

# Leppard has a long run

Some rockers say video killed the radio star. Guitarist Phil Collen says video helped boost rock'n'roll band Def Leppard into superstar status.

"It (MTV) certainly helped. We embraced the whole video concept in the early 1980s," said Collen, on a break from Def Leppard's 10-month long road trip as the band stopped in Saskatoon. "In the long run though, it (videos) did hurt us I guess because it took away that mystique. They became very candy-coated and did nothing to display our passion for the music."

Def Leppard has been making music since the late 1970s, originally founded by Joe Elliot on vocals, Pete Willis, guitar, Rick Savage, bass and Steve Clark, guitar. They started as a bar band, becoming immensely popular in their hometown, Sheffield, England. The foursome were known for the hard-hitting, heavy metal sound inspired by groups such as Mott the Hoople, T-Rex, Queen and Led Zeppelin.

It was *Pyromania* which first spurred the group's success in 1983. Collen joined the group just before the release of the band's biggest hit, replacing Willis, who was battling alcoholism.

More trouble came when drummer Rick Savage was involved in a car accident and lost his arm. Fitted out with a special drum kit to accommodate the injury, the band regrouped once again, this time issuing the wildly successful *Hysteria* early in 1987. The album produced six straight top 20 hits for the group including *Hysteria*, *Pour Some Sugar on Me*, *Love Bites*, *Armageddon It* and *Rocket*.

With a treasure chest full of hits to rest on, Collen said it's still important to the band to tour and to make new music. He says the Prince George show at the Multiplex on Saturday is sure to bring the best of Def Leppard's past, with a two-hour show starting off



It will be more than a blast from the past as Def Leppard brings its old and new music to the Prince George Multiplex. SUBMITTED PHOTO

with five consecutive top numbers, as well as a good dose of the group's new work.

"We're still very much based on substance," said Collen. "And I guess as long as people are still listening, and still buying the music, well that's really cool."

For veteran fans, there's still the patented Def Leppard metal sound, but Collen says you'll find some added riffs, some sounds more familiar in today's music than in the 70s and 80s.

"For instance, we'll take some hip-hop," said Collen, "and then we'll turn it around and make it work for us, not just for the sake of adding it though, but because as musicians, we

are also trying to make it as relevant as possible."

The current challenge, says Collen, is getting Def Leppard's music played on the radio or MTV, today Too much of the music business is run by what Collen calls "a corporate entity" with too many decisions regarding airplay made in corporate offices rather than by DJs.

The playing the road bit is the easy part, he says, and really the way the group stays in touch with old and new fans.

"The playing live part, well that's pretty physical," he says. "It's really pretty much a no-brainer. You literally have fun and it's just a trip playing with this group. That's the easy part."



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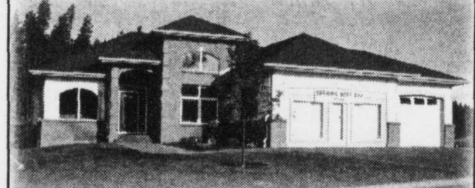
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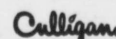
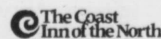
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## Clarification

Margaret Vardy was incorrectly identified in a story in the Sunday, September 7 paper entitled 'No where to turn'. The Free Press apologizes for any inconvenience.

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