

# Record Reviews

## They Love Junk in The Pursuit of Happiness

The Pursuit of Happiness  
Love Junk  
Chrysalis/MCA

by Mike Spindloe  
It is my pleasure to report that the major label debut from expatriate Edmontonians Moe Berg and company is a thoroughly well-conceived effort

that not only packs a raucous punch but also has airplay written all over it.

TPOH have given us a generous serving of 13 original songs and there's hardly a weak one in the bunch; a rarity indeed in these days when even the hits are filler.

The sound is not completely original, but that doesn't matter, because the main discernable influence is a good one. Producer Todd Rundgren is all over this album — he manages to make Moe Berg's vocals sound almost like his own, somehow — and I'm certain that he had a hand in the arrangements although he's not credited. All the Todd-isms and the fact that *Love Junk* was recorded at Rundgren's Utopia studios explain why the album sounds like the straight-ahead rock and roll album that Utopia was always just a little too cute to make.

From the first notes of "Hard to Laugh," the hooks just keep on coming, jammed into three and four minute blasts of energy. Even the lyrics are interesting ("I'm an Adult Now" stands out); a lyric sheet would have been much appreciated, but even without one it is clear that Berg's lyrics are as well thought out and economical as his music.

It's too bad that TPOH had to leave Edmonton to get the opportunity to make this album, but when the results are so positive, one can only wish them the best of luck with their entry in the international pop sweepstakes. They should make it, because *Love Junk* is as cerebral as it is intelligent; and they don't write 'em like that anymore, much.



## Joe Hall: a Canadian artist not to be deleted

Joe Hall  
Direct to Delete  
Locomotive

by Mike Berry

The title says it all — the national price of true eccentricity. Joe Hall is Canada's answer to all of the musical eccentrics that people automatically assume come from everywhere else, especially the U.K. As such, Joe is destined never to replace Madonna or horror of horrors Bananarama (gag!).

What sets Joe apart is that he's ours — purely Canadian; to listen to Joe's stuff implies a fundamental knowledge of the way Canada, and Canadian society in particular, functions and thinks. Woe betide any foreigner who presumes too much.

Following on his days with the Continental Drift (of whom Tony Quarrington, along with Joe is the only remaining member), Joe Hall has taken his 'aging Bluesman' roots and prepared an album that examines (not castigates openly) the perceptions of those who are not always comfortably ensconced within the mainstream of society. You (I hope), me and Joe himself.

"Full Moon and Welfare Cheques" (even the spelling is Canadian, instead of the horrendous American 'checks') is the best song to come down the pike in a long time, vis-a-vis Canadian music, and is destined to become a Canadian classic, if only

people hear it. (Phone your favourite radio station and request it — lots!)

"Dirt Bag" is definitely a close second, and is one of those "I've been there — I've seen it" kind of songs that tweaks us all, sometime; perceptive as hell.

Following on the heels of stuff like "Vampire Beavers" and "Bohunks in Motown" off an earlier album *Rancho Banano*, songs like "Muscle Beach" and "Happy in the Decadent West" receive the irreverent Joe Hall treatment, while "Manufacturing" is certainly more relevant now that the Free Trade (hah!) agreement has been signed.

Joe's stuff is not so much about music as what one can do over it.

Sounding at times like a cross between Frank Zappa, Cheech Marin and Alex Harvey, helps Joe to establish his unique style of commentary while the musical accompaniment punctuates his diatribes.

Long-time associate Tony Quarrington (guitar, etc.) is always right there — never overstating but making sure we get the point.

Joe Hall is a true Canadian Artist. Unlike the well-hyped versions though, he prefers to stay that way, even if more people are slowly awakening to him.

He's not suffering from any delusions either. The title of the album shows that he's well aware of the vagaries of a record

business that is dominated by more accountants and purveyors of blandness than artists of good taste. (Not to mention the public!)

If you wish to impress your friends with genuine slices of Canadiana, buy this album. True Canadian art should be revered (due to its rarity) regardless of the form in which it appears.



## Charles S. Noble Award for Student Leadership

The Charles S. Noble Award for Student Leadership is intended to recognize post-secondary students demonstrating outstanding dedication and leadership to fellow students and to their community.

Nominees for this Award must be Alberta residents and currently enrolled in a minimum of three full-time courses. Nominees should display commitment in one or more of the following areas:

- student government at the local, provincial or national level
- student societies, clubs, organizations or in non-profit community organizations

Commemorative plaques will be presented to recipients upon recommendation of the Selection Committee at each institution.

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