodhran (Irish hand drum pronounced "bow-ron"). Bagpipes and bodhrans played by Prince George musicians in a Prince George recording studio.

Back in 1997 Simon Collins met up with local record producer Mike Callewaert of Rocketfish Productions. He convinced Simon to come to PG to begin work on his debut CD. Simon came and utilized local musicians Sheldon Clare and Alan O'Reilly for a little number they were working on. The song eventually became 'Pride'.

"They probably forgot about that whole session," Simon laughs in a recent interview with *The Free Press*. It was a very long time



between recording and release in Canada, protracted by the apathy of Canadian and American record labels to support anything from the techno field. Simon had to take the whole project to Germany where the production team Schallbau Produktion went to work on the bed tracks and released it for techno-crazy Europe. Sales were huge. The North American industry finally took notice.

"Europe is a few steps ahead of us with this kind of music," Simon says. "It's (North America) a hip-hop, rock 'n' roll place. Anything else is out in the cold. That's why we have to start in Europe. I shopped my stuff around Canada and Los Angeles for years and every label said the same thing. It's great, there's commercial potential, but go to Europe. Finally I took the hint."

Front, back, it doesn't matter which door he came in through, it is now in record stores and on the radio. Eric Samuels, program director for Z95.3-FM in Simon's hometown of Vancouver, says the single is still too new to judge for popularity but it seems to be catching on quickly. But is this due to the fact he is local to the Vancouver market? Or Phil Collins' son?

"It's certainly a factor," says Eric. "As much as possible we like to support local performers. Yeah, it helps, too, that he has a famous father, but ultimately you have to have a song worth playing. Tal Bachman (son of Randy) is another example just like that, but if it isn't a good record it means nothing...We're pretty happy with 'Pride' so far."

The reaction from Prince George is also positive. "I'm pretty thrilled. I did a lot of work on that record," says initial producer Mike Callewaert, who also contributed some guitar work and co-writing to the album. Over at radio station 101.3 Hits-FM, program director Ken Kilcullen says the local content of the song "absolutely" has an affect in their decision to play it. He says "it's on my desk right now and I anticipate we will be playing it. It hasn't been out long enough to make the charts yet, (but) it has the local angle and it's a good enough song."

The Simon Collins album *All of Who You Are* is available in local record stores.

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Caitlin books wins provincial award

Provincial literature got its recognition at the British Columbia 2000 Book Awards. Sixty-one books were given awards of recognition and one of them was *The Ghost Behind Him* by Doris Ray, published by Caitlin Press of Prince George.

The book deals with healthcare problems in B.C., especially concerning mental illnesses. Doris Ray tells of the troubles she had in co-ordinating health care for her son, who is schizophrenic. It's a true story about her son, who admits himself to the emergency ward, but gets turned away.

"It's been a real problem in B.C., because people with mental illnesses are not recognized by regular medical doctors necessarily, some do and some don't," is Cynthia Wilson's point of view concerning the social subject. She

is the publisher of the award-winning book.

The idea behind the awards is to support provincial literature by helping publishers to profile books from British Columbia and by raising the amount of B.C. books in school libraries.

"I think we have a high readership. People read a lot of books on B.C. particularly here in the North and anything that gets more B.C. books by B.C. authors and B.C. publishers into the school is a good idea," says Cynthia.

"I think there's great talent among writers in B.C. and getting a place to publish is very good. I think that a lot of our school books are dominated by America and Central Canada and the more that we can go on local readings and local history the better off we are in the school."

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1 Mission Impossible 2	14A	12:30	2:50	5:10	7:20	9:45
2 Road Trip	PG	1:15	3:45		7:05	9:40
3 Shanghai Noon	14A	1:00	4:10		7:10	10:05
4 Mission Impossible 2	G	12:00	2:15	4:30	6:45	9:00
5 Dinosaur	18A	12:15	3:30		7:00	10:10
6 Gladiator						

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