



Rock

Raff

Remembered

Karen Magill

DEDICATIONS

-I would like to thank Dorothy Thompson for first writing the book 'The Complete Guide to Promoting and Selling Your ebook' in which I found the advice to write this book. Thanks to Dorothy for all her advice and help and great guests on the yahoo group, TWLAuthorTalks. And last, but most assuredly not least, thanks to Dorothy for designing such a great cover.

-Thanks for my parents and family for all their support.

-Thanks to my friends for putting up with me.

-And thanks to the musical artists who let me into their lives.

FOREWARD

I went to a POISON concert and wrote a review. I did this because I never liked the reviews that the papers wrote, finding them biased and inaccurate. An ex-boyfriend of mine showed the review to an editor of a paper aimed at high school students. He liked it and published it and I began writing a column on music for him as well as reviewing concerts and product. One day the editor and I got into a disagreement over a change he had made in an interview I had done. He told me if I didn't like it to start my own production. So I did.

Out of that challenge came the weekly newsletter 'Rock Raff'. Based in Calgary, Alberta Canada 'Rock Raff' consisted of interviews, reviews of product and concerts. I wrote editorials and, for a small fee, listed upcoming performers in clubs. There was a section call 'Raff Remembers' where important dates in rock music were listed. The newsletter changed depending on what new ideas I came up with. I edited, produced and primarily wrote 'Rock Raff', though I did have other contributing writers.

Looking back, I am quite impressed with how welcoming the music companies were to 'Rock Raff' and myself. Whether I needed information, releases or the occasional concert ticket, they always seemed willing to help. I would talk to anyone whether the artist was a garage band that never got out of the garage or a multi platinum-selling artist. My only stipulation was that they had to perform some original songs. I wonder if the industry would be the same today or to everyone. I don't know why I was welcomed so openly, I'm just glad I was.

When I decided to create a free ebook, I pulled out my copies of 'Rock Raff' and took a trip down memory lane. Some of these articles make me smile because there is back-story to most of them. Everything in here was written by me. Some of these artists you may never have heard of but those may be the ones that touched me the most.

Enjoy the pieces of my past you find in here. Let me know you think.

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HATTON'S BODY AND SOUL

(originally appeared in debut issue. July 3, 1991)

'Body and Soul' is the title of the debut releases by Susie Hatton, produced by the vocalist and songwriter for POISON, Bret Michaels.

Though this album is technically classified as pop, the listener is relieved to realize that 'Body and Soul' is missing the electronic enhancers that are so prevalent in pop music today.

Instead, Hatton's passionate voice and the guitars dominate; creating music that is a delight to listen to.

Though Michaels co-wrote many of the songs on this album, the songs belong solely to Hatton.

With cuts that include a cover of the ROLLING STONES' classic 'Brown Sugar', 'Body and Soul' is assuredly an album to at least take into consideration.

THE ORIGINALITY OF SUSIE HATTON

(This appeared in Issue #3 July 17, 1991)

'It's real. It's raw. It's honest. It's time. These words appeared in an advertisement for 'Body and Soul, the debut album by Susie Hatton. And they tell it like it is.

Last week, I was fortunate enough to be able to conduct a telephone interview with Susie Hatton and these are the results of our discussion.

Hatton grew up in Ohio playing the piano since she was ten yet Hatton never played the club scene.

'When I met up with Bret (Michaels) we wrote together for awhile before we actually picked the songs to demo.' Hatton explains.

The correct songs must have been picked because 'Body and Soul' was released on May 14 in the United States and has been doing well there ever since. In fact, Hatton is getting ready to release her second single to follow up her first, 'Blue Monday'.

Hatton has stated that she didn't 'want another artist's signature placed on me'. Since many of the songs on 'Body and Soul' were co-written by POISON's Bret Michaels as well as it being Michaels' first project as producer, I wondered if Hatton was ever apprehensive that his signature might be placed on 'Body and Soul'. Hatton was quick to explain.

'I wrote all my lyrics and so much of the music and melody ideas that it is mostly from me.'

'Bret's whole part that he played was the fact that he kept it rock and roll like I wanted to. With his experience, he kept it real.'

'Bret did everything I wanted him to do as far as keeping it in the direction I wanted but he me write on my own album so it was me, it was my songs, my situation.' Hatton elaborates.

The sounds of 'Body and Soul' are distinctively Hatton's and who else could describe it better than she?

'It's a mixture. It's rock, it's soul, it's groove. I have a little bit of everything on there. Real soulful ballads that mean a lot to me, that were written about things that happened to me.'

'I have songs that are rock and roll, that are fun to sing along to and I have a couple that you can even dance to ' further clarifies Hatton.

'It's the variety pack!' she goes on to laugh.

Hatton says that was a little nervous doing this album because everything out there right now is dance. She also didn't want 'Body and Soul' to be another processed pop album. Yet with a cover of the 'Rolling Stones' 'Brown Sugar', how could it be?

'I've always loved the ROLLING STONES Hatton says 'and I've always loved Brown Sugar.'

Hatton continues to point out the fact that you can never make a 'Stones' song better.

'Find a STONES' song I like and do it different. Not do it better, not try to outdo anything. Just do it different and do it fun.'

Hatton is anxious to get out and play live yet unless can get a demand going here, we may not be blessed with the opportunity see Susie Hatton in Calgary. If you want to hear music that is rock and roll, not metal yet thankfully not electronic pop, dance or rap then ask your music store for 'Body and Soul'. Contact MuchMusic to see if they have the single 'Blue Monday' and contact your favorite radio station.

Hopefully 'Body and Soul' and artists like Susie Hatton are a premonition of the music of the future.

RAFF REMINISCES

(originally appeared in Issue #62 September 2, 1992)

As we all know, or should know, the music we hear and love today would not exist if it weren't for artists in the past.

So this section is to take a look at some of those previous albums that have become legendary.

This week, I would like to take a look at two of my all time favorite releases.

When a person thinks of KISS in the past, they see the heavily made up musicians that set the rock world on its ear. And, more often than not, they see and hear the album 'Destroyer'.

Released in 1976, (that's almost twenty years ago now!) 'Destroyer' is still a favorite among many today. And for good reason.

The cuts on 'Destroyer' consist of the hard rocking tunes like 'Detroit Rock City', 'Shout It Out Loud' and 'Great Expectations' as well as, perhaps, one of the most memorable rock ballads written, 'Beth'.

The tune, 'Do You Love Me' is a rock star asking his girlfriend if she would still love him if all the glamorous trappings of being a rock star weren't there.

A question, I'm certain, that many men in that position ask or like to ask.

KISS has gone on to create many quality releases and memorable tunes. But I don't feel that there will ever be any that become as legendary as 'Destroyer'.

Another one of my favorite albums is 'Bat Out of Hell' by MEATLOAF.

Of course, many of us remember the song 'Paradise By The Dashboard Light; from our high school days. Even though this album was released in 1977, its appeal seemed to last a lot longer than that.

Then there is 'Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad' which is another tear jerking rock ballad that has become legendary.

The title track is a song that cannot go unmentioned as it begins 'Bat Out Of Hell' and is impressive in its length (nine minutes, forty eight seconds) musical content and lyrical meaning.

But my personal favorite has to be the final cut, 'For Crying Out Loud'.

This eight minute and forty-five second song is backed by members of the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra to add an extra sort of appeal.

Throughout this song, the man is telling the lady of his life that 'he thanks, need her, serves her, wants her and holds her'. But 'ah most of all, for crying out loud for that I love you'.

A tribute to romance and the giving and taking in a relationship, I could never get bored with this tune.

Nor could I ever get bored with the album 'Bat Out Of Hell'. An album that may be destined to remain in the hearts and minds of rock music listeners for all eternity.

EDITORIAL

(originally appeared in Issue #64 September 16, 1992)

When a musical artist attains superstar status, there is one group of people he/she/they have to thank and one group only: the music fans that bought their release (s) and put the singles to the top of the charts.

Yet, it appears that some artists tend to forget that very important piece of information.

In the past years, there have been memorable incidents of musical 'superstars' that are not fulfilling their responsibility to their fans.

One band left the stage immediately following the final song of the regular set. Then the stadium lights went up! It didn't matter how loud the crowd cheered, the band would not do an encore.

A short time later, the vocalist for the aforementioned band reportedly announced, on national television, that 'Calgary didn't know how to rock'.

Reports stated that the band members were fighting with each other and therefore had no desire to perform an encore. As well, none of the members appeared to be giving their 'all' to that evening's performance.

Then to have the vocalist make such a statement! All a statement like that does, whether right or wrong, is to prove that the vocalist is arrogant and condescending. It also may have done damage to the band.

More than likely, the vocalist alienated some of the fans. Something that no band can afford to do.

Consider the artists who perform a few songs then 'pass out' due to drug or alcohol abuse or just leave the stage for no justifiable reason.

Of course, we also have the artists that verbally and/or physically abuse their supporters.

The artists mentioned above are not taking the responsibility bestowed upon them when they were fortunate enough to achieve the status that many can only dream of having. Neither are they expressing the respect and consideration is due to the fans that put them there.

And the fans have to stop letting them get away with it! It is reasonable to understand if a concert is postponed or cut short due to a legitimate medical reason (not created by the over indulgence in illegal substances and/or alcohol) but it is NOT reasonable to justify these occurrences without a valid reason!

Certain artists and fans have to realize that these superstars are not 'gods'. Neither are they to be placed extremely high on a pedestal.

These stars are merely human beings with, in some cases; an exceptional talent for creating and playing the music that is dear to us.

Always remember that it isn't the record companies, managers or music writers that have places these artists on top. It is the fans and, should the fans so desire, they can bring the artist crashing down anytime they so desire to do so.

INSIDE SLIK TOXIK

(originally appeared in Issue #51 June 17, 1992)

June 12, SLIK TOXIK played the 'Live Wire' and I had the honor of interviewing Kevin Gale and Pat Howarth, SLIK TOXIK's guitarist and bass player respectively.

'I thought of it,' Howarth answered immediately when asked how the name SLIK TOXIK came to be.

'We decided to change the name of the band,' Howarth continues, 'I was sitting and there and I go, Kev, check this out – slick something. Something heavy with the word slick.'

From there, a dictionary was consulted; the spelling changed and the name SLIK TOXIK was born.

The name compliments the music as well. For as the name signifies two contradictory elements: light and heavy or smooth and deadly; SLIK TOXIK's music also consists of two contradictory elements. But I will let Howarth explain that.

'We have both sides to our music. We have the polished side and we have the very aggressive, raw side.'

The band's debut album, 'Doin' The Nasty' was released in March of this year and, since then we have seen SLIK TOXIK in numerous magazines, both Canadian and American.

I, for one, am quite impressed with the amount of press that this very worthy band is receiving. But I was curious to know how things are progressing for SLIK TOXIK.

'I think it's going a little quicker than what I expected,' says Gale. Gale also mentioned that SLIK TOXIK is doing really well in Canada so the area they have to focus on is the States.

'I thought it was going to take a lot longer to get the notoriety.' Gale clarifies.

'The responses from people have been far beyond our expectations.' Howarth interjects.

'Going in the States and having people show up with albums and posters and pictures from 'Metal Edge.'

In my opinion, SLIK TOXIK is fully of this amount of success and more with 'Doin The Nasty'.

SLIK TOXIK began their present tour on May 11 and it will end June 17. Two weeks later, they will start touring Eastern Canada and the States with SAIGON KICK.

Unfortunately, for those of you who had the misfortune to miss SLIK TOXIK this time, they do not know when they will be back.

As many of ROCK RAFF readers know, I am against censorship and it disturbed me greatly that the 'Obscenity Bill' was passed into law recently in the United States. (see editorial in Issue #46)

I clipped that article from the 'Rolling Stones' magazine and showed it to Gale and Howarth.

'Crap. Complete and utter crap,' was Gale's immediate response. He went on to elaborate.

'Once you censor any song, you censor the individual's freedom of expression and that's wrong.

'You cannot censor the freedom of expression by anybody.'

It is evident that this is a topic that Gale feels quite passionate about as gave me much of his opinion on censorship

'Once you censor a song like that you are censoring the individual who wrote the song.'

'There's provocative stuff on commercials.' Howarth intercedes. 'You can go to a movie and see a guy's throat ripped out by they always attack music.'

Presently, because of the lack of bands here in Canada, Gale doesn't feel that this censorship is going to have the wider specter that is occurring in the United States.

However, Gale went on to explain that as more bands get signed and more product is available, he feels that it may be worse here in Canada than in the United States. Howarth also had his own speculation on the effects of censorship.

'I actually think it causes more rebellion with musicians with musicians and the more they try to outlaw it the more you are going to see them do it for the cause of rock and roll.'

Gale and Howarth feel that SLIK TOXIK is generally being treated better by the general public now that 'Doin' the Nasty' had been released.

'The people that used to condemn us are the first ones that are patting us on the back.' Gale observes.

What about other musicians? Are they treating SLIK TOXIK better or worse than before 'Doin' the Nasty' was released?

'Both.' Howarth says. 'Some used to be more friendly towards us and now we are hearing things behind our backs.'

But that is par for the course, I feel, and at least they are talking.

Both Gale and Howarth appeared to me to be committed, intelligent men with goals that surpass many of other peoples'.

Gales wishes to play Madison Square Gardens before his twenty five (he is presently twenty-three) and Howarth wants to play those big venues. Full of people rocking to SLIK TOXIK tunes of course.

I'm going to end this interview with the comment that Howarth made concerning their live show.

'You get the album plus an extra percent of energy.'

Needless to say, I was extremely curious about the live show and, to know what I thought of it, just read on.

Well after ending that interview that way, I could not included the review of their live show so here it is!

SLIK TOXIK TAKES THE LIVE WIRE!

(originally appeared in Issue #51 June 17, 1992)

On June 12, SLIK TOXIK took over the Live Wire and left the people reeling! Calgary will never be the same again.

When SLIK TOXIK ascended the stage, all hell broke loose.

Besides the high quality and general appeal of the music of SLIK TOXIK, the high level of energy that is given out by the band is also immediately noticeable.

After the first song, a viewer is certain that band must burn out soon after. Not so. SLIK TOXIK is able to present each and every memorable tune with the same amount of energy as the first song. Perhaps more.

Another thing I noticed is that the stage is too small to hold SLIK TOXIK. Especially vocalist Nicholas Walsh.

A few times I noticed that the musicians almost seemed to run into each other. But, I also felt that, no matter how big the stage was, it would still be too small to hold SLIK TOXIK.

Back to the music. If you are one of the intelligent rock listeners that has heard 'Doin' The Nasty', then you know how good the music is. But a listener cannot truly appreciate SLIK TOXIK or their debut album until they have seen or heard SLIK TOXIK live.

From song to song, the music was presented to the audience at the LIVE WIRE with finesse, style and the aggressive raw edge that was mentioned earlier.

One of my favorites moments was when SLIK TOXIK performed 'Cherry Bomb' which, if you read the review of 'Doin' The Nasty' in Issue #42, is the tune I liked the best.

I didn't think that 'Cherry Bomb' could get any better but I was wrong. Hearing and seeing it performed live made me realize that SLIK TOXIK is

capable of surpassing the quality of ANYTHING that sounds great recorded.

Assuredly, this was one of the best rock shows to hit Calgary in a long time and there is no reason whatsoever that we shouldn't see SLIK TOXIK ascend to greater heights in the music world. To phrase it simply – SLIK TOXIK kicked ass!

Opening act that evening was Calgary based band, NOBODY'S FAULT.

Per usual, the first set consisted of cover tunes. These cover tunes, both newer and older songs, seemed to have been chosen not only for their audience appeal but also because Steve Raymond's unique voice compliments them perfectly.

But don't let Raymond's voice distract you from the talent that exists within the other three members of NOBODY'S FAULT.

Lead guitarist, Mike Sweeney, bass player Jim Tanzi and drummer Lyle Wishlow are all musicians that have confidence in their playing and, with time and hard work, should go far.

Over the length of the weekend, I discovered that the future of NOBODY'S FAULT is in doubt. But, whatever happens, I hope that we see these four musicians emerge on the music scene again.

DEF LEPPARD DOMINATES DOME

(originally appeared in Issue #66
September 30, 1992)

Die hard fans of the British hard rock band, DEF LEPPARD, were in seventh heaven October 5 when they got approximately two and a half hours of nothing by DEF LEPPARD music.

Many of those less devoted fans certainly gained a new degree of respect for the five rockers from the UK. DEF LEPPARD gave their all around the diamond shaped stage.

The songs performed consisted primarily of cuts from 'Pyromania', 'Hysteria' and the latest, 'Adrenalize' which, considering that these are the releases that made DEF LEPPARD superstars was hardly unexpected.

A favorite moment for many fans was when DEF LEPPARD performed a pre-'Pyromania' song, 'Bringing On The Heartbreak'. As has apparently been the case with previous tours, DEF LEPPARD 'redid' this tune so that, although it did contain elements that were familiar, in many ways 'Bringing On The Heartbreak' was a brand new tune.

Some of the concertgoers though appeared to be experiencing a twinge of sadness. Especially when vocalist Joe Elliot did his 'walkabout' on the empty stage.

Four years ago, Elliot walked about the stage speaking of the tragic accident that had taken the arm of drummer, Rick Allen.

This evening Elliot had an even more tragic event to comment on – the loss of their friend and guitarist Steve Clark. But Elliot also used the time to introduce their new friend and guitarist Vivian Campbell.

Although no one will ever be able to replace Clark in the hearts of many Def Leppard fans and his shoes will be difficult to fill, Campbell won over many devoted fans with his exemplary mastery of the guitar and his boyish onstage charm.

The members of DEF LEPPARD, including Campbell, operated as five individuals melding together to create a total package.

It is difficult to believe that Campbell has only been with DEF LEPPARD for eight months.

And, of course, what is a rock concert without a light show? Well, DEF LEPPARD had their light show and the circle where Allen sat behind his drum kit was on hydraulics. The circle rose once with Allen and bass player Rick Savage present and the second time with Allen, Campbell and guitarist Phil Collen.

And though there was nothing about this evening's performance that was overly awe inspiring or something that will remain in memories for a long time to come; it was a good show and well worth the price of the ticket.

TRIBUTE TO BRYAN ADAMS A CANADIAN ROCK STAR

(appeared in Issue #32
February 5, 1992)

Do any of you remember August 17, 1990? That was the day that Paul Laine, THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS and Bryan Adams held a free, outdoor concert at Canada Olympic Park. *(ed. Note: this is in Calgary Alberta Canada)*

That day will always stand out in my memory, not only because of the superb quality of music that was played but because during the Adams' tune 'Summer of '69', the skies opened and within moments everyone was drenched.

How many of you reading this can remember times in their life that always seem to be connected to a Bryan Adams song and/or album?

Needless to say, the name Bryan Adams is a household word and he has been a steady influence in many of our lives for quite some time now.

And it is no wonder that this is so! Time and time again, Adams turns out solid music that is honest and real. His lyrics usually speak of emotions and events that can be easily related to by the everyday person.

And there are some who criticize Adams for his apparel but his dress, like his music, is honest. Whether you are hearing or seeing Bryan Adams, you know that he is being true to himself.

Many years ago Adams could have left Canada to settle in other parts of the world but he chose to stay here. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that the federal broadcaster regulators' decision to deny him Canadian status with the album 'Waking Up The Neighbours' angers so many.

Adams has, in a lot of ways, brought the Canadian rock music scene to the eyes and ears of many in the world and has proven time and time again that there is real talent in Canada. And Canada repays him by placing him in the 'international' category therefore limiting the number of times his new singles can be played on the radio.

Fortunately, though the CRTC can't seem to appreciate Adams, his fans have prevailed and apparently record sales for 'Waking Up The Neighbours' is just as good, if not better, than those with previous albums.

Adams has achieved the international success that is rightfully his but he is still proud to be called a Canadian. And, as Canadians whether you like his music or not, we should be proud to call him one of our own.

(note: According to reports I found on the Internet, Bryan Adams now lives in England.)

WELCOME HOME BRYAN!

(appeared in Issue #32
February 5, 1992)

On January 29, Calgarians had the opportunity to welcome home Canadian rock and roller Bryan Adams. Thankfully, the sold out crowd (approximately 16,000) at the Olympic Saddledome didn't disappoint anyone as they greeted Adams with style.

The second the lights dimmed, signaling the near impending arrival of Adams, a roar of approval sounded to the rafters of the Dome. And from that moment on and throughout his extensive performance, Adams held the crowd in the palm of his hand.

No wonder. Whether Adams was performing old or new tunes, he played with a vitality and freshness as if he was introducing the song to the people for the very first time. Even with those tunes that are forever ingrained in the memories of concertgoers.

And it's not many artists, Canadian or otherwise, that can play the intro to a tune that has not topped the charts in many years then keep quiet and have the audience sing the beginning. But that's what happened when Adams started 'Summer of '69' during his second encore. Needless to say, the crowd loved it and loved Adams.

One set of admirers in the front row displayed a banner that read 'Adams, 100% Canadian' (no doubt this was in protest to the CRTC ruling on the release 'Waking Up The Neighbours')

Adams was his usual down-to-earth self with stage apparel consisting of jeans and a t-shirt, simple stage with no lasers or flash pots and the solid, everlasting rock and roll music that remains in the hearts and minds of many.

Calgary awarded Adams with a standing ovation that brought this rock and roller back for three encores. Welcome home Bryan.