

Jr. Undaunted by Island

by Gene Kosowan

The decision by Island Records not to sign locals **Jr. Gone Wild** has left bandleader **Mike McDonald** unfazed and determined to attract more label attention.

Commenting on the record company's reversal on promises made to the group prior to a three night engagement at the Power Plant, McDonald explained that the failure of signee **Andrew Cash** to reap dividends after much financial backing made Island apprehensive in trying to develop another Canadian act.

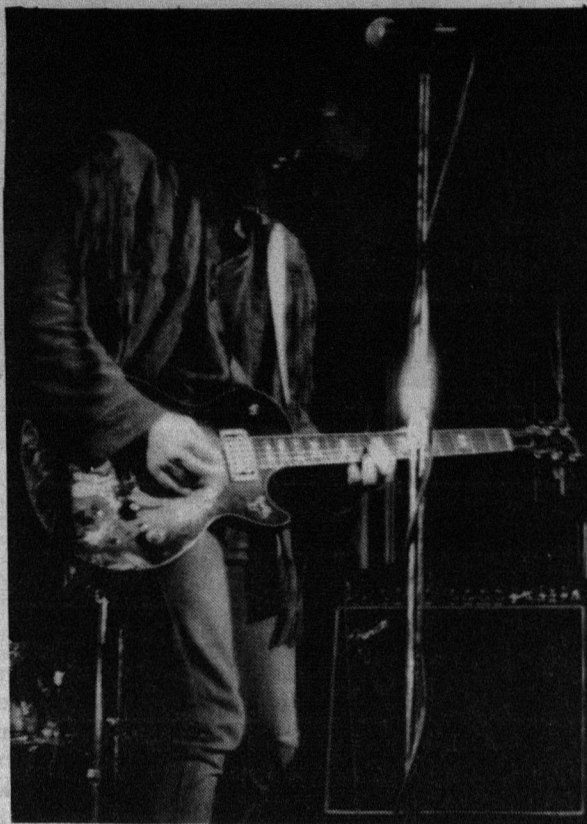
"We were disappointed when we found out," he said. "So we got drunk that night."

Jr. Gone Wild will not pursue litigious action in the wake of any broken promises made by the company ("We got \$4,000 to \$5,000 worth of shit from them for free.").

The Island decision was the only dark spot tainting the quartet's recent Edmonton-to-Montreal fall tour. Audience reaction was positive and the band also recorded a demo at Phase One in Toronto with **Joe Primeau (Glass Tiger)** behind the panel.

While manager **Doug Caterill** plans to expand on the attention given to them by at least four other labels, McDonald is revamping the band's personnel. Drummer **Paul Paetz** is leaving and will be replaced by returnee **Ed Dobek**, whose excesses and fractious demeanor resulted in his dismissal from the group almost two years ago.

Said McDonald, "He's turned really conservative in the last two years. Plus he hates working and he wants to play and write songs."



Background vocalist **Bernice Pelletier** will also be added shortly, while Jr. promotes their recently released 16 song anthology cassette *Folk You: The Guido Sessions*, named after long time friend and former AirTight contributor **Anthony Fulmes**.

A-Okay Fights Local Apathy



by Gene Kosowan

Michie Mee, Canada's hottest rapper, thinks **A-Okay** is cool, but for now, Edmonton's reaction is hardly one of a tepid nature.

And that is something that the 19-year old native Edmontonian would like to change, despite the positive response he's received in Toronto and stateside, not to mention the possibility of opening for **Public Enemy** in December.

No doubt he's doing well out of town (he does a Calgary stint with Detroit rappers **Cash Money** and **Marvelous** in November), but Edmonton seems to have a derogatory perception about rap in general.

"I think the city has taken it the wrong way," says A-Okay, "I have a jacket that says 'A-Okay Beat Factory Posse' and the police have stopped me sometimes. It's that word 'posse' that gets to them."

While E-town needs to adjust to the fact that posse denotes more than just a gang according to street vernacular, A-Okay also feels that the rap fashion stereotype is also way off base.

"That's one thing I haven't been into," he says. "You know, wearing lots of chains."

"I can't afford it and you do want the kids to look up to you. How do white kids get a lot of gold? They can either steal it or beat someone up to get it. It doesn't look good for a kid to wear a lot of chains. It makes them look like a pimp or a drug dealer."

A-Okay (aka **Bill Connolly**) has been controlling the mic for six years, but the white rapper's exposure to black culture extends as far back as he can remember. His friendship with a friend named **Anton**, a result of the connolly household's association with a black family, laid the groundwork for his current trade.

"We spent a lot of time together, listening to a lot of soul and reggae," he recalls. "And then rap came out."

Overcoming the racial barrier was not as difficult as A-Okay had surmised, when it was discovered that few whites were engaged in the same preoccupation. A venture to Toronto in 1986 quickly led to an association with Canadian rap label Beat Factory Productions, which he still corresponds with regularly. An early work "Payback Volume Two" received heavy airplay at CKLN.

"I was there with Michie Mee and a New York group called **Audio Two**," says A-Okay. "They were really impressed that a white hut could rap really well."

His recent effort, "Choice of a New Generation," has been creating a buzz of sorts south of the 49th parallel. "A radio guy in Dallas called me up and he gave a tape to someone in Chicago, who's been playing it as well."

A-Okay uses live samples, Technics 1200 turntables, a drum machine, a computer and his own politically inspired lyrical wit to hone his sound with colleague **DJ Dice**. Like most rappers, he feels no reproach about using other recorded sources.

"You can still be original," he claims. "It's how you put it together."

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FM88 Guarded by Polygram Decision

by Gene Kosowan

The decision by Polygram Canada to relent from its policy of charging service fees to campus-community radio stations across the country has FM88 personnel in a receptive mood, but adopting a cautious attitude.

"I guess I could say we're optimistic," said station manager **Ian Istvanffy**. "On the surface, it appears that Polygram is going to back down, but we'll see."

In response to a boycott on the major label's material imposed in September by no less than 20 stations and members of the National Campus-Community Radio Association, Polygram has decided to forego the service fee policy in favor of an alternative package delivered to stations free of charge. Istvanffy claims that FM88 could receive as many as 100 albums from the Montreal-based company.

Once the boycott is officially lifted, only selected product likely to get attention on NCRA stations will be shipped. Product by alternative crossovers like **New Order** and **Van Morrison** will be delivered along with records by more obscure acts like **The Pixies** and **Pere Ubu**.

"We're limited to the type of albums we get," said FM88 programme director **Richard Thornley**. "We won't get everything. To my mind, it's no great loss."

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Mojo Nixon?"

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