



Randy Bachman musician

## A Dozen Favourite Canadian Guitarists



Hey, if Randy Bachman doesn't want to follow the rules and make it a Top Ten, who are we to refuse? He's responsible for five of the Top 100, with three Guess Who discs, one BTO, and as producer of Trooper's *Hot Shots*. Randy collects favourite guitar players like he collects vintage guitars, a priceless collection numbering in the hundreds. Here are his picks.

"Listed in no particular order, because each in their own way is a great player and has added to the richness of Canadian music. They have rocked the world: Lenny Breau, Liona Boyd, Neil Young, Alex Lifeson, Domenic Troiano, Kim Mitchell, Rik Emmett, Jeff Healey, Colin James, Brian Smith, Paul Dean, Keith Scott."





Andy Curran musician

# Top Ten Canadian Hard-Rock/Metal Albums

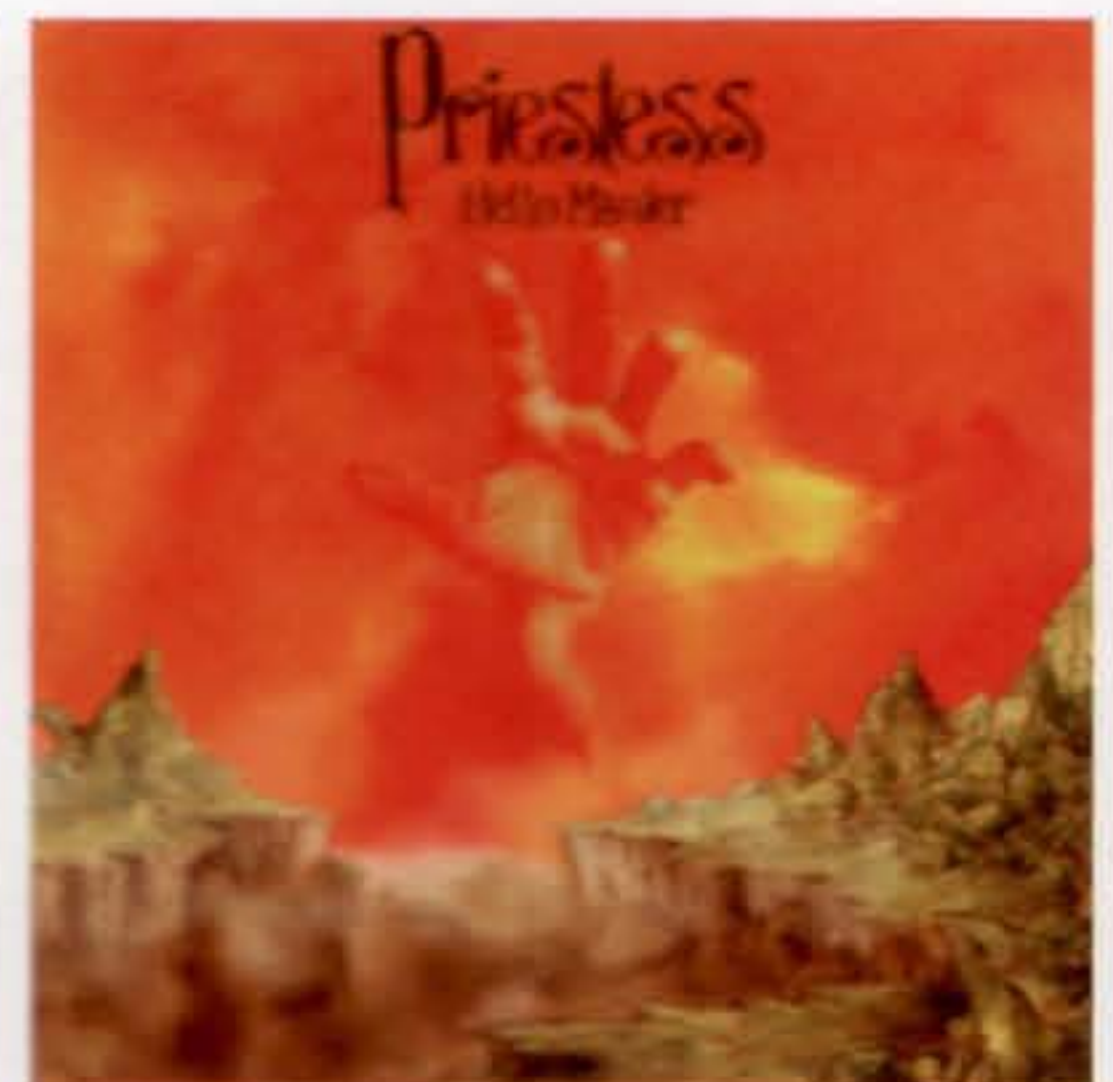
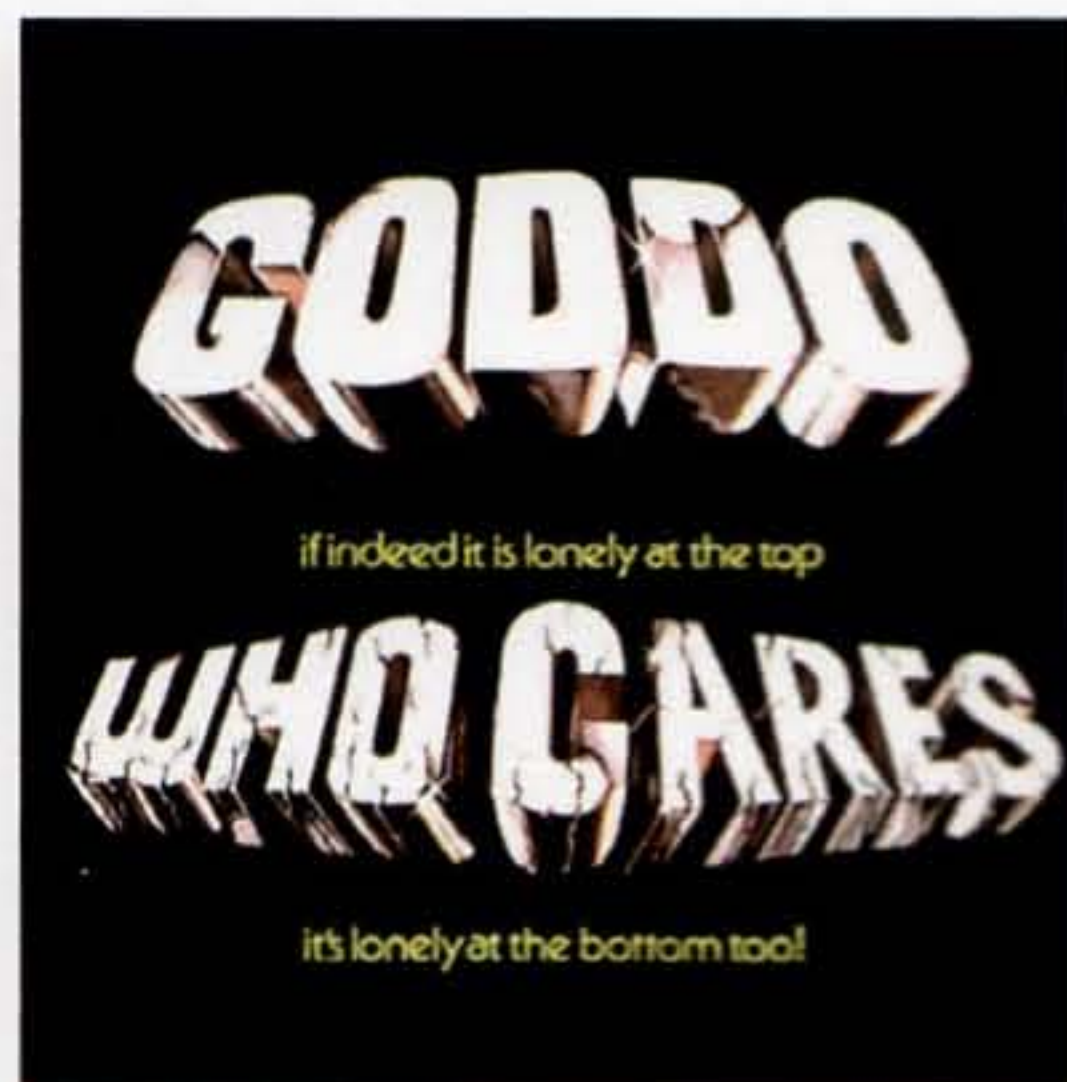
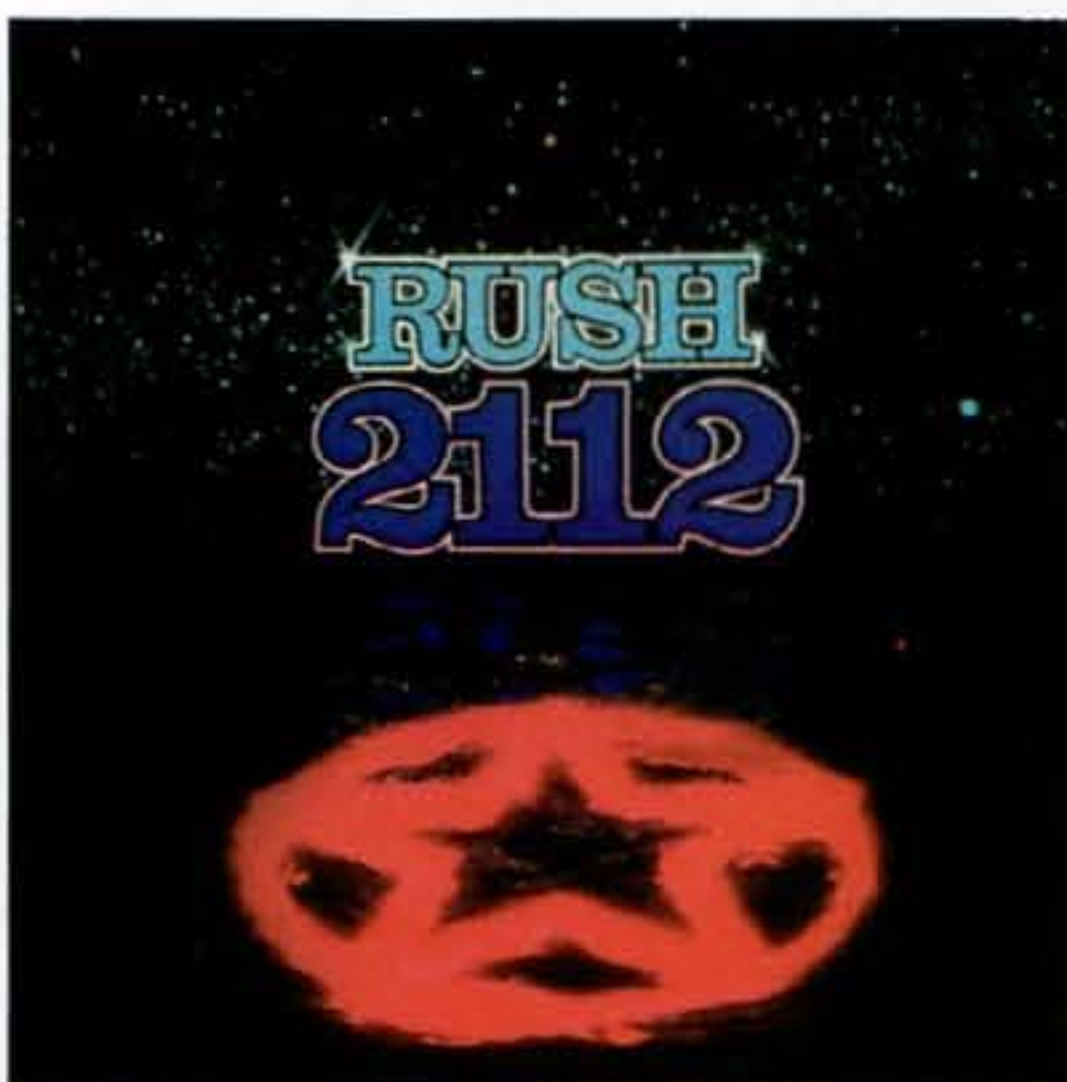


With his band Coney Hatch or on his solo work, Andy Curran knows how to pump up the volume to eleven.

Four out of five doctors warn that just reading this list could result in permanent hearing loss.

“On behalf of the legions of Canadian heavy rock fans, I submit my Top Ten favourite hard-rock/metal albums of all time.”

1. Rush  
*2112*
2. Sons Of Freedom  
*Gump*
3. Goddo  
*Who Cares*
4. Bachman-Turner Overdrive  
*Not Fragile*
5. Max Webster  
*High Class In Borrowed Shoes*
6. Pat Travers  
*Makin' Magic*
7. Neil Young  
*Rust Never Sleeps*
8. Frank Marino  
*Juggernaut*
9. Streetheart  
*Meanwhile Back In Paris*
10. Priestess  
*Hello Master*



# Moving Pictures

## Rush

Anthem, 1981

Tom Sawyer | Red Barchetta | YYZ | Limelight | The Camera Eye | Witch Hunt | Vital Signs

Record label execs and fans never know what to expect from Rush. The band never stand still, always learning, developing, adding instruments, changing their sound from album to album. There's no other band like them, and it's impossible to label their music over the scope of their career. Are they a power trio? Is it hard rock? Progressive rock? Synth rock? Every time Rush have been pigeonholed or written off, they've emerged with something new and fresh, thrilling old fans and making new ones.

The end of the 1970s found Rush going through another change. The group had become known for big ideas and long songs on the hit albums *2112* and *A Farewell To Kings*, but they were ready to think past side-long songs and sci-fi lyrics. Drummer Neil Peart has been the group's chief lyricist since he joined Rush for their second album: "I was experimenting with giant epics and myth building through [the mid-seventies], and then [the 1980

album] *Permanent Waves* was the turning point. It was our response to New Wave music. It suddenly got much more punchy and direct and simplified, and we went, yeah. When those bands came along — Talking Heads and The Police and Ultravox, Elvis Costello, and Joe Jackson, all these undeniable great talents — I was a music fan, and went, 'I like this, and more, I want

**Not only does this album blast Rush to international notoriety but it does this with a recipe most unlikely to make them a household name. Imagine a band today presenting *Moving Pictures* to a record label exec.**

**— Gordie Johnson**

this to become part of our music.' So we started with *Permanent Waves* to pare things down, and then by *Moving Pictures* we really drew all the threads together, we had a sense of our kind of concision. Which, in the case of 'Tom Sawyer', was between four and five minutes long, a big, long complex time-signature

instrumental in the middle, drum solos — it's our version of conciseness in that I suppose it's four and a half minutes of bombast instead of twelve."

Guitarist Alex Lifeson and bass player/singer Geddy Lee were in equal step with the move to newfound tightness and simplicity. Peart remembers it as one of the group's most creative periods: "We were in such a great place at the time. We did all the songwriting at Ronnie Hawkins's farm near Peterborough, Ontario. And it was in the summertime, and we were all in a great space and experimenting more. The unity of the music on *Moving Pictures* really stands out in my mind, despite the big variety of music. 'YYZ', the instrumental, and then the moody 'The Camera Eye', the long piece on side two. Then 'Vital Signs', unabashedly New Wave, driven by the sequenced keyboards of the New Romantic bands of the time, like Ultravox, and the guitar chops right out of The Police, and yet I was playing drums from King Crimson and mixing in reggae."

The biggest surprise was that the airwaves now embraced Rush, bringing them, and Peart, to a brand-new, much bigger audience: "With 'Limelight' and 'Red Barchetta' being on the radio, I remember travelling around at that time and hearing these songs, and that was certainly the height of our popularity. Suddenly our concert attendances doubled that year, we were, like, the 'in band' of the year with that album. These are not radio songs, but they were that year."

The success of *Moving Pictures* was the big payoff for years of hard work and ups and downs. Rush routinely ignored advice to write radio-friendly songs, to stick to what was safe. Instead, they did exactly what they wanted with each album, feeling that musical integrity and growth were more important in the end. Still, Peart is amazed that sticking to ideals actually

worked: "We got away with it. A lot of times, I can only think, how did we get away with it? How accidental so much of our progress was. Had Mercury in 1976 been a well-organized, modern multinational company, we would have been dumped. Had radio in 1980 suddenly not been friendly to complicated guitar rock music, we wouldn't have gone on the radio. It's astonishing. Certainly, we have gone through different albums since then that have been more or less successful, but the concerts remain a constant. People that didn't like our last album will still come to the show. That's an important thing — we really built our reputation the hard way, but it's the enduring way, too. We couldn't know we were doing the right thing. We tried to do the right thing but you never know. There were those pieces of luck of the most bizarre kind that allowed us to sneak through. I have no doubt that we got away with our kind of stubbornness, too. I see a lot of bands cave in to what the record company tells them to do, and it doesn't seem to work very well, that method."

Rush are in a position few bands from the seventies enjoy. They are revered for this and other albums, classic rock radio loves them, and their old records continue to sell well. They're still a viable recording and touring act, with each new disc, including 2007's *Snakes And Arrows*, promoted as an important release, not some vanity project of a band past their prime. Neil Peart recognizes the band's good fortune: "I'm grateful because I don't like touring very much, and we're about to launch a major tour. I just had a reality check when I was looking at the *LA Weekly*, and they had a full-page ad for our shows coming up there, American Express, advance tickets, blah blah blah. And then way in the back there are bands like Asia, Toto, and they're playing at these little clubs in the valley that I've never even heard of. At least I'm pretty



Rush (left to right): Neil Peart (drums), Geddy Lee (bass, keyboards, vocals), Alex Lifeson (guitar)

glad I have the choice to go out and do a major rock tour and travel in a comfortable bus and ride my motorcycle every day and make the best of it.”

Peart still likes to mix in old fan favourites, even though they’ve had plenty of hit albums: “Nothing like *Moving Pictures*, though. We were a cultural phenomenon to young people in the US and Canada. And I know by listening to classic rock stations in Los Angeles, where I live, the songs you’re most likely to hear are ‘Tom Sawyer’ and ‘Limelight’. Those are

definitely the mainstays [of live shows] because they are for the audience. That’s the kind of good resonance of popularity, I guess. You have that enduring soundtrack of somebody’s life. I have to say it’s an important thing to me that twenty-five years later I still enjoy playing it. ‘Tom Sawyer’ is still one of the hardest songs in the world for me to play. If I can play it right night after night, that’s perfectly okay. You can never get bored with that kind of material.”

# 2112

## Rush

Mercury, 1976

2112 | A Passage To Bangkok | The Twilight Zone |  
Lessons | Tears | Something For Nothing

There was a time when Rush were unpopular. Sighs Neil Peart, “2112 was coming out of the darkest possible period of our career. We were touring small clubs and doing meagre opening shots, and even at the time we called it among the band and crew the ‘Down the Tubes’ tour. That summer of ’75 we were unable to pay the crew salaries and our salaries. That winter of ’75-’76, when we were just starting to work on 2112, I remember I didn’t have a car running. I was sleeping on a friend’s coach when we were recording it. I was thinking about a return to the farm-equipment business with my dad to be a likely reality.”

Things were so bad the group were officially considered a lost cause by their own record label: “We were with Mercury Records then, and they completely wrote us off of their next year’s financial predictions. We did not even appear. We were truly written off.”

“We were getting a lot of pressure from the business side to be more commercial and write some singles, and ‘if things don’t turn around, we’re going to have to talk about material’ and all of that. I was always a big contrarian, and grew up in all the beautiful purity and experimentation of the music of the sixties. I still hold that to be the highest ideal, music for music’s sake, and I still don’t brook any interference with it. We turned all of that rebellion and anger and frustration into the music, it seems. 2112 speaks not only literally a story of the individual against a faceless mask but it’s also what we were facing. We were so tired of this interference that we thought, okay, we’re going to stand up for what we believe in and fall trying. So I really believe all of that communicates itself through the music.”

Instead of co-operating with a three-minute single, Peart wrote

I wore out the grooves on my vinyl copy of 2112, falling asleep with my headphones on as a teenager. I played bass along to that album a thousand times in my bedroom. I had great parents!

— Andy Curran

“a side-long opening piece and a couple of other weird songs.” The A-side was the epic cut “2112”. Peart was and is an extremely well read man, and the author of several books. “As I was putting together the futuristic dystopia and the individual rediscovering music in the machine age, I eventually went, hey, wait a minute, this is awfully like Ayn Rand’s *Anthem*. So, realizing that was the case, I went, okay, I’ll just give credit to it. But I had no intention of adapting that story directly. The story was born out of a different inspiration, but obviously subconsciously [it was *Anthem*].”

Rush gave Mercury Records exactly what they wanted, a huge hit album, by completely ignoring what Mercury told them to do. Corporations would no longer question Rush’s music and motives. They’d learn those were among the few things they could count on for their financial predictions.



Neil Peart musician

## Ten Influential Canadian Drummers

Neil Peart has won so many international awards for his drumming that everyone's lost count. He's the percussive master and lyricist for a "little Toronto combo", as he calls Rush. Rather than submit a Top Ten list, Neil chose to write a few lines about ten Canadian drummers who have influenced him. A published author, Neil's four books are based around themes of travel, from motorcycle journeys to life on the road with Rush.

"Garry Peterson of The Guess Who came into my life twice early on: first, seeing him play at the Caledonia Fair around the summer of 1965, just before I started playing drums; then again in 1970, when my band, J.R. Flood, played an outdoor festival at

Brock University in St. Catharines. The festival was headlined by The Guess Who and Mashmakhan, whose drummer, Jerry Mercer, was also an early influence, especially in soloing. That night I watched from the back of the huge crowd as Jerry played a solo in 'Letter From Zambia', an African-influenced piece, with dark polyrhythms (I also recall Jerry incorporating short blasts on a whistle held in his mouth), and it was one of the most original drum solos I had heard up to that time. Jerry and I crossed paths again in later years, when he was with April Wine, and they played a few shows with Rush. In fact, my present drum tech, Lorne Wheaton, once worked for Jerry, too.

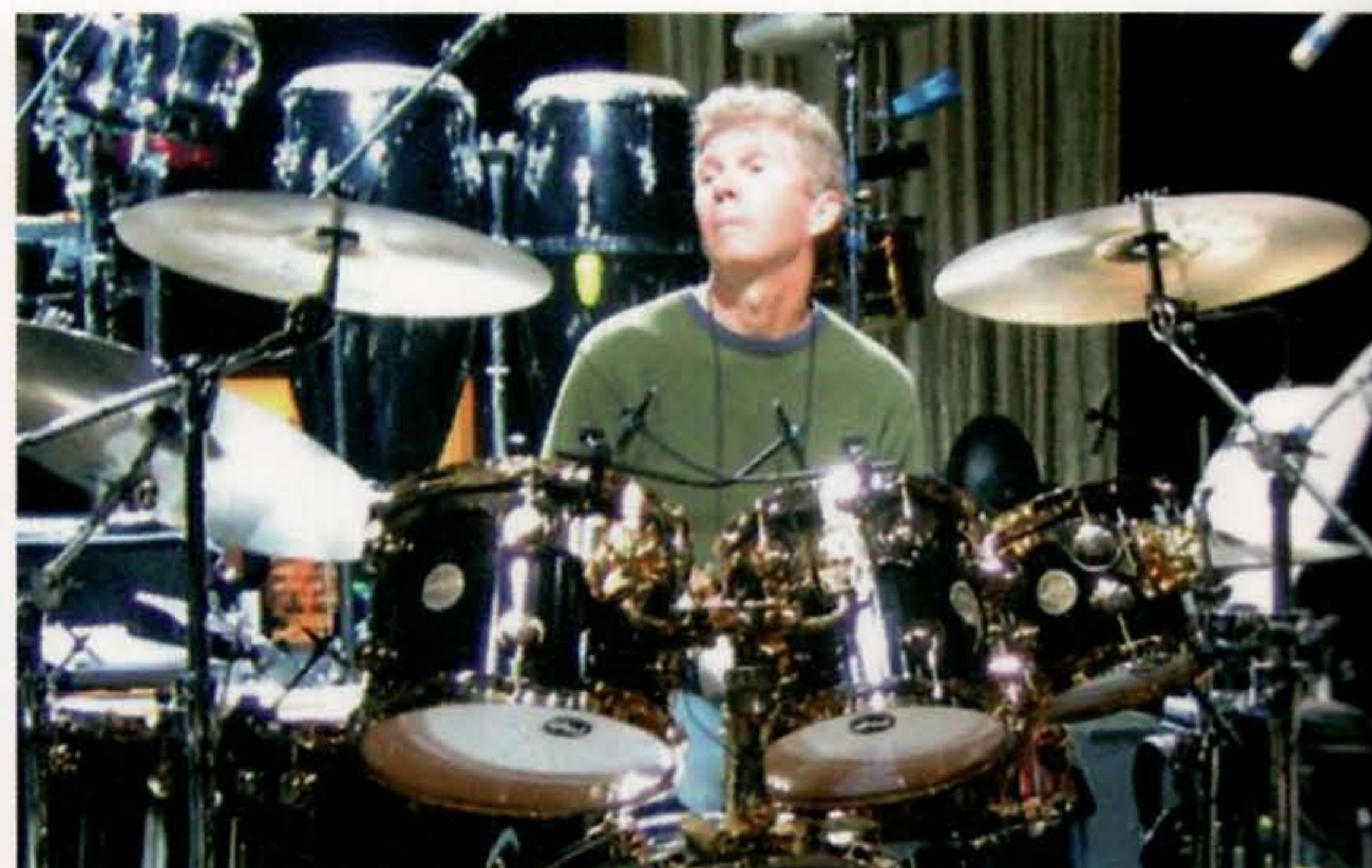
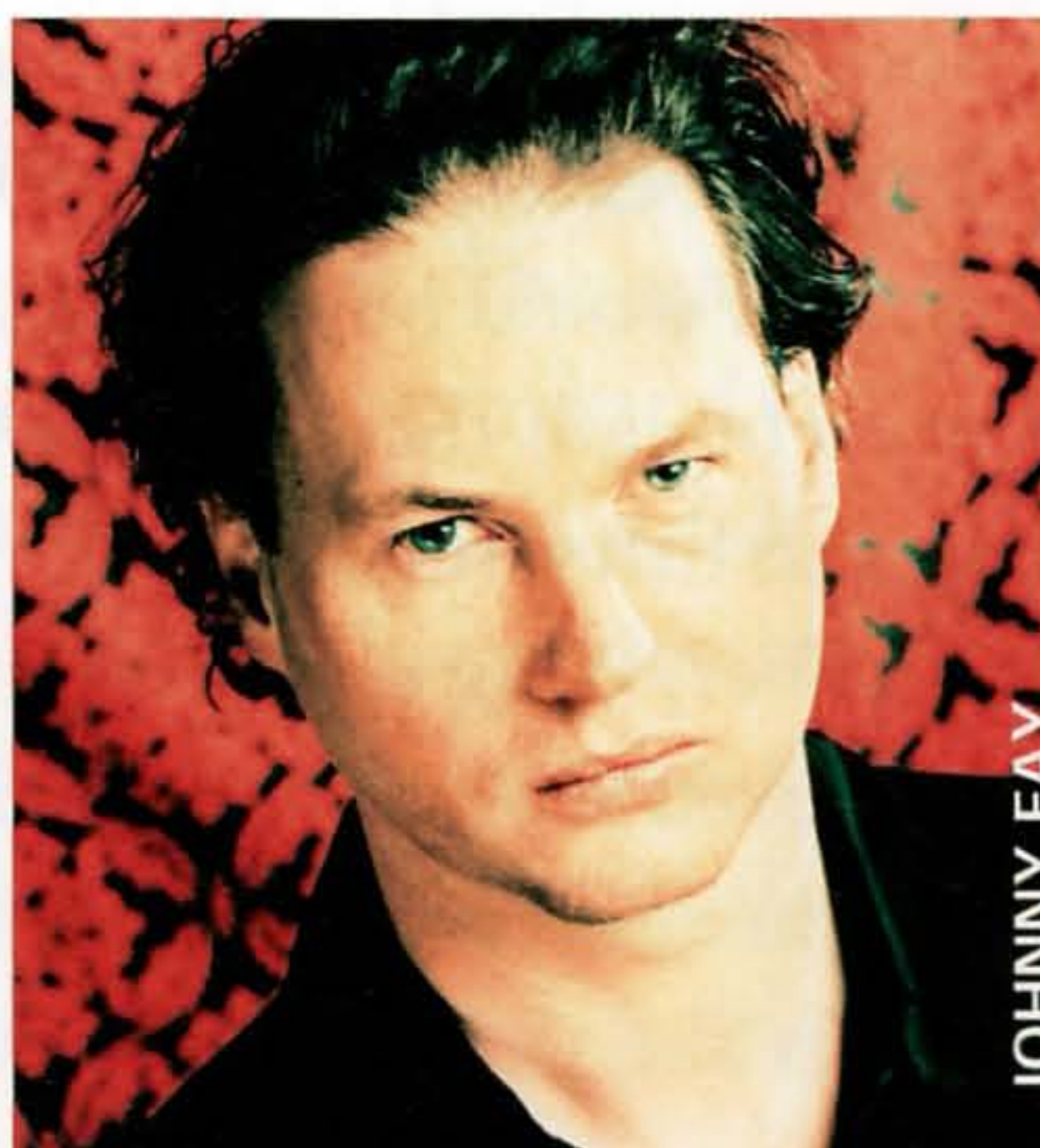
"Other big influences in the late sixties, when I was a teenager, were seeing the amazingly funkadelic Whitey Glan with Mandala at the Lincoln Curling Centre [roller rink] in St. Catharines, and Skip Prokop's beautiful rudimental technique and jaw-dropping solo (featuring three small snare drums



high on his right) with Lighthouse at the arena in St. Catharines. Really, there were so many great drummers around southern Ontario in those days that I'm surprised I didn't just give up. Graham Lear is another drummer who came into my musical life twice: first, with George Oliver's Natural Gas at the roller rink; then years later on his fantastic recordings with Gino Vanelli.

"A couple of other Toronto drummers were very influential to me early on: Dave Cairns with Leigh Ashford, and Danny Taylor with Nucleus, both with a powerful, r'n'b-influenced style of rock drumming that is still part of my playing.

"Later on, in the seventies, I was impressed by Martin Deller's fluid technique and resonant touch with FM, the solid timekeeping and dramatic fills of Gary McCracken with Max Webster, and the tasteful economy of Johnny Fay with The Tragically Hip."





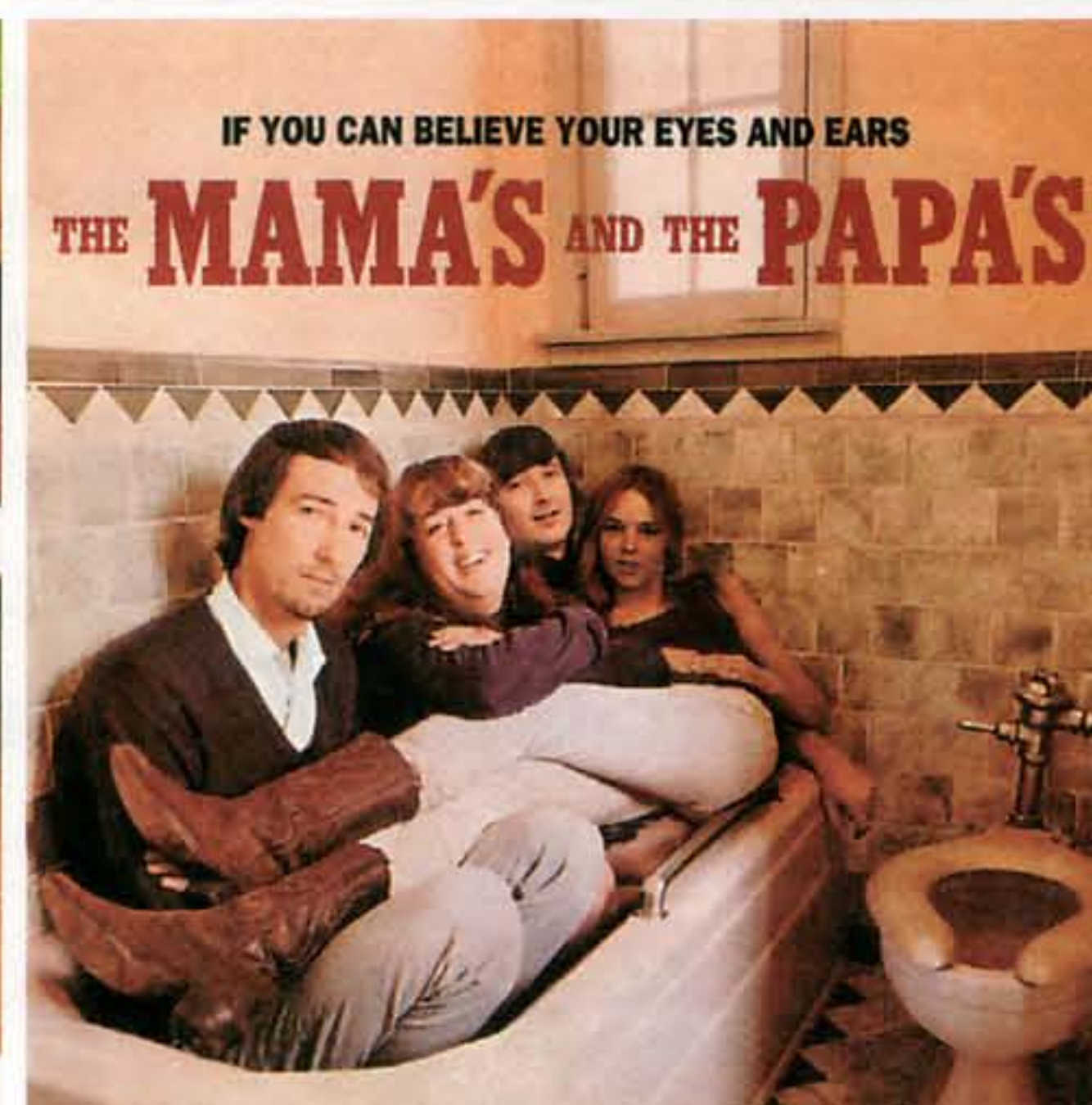
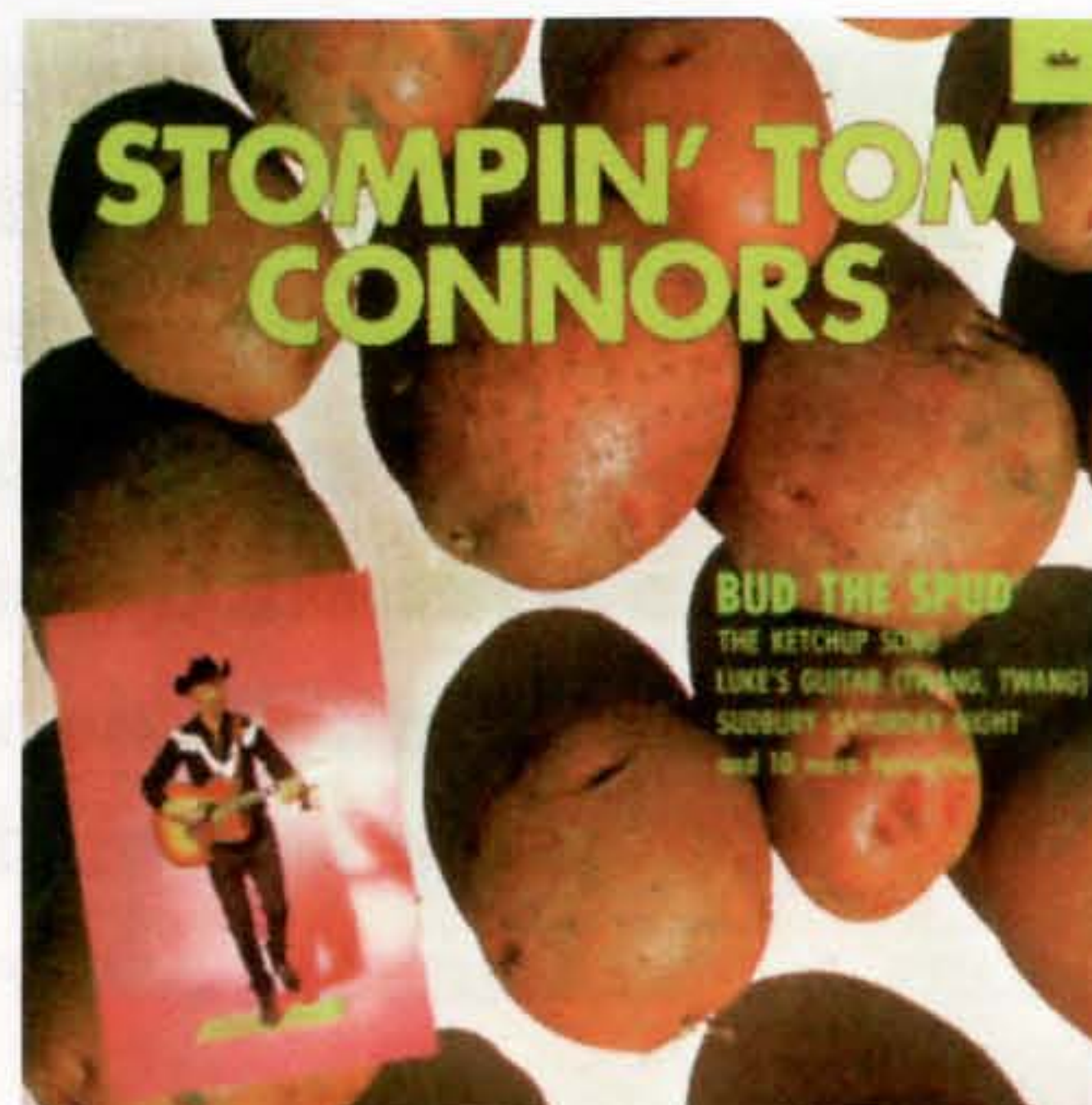
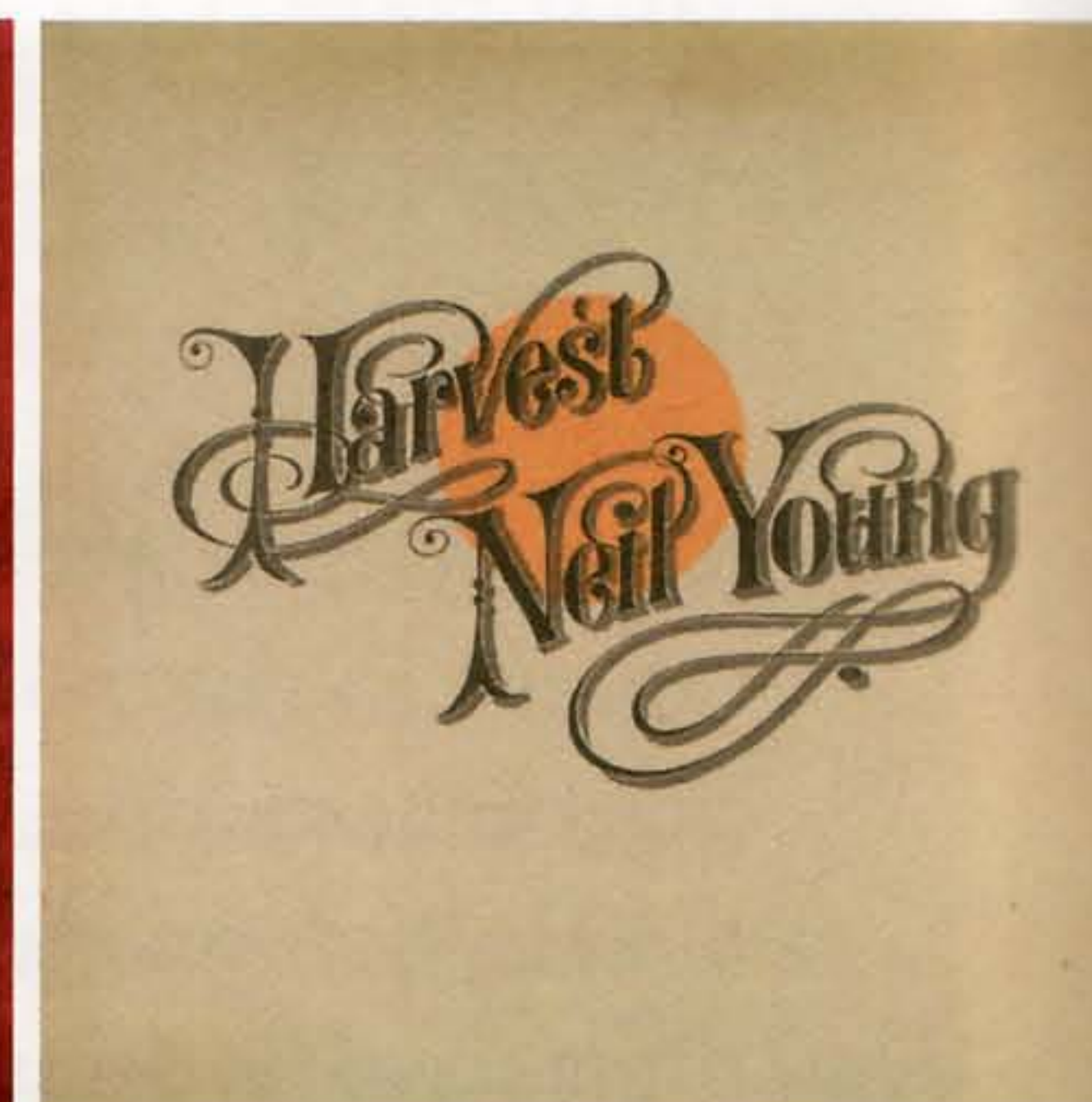
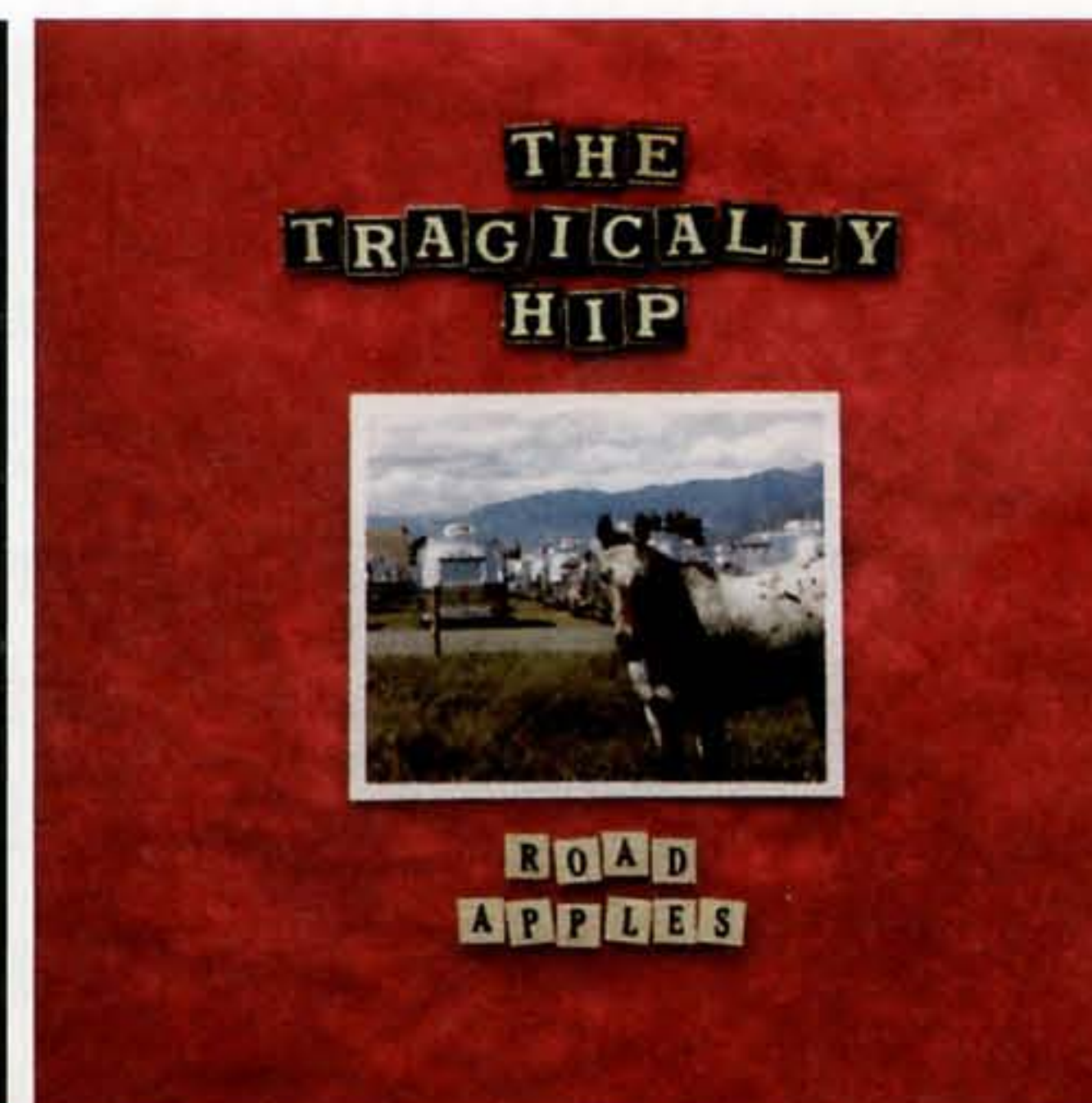
# Bubbles's Top Ten Canadian Albums



Bubbles is the secret hero of Canadian rock music. He's an inspiration to famous musicians the world over, who seek him out for the chance to jam. He's performed with Rush and Axl Rose, and even tender Ron Sexsmith begged him to share a microphone. Bubbles knows music like he knows kitties. Here are his picks, from his many friends in Canadian music.

- 3. Neil Young — *Harvest*: "My kitties like it when I sing 'Old Man' to them."
- 4. Stompin' Tom Connors — *Bud the Spud*: "My fuck, I love potatoes."
- 5. The Band — *Music From Big Pink*: "I have kitties named Big Orange and Big Grey!"
- 6. The Mamas And The Papas — *If You Can Believe Your Eyes And Ears*: "I think this one should count, seeing how Denny was from Nova Scotia. Holy sweet fuck, he could sing, God love him."
- 7. Skid Row — *Skid Row*: "Trains."
- 8. Helix — *Walkin' The Razor's Edge*: "Ricky made me promise to put this on here. I'm not giving them a fucking 'R' though."
- 9. Mike O'Neill — *What Happens Now?*: "This is one of the guys with the camera crew that follows us around in Sunnyvale. Ricky stole his CDs out his car."
- 10. The Guess Who — *American Woman*: "A great cart-working-on record!"

- 1. Rush — *A Farewell to Kings*: "'Closer To The Heart' is on there, for fuck's sake!"
- 2. The Tragically Hip — *Road Apples*: "I love The Hip, even though Gord Downie never gave me the macaroni salad he promised me when we stole that engine for him."





# A Farewell To Kings

**Rush**

Anthem, 1977

A Farewell To Kings | Xanadu | Closer To The Heart | Cinderella Man | Madrigal | Cygnus X-1



**What an amazing recording. You just put on the headphones and disappear into your happy place. Beautiful.**

**— Marc Perry, EMI**

Despite the surprising success of their previous album, *2112*, Rush were not content to copy the formula. Drummer-lyricist Neil Peart explains that, as musicians, the group collectively felt the need to grow: “We did the guitar-bass-drums trio, established ourselves that way with *2112*, and then became a little bit frustrated with that limitation. We talked about adding a fourth member, a keyboard player at the time, and decided, no, we’ll expand on our own. So the other guys got into acoustic guitars, 12-string guitars, double neck, and bass pedals. I was getting into keyboard percussion, from glockenspiel to tubular bells and temple blocks and anything you could hit with a stick, basically. Musical technique, too — we were learning

a greater level of complexity and different time signatures and all of that. Let’s do a song in 13/8 — okay, yeh. And let’s put some mini-moog and tubular bells on it. Yeh! It was that kind of excitement and enthusiasm.”

Two years before, the record company had demanded a radio-ready single. Rush had refused, instead coming up with long, complicated pieces. This time, however, they did provide a radio hit, though completely by accident. Of “Closer To The Heart”, Peart says, “It’s unconventional with no verse and chorus. A friend of mine’s grandmother had an etching of a blacksmith pounding on a

ploughshare, and the caption under it was ‘moulded closer to the heart.’ We never considered it a single. It was the only short one, it was by default.”

Rush did everything the opposite way. When a hit single was needed, they wrote twenty-minute cuts. When epics were working, they had a hit single. When they became rock stars, they ignored the rock-star life, staying away from drug and alcohol addiction. “We walked a little different line,” Peart says. “It’s not like we didn’t go to all those places, we just didn’t stay there. As Winston Churchill said, when you’re going through hell, keep going.”