

E T E R T I M E T

'God Made Me' and God Made Women

PETER J. CULLEN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Although signing and heavily endorsing an unheard talent may seem risky, it isn't difficult to understand why Sony has placed their faith in the young Winnipeg, Manitoba native, Chantal Kreviazuk. Soft-spoken but incredibly intense, Kreviazuk (pronounced "kree-vee-a-zuk") has not only put forth an impressive debut album but also retains a fierce respect for herself as a musician and as a woman.

The 22 year old escalated from performing at lounges, weddings and parties to appearing daily on MuchMusic in heavy rotation in a relatively short time span. Now most people recognize Kreviazuk from her very popular song "God Made Me," the success of which is something she has yet to grow accustomed to. "I hoped for [its success]. I'm really thrilled it did as well as it did. . . . It always feels incredible every time I see that. I just hope the second, third and fourth singles do as well [laugh]. It'll be hard if that is the extent of it, but I'm anticipating the second one doing well, too." The second single from her debut album *Under These Rocks and Stones* is "Believer," and it should, in all likelihood, equal the success of "God Made Me."

Kreviazuk shouldn't have to worry about upcoming singles because her album contains some strong tracks. Aside from her plaintive voice and strong chorus lyrics, it's her piano playing that sounds extremely enticing. Kreviazuk started playing at the early age of three and competed in

festivals throughout her younger years. Although her talents evolved in the vein of classical music, contemporary rock has always been the love of her life. "I was always into contemporary and upbeat music," she says. "I think I knew every word to 'Crocodile Rock' when I was three or something. . . . I don't think classical music is as predominant in my life as my web site lets on. I mean, it's important because it's how I learned to play [piano], but there wasn't actually a shift [in genres]. I think one manifested through the other."

Since Kreviazuk's set at Saint John's Imperial Theatre will be a solo performance, she believes that the audience will enjoy and come to embrace the piano, an instrument that appears in modern rock less and less frequently. "I'd like to see piano end up sounding cool to people. So, I'm sort of hoping that will happen. I think [the piano] is cheesy if it's that dominant in a song or if it's for a more slow-paced song. That's why I'm excited about 'Believer.'"

Kreviazuk's increased profile in the music industry and the pressure that inevitably accompanies success hasn't affected her in the least. Her personality and words seem to indicate that performing for crowds is an inbred desire. "Unless there's a crisis or unless something's wrong, I'm generally having fun. Y'know, I'm that kind of person. I usually take every situation and make fun out of it. I can't really get that serious. [Laugh.]

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The areas in which I have to really focus and be professional I'm usually enjoying anyway. Playing and getting intimate with a crowd is easy."

Kreviazuk also points out that the rewards she reaps for her performances are more spiritual than anything. "I always get nervous, but I find that there are rewards to it which stimulate me, personally. Like, when you're

at a show and someone sings out a line from your song or you see someone mouthing the words to your song, feeling someone being really into the performance is really exhilarating."

Kreviazuk is an extremely interesting person outside the realm of her music. She thrives on creativity and other artistic hobbies. Aside from writing about her day-to-day life in a diary format, she also enjoys writing letters and she totes a journal around with her to record her own and others' words and thoughts. And while she comments that her friends find it weird, she admits that she has an unusual artistic habit. "I draw people sleeping. I show it to them

"That's one of my goals, to retain my integrity as a female and as a human being."

after and it usually looks pretty unreal. When they're awake I can't quite do it. But I really capture people when they're sleeping."

Surprisingly, Kreviazuk doesn't take an enormous amount of pride in the lyrics and music that she has written; however, she does acknowledge that her originality is an important asset in the music business. "I don't know how some [music] gets to radio. . . . I'm talking about music that doesn't say anything that's hasn't been said before. I mean, most things have been said already, but I mean being creative and having new energy."

women, foregrounded by her experiences in the music business. "Women are really messed up from looking at other women and looking at women in the media and those who are on television. If you look at *Elle* magazine or *Vogue* magazine and the women that are one the covers, who do think is buying these magazines? It's women that are buying them. Women are obsessed with women, not because they're in love with them or they have a sexual attraction to them, but they suffer by comparison continually in their own minds. They are continually fighting a battle within their own self to look like what the media is presenting as the perfect woman. So I think that's why the women put up with these kinds of videos and so on because our self-esteem is affected continually by them. We just can't seem to get past it, you know? If you wanted to ask me what my goals are, I think that's something that sort of relates to a personal goal and a professional goal. To perhaps shed some light on that for other women and in the same token be true to myself as an individual."

Although her "God Made Me" video does reveal that Kreviazuk has an enviable figure herself, she is still watching what is and what is not acceptable. "There have been a few times

when I've said, 'Okay, you know what, Chantal, you're still in the tasteful zone but watch it.' I just want to keep my guard up that I'm not crossing that line. . . . I've made a few mistakes on photograph shoots and stuff like that. I've learned from them and I'm really upset about them. That won't happen again."

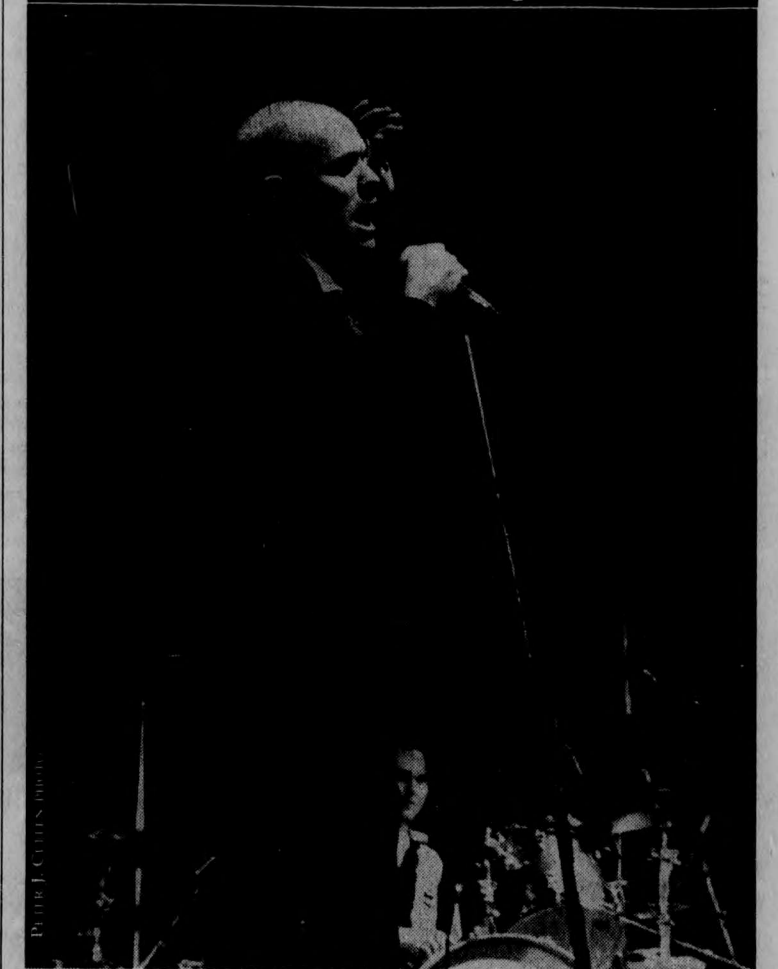
Kreviazuk then makes her point: "Women are beautiful. They're gorgeous creatures. They're a flowing creature and [mysterious] and a very beautiful being, and I can see that. So I think there are differences between being beautiful and being elegant

and being feminine . . . and [then] being, y'know, crude and tasteless. It's really just a matter of fact, I think, more than anything. "My second video ['Believer'] I'm really proud of, in the sense that it has nothing to do with my physical being. It's all about performance, and I wear a gray coat through the whole video. You can't tell what my figure is like, and it really has no bearing at all on the presentation of the song. And yet it's still an exciting video. It's still stimulating, and for that I'm very happy. So I'd like to see things go in that direction; however, I'm not going to mislead anyone. I'm not going to make promises I can't keep because I am an artist and I do get caught up in moments. That happens a lot in art and I realize it can be very rewarding to see the self or present the project in an artistic, creative and beautiful manner. And I really love doing that. I know I'll make mistakes but I just think it's important to always retain one's values and not sell yourself short."

Kreviazuk slowly slips back into a more relaxed state and then laughs about the idea of becoming a media star. "I wear my heart on my sleeve and I have a lot of fun and I'm outgoing," she says, "but I don't really feel worthy of that yet. And I don't know that I ever will."

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The Hip return, but fans still yearn



By the grace of Gord: Gord and co. gave it their all, but a rescheduled show and a tired band left the fans wanting more.

PETER J. CULLEN

THE BRUNSWICKAN

The Tragically Hip gave all they had during their performance at Harbour Station last year on December 8, but it definitely wasn't enough. However, it turned out to be the best show possible under the circumstances.

Due to a snowstorm in Newfoundland, the Hip were forced to reschedule the Saint John show. Instead of playing Saturday night at 8 pm, they were forced to bump the performance up to Sunday at 5 pm in order to fit both Halifax and Montreal into their hectic tour schedule. Although everyone still had the opportunity to see Canada's favourite band, the Saint John crowd experienced the misfortune of being subjected to a rock concert on a Sunday afternoon. Not sure whether to dance or sit, most people stood and cheered.

The opening act, Rheostatics, did as well as could have been expected. Playing material primarily from their new *Blue Hysteria* album, the four man band managed to maintain attention based solely on the quality of a first time listen. Adorned in suits, the group - which has actually existed longer than the Tragically Hip - sounded fine, delving into long, extended versions of some of their songs. However, except for one row of fans, the audience remained seated but appreciative as the Rheos jammed out seven or eight songs in 45 minutes. After their set, however, the band popped out of the locker room to invite the energetic row backstage for an informal meet-and-greet. Apparently it pays to show your enthusiasm.

When the lights went down again, the brooding bass intro to "Grace, Too" quickly brought the crowd on its feet. Sauntering on stage, the Hip joined in with the music as frontman Gord Downie broke into verse. Sporting a recently shaved head, Downie proceeded to demonstrate why the Hip are so popular; his ambiguous and unique lyrics sparked the crowd to cheer and applaud during the introduction and conclusion to every piece. The band exhibited shades of greatness during an excellent performance of "Put It Off," its three note bass riff causing a trance-like atmosphere. "Fifty Mission Cap," "Daredevil" and "Giftshop" stood apart as the best hard rocking tunes of the evening.

Despite this, however, no one engaged in regular arena rock activities, such as crowd surfing or smoking. Although their performance served up an excellent concert, their trademark energy and fervour were not apparent, creating a disappointing event. "Nautical Disaster" lacked its trademark intensity and other songs such as "Springtime In Vienna" and "Let's Stay Engaged," despite the funky laser light show, seemed to simply float away into the rafters. Even *Trouble at the Henhouse's* big single, "Ahead By A Century," seemed sedate. Gord worked hard throughout the show, even tap dancing at times, but the band, admittedly, was just too tired to be at their best.

In itself, though, the concert was wonderful. Two hours worth of honest rock 'n' roll and exposure to the best of the Hip's rich catalogue of music can't be scoffed at. However, the problem is that the Hip are too good for their own good. The early evening Sunday show, filled with incredible, original songs and an obvious passion for performance from the band, could still stand toe-to-toe with almost anything any other touring artists emit. But because the Hip have been elevated to such an extreme standard of success, any minor flaw in their show detracts.

Simply because so much is expected of their live performance, people are disappointed when the band doesn't reach the above-and-beyond level. In reality, any Hip show is a performance worth seeing, just some more so than others. Saint John's show, sadly enough, fit in with the "others."



ARTS

• The Beaverbrook Art Gallery
Atilla Richard Lukacs: *E-Work* - Jan 12 - Mar 2/97
The Power of Images: Atilla Richard Lukacs - Jan 14, Jan 28 & Feb 4/97

• UNB Art Centre presents *Common Ground* (clay works by Craig Schneider) and *Tempting Fate* (paintings by Philip Iverson) at Memorial Hall, Jan 12 - Feb 23/97.
Opening reception Jan 12, 2-4 pm. FREE. 453-4623.

• Capital Film Society presents *American Buffalo* at Tilley Hall 102, Jan 13, 8 pm. \$3 members, \$5 non-members.

• CHSR's "Funk Night" presents *Blade Runner* at MacLaggan Hall, Jan 14, 7 pm & 9 pm. \$4.

• UNB/STU Creative Arts presents Felix Mirt Productions in *A Sweet Round of Poison* at STU's Black Box Theatre, Jan 17, 8 pm. \$10 students, \$18 adults. 457-2233.

• New Brunswick Museum presents *Jourds of France* at Market Square in Saint John, Jan 17 - Apr 30/97. (506) 643-2300.

MUSIC

• Swirl at The Dock, Jan 10-12. FREE.

• Brent Mason at The Social Club, Jan 13. FREE.