

# GENRECIDES

MICHAEL EDWARDS

## THE PERILS OF GROWING OLD...

Most people seem to reach a point in their life where they no longer listen to new music. Instead, they stick with the music from a certain period of their life. That's why The Eagles can charge \$500 a ticket for concerts. Anyway, there is an alternative - keep searching for new and exciting music; if it's good enough for John Peel...



And that's what I thought I did. Or at least, I did until last week when somebody was cruel enough to comment that my taste in music was getting rather middle-aged. Apparently (I use that word for I am not totally convinced...), I don't listen to a whole lot of loud music. Maybe my ears don't bleed continuously, but I am partial to some loud stuff. I'm just getting more picky. The quieter stuff offers melody and lyrics in a way that Iron Maiden never could.

But even musicians get older. Inevitable really. Even Johnny Rotten, now Lydon, has turned his back on his punk roots of old and has jumped back into a Sex Pistols reunion tour. The Clash did a Levi's jeans ad a few years back. Sigh. Perhaps age just brings about the inescapable mellowing of the personality. If it does, I'll be putting down the deposit on my walker when my birthday comes around next month.

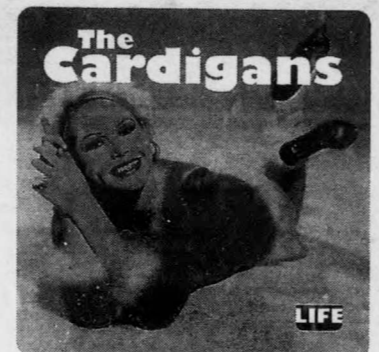
It might be a stretch to think of Bruce Springsteen as ever being an angry young man, but it would seem that he has grown into a pissed off old man. He practically gives the finger to that most sacred of recent American icons Forrest Gump on his new album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad* - can this really be the same person who was so proud to be 'Born In The USA'? Well, if you look at the changes that have occurred in his home country since *Born In The USA*, the changes in his music seem to make a lot more sense. Bruce has taken the despair of a country, and stuck it onto a compact disc. No mean feat. It is also makes this his finest album for almost ten years.



*The Ghost Of Tom Joad* is a very sparse, bleak album; it's basically an acoustic affair with the occasional accompaniment from a band. It recalls the days of *Nebraska*, but the songs are most definitely of the folk variety - the influence of Woody Guthrie is very obvious in the form that the songs take. Every song has a story to tell. Like an ex-con who finds it so hard to go straight. Or the illegal Mexican workers in California. Or the discharged soldiers adjusting to civilian life. Mundane

stories perhaps, but so heartfelt. I could even hear the tiniest hint of Bob Dylan in Springsteen's delivery...or maybe I just wanted to. The heir apparent? Maybe.

And then there is Roddy Frame, aka Aztec Camera. His debut album, *High Land, Hard Rain*, documented the angst-ridden teenage years quite beautifully, and also showed him as a songwriter mature beyond his years. While the subsequent albums may not have lived up to that early potential, they still contained a higher than normal number of pop gems. But those woe-filled years are most definitely behind him; his latest album, *Frestonia*, is an almost jubilant affair. Positively happy. One particular song which stands out is 'On The Avenue' which reminds me of numerous Scottish folk songs. Roddy still plays a mean guitar, both acoustic and electric, and even the slow songs have an underlying feeling of exhilaration. An upbeat album; maybe growing old isn't all that bad after all.



But then again, if you wait long enough, any kind of music will become fashionable. For instance, easy listening music is finally in vogue; we can all get our polyester suits out of storage at long last. One of the best of the bunch that

falls under this umbrella is *Life* by The Cardigans, yet another good band from Sweden (the Swedish government must be putting something in the water). Anyway, they take the concentrated spirit of a song like 'The Girl From Ipanema', and a big band feel and turn the whole thing into the purest of all pop - listen to 'Carnival' for the best example of that. And if they are not doing that, they are telling tales of eccentrics or turning in one of the most bizarre cover versions ever ('Sabbath Bloody Sabbath'). The whole package is completed by the most wonderful band photos on the sleeve. I believe the word is kitschy.



Indie music has been making friends with country music for the last little while. Originally there was just some flirting, but now they are good friends. They might even be dating. So it was only a matter of time before a whole bunch of these people got together and formed one of those 'supergroups' which were so popular a few years ago. Enter The Golden Smog with their amusingly titled *Down By The Mainstream*. They comprise of members of the Jayhawks, Wilco, Soul

Asylum and a few others, and they sound pretty much like you expect. They sound an awful lot like the Jayhawks, and that is probably why I like it so much. You get twangy guitars, harmonicas and depressing songs - usual country fodder; even though they don't mention that, you just know that their dog has just died. Not the most



cheerful thing I have ever heard, but a very, very good album.

And finally this week, show tunes. Well, maybe not, but Ben Folds Five remind me an awful lot of show tunes. And that's because they don't use any of those pesky guitar things - they use a grand piano instead. Not only does the piano carry the melody, it also has a very syncopated rhythm that makes the drummer almost unnecessary. Their music has an epic quality that you usually only find on albums produced by Jim Steinman. Or Andrew Lloyd Webber. If anyone out there has a good enough memory to remember Randy Edelman, you should have a pretty good idea of what to expect. Because they have both a unique sound, and some good songs to boot, Ben Folds Five makes a refreshing change in this world ruled by guitars.

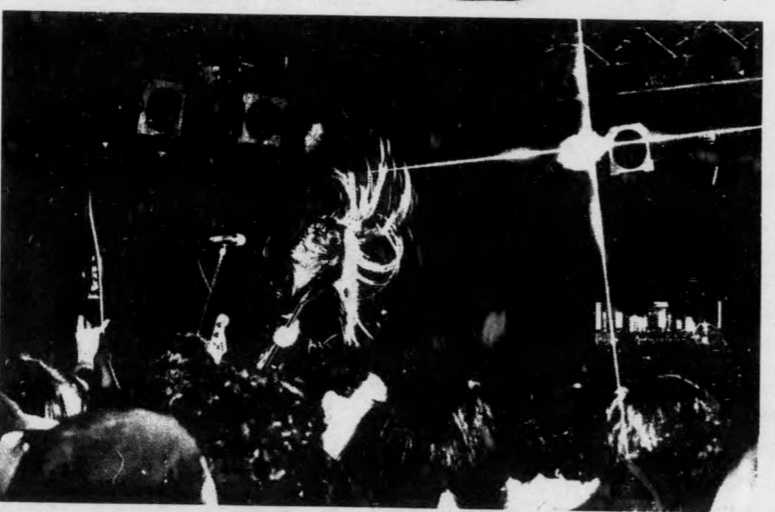
# Headbangers' Delight

by Murray Thorpe  
Brunswickan Entertainment

The energy of the band, Voivod, made its presence known as soon as I entered Birdland in Halifax last Friday night. Pushing further into their forum of entertainment, I could see I was not alone in my curiosity or love of metal music. The fans were dancing enthusiastically in an area called the pit in front of the band. Fairly large bouncers were continually protecting the band from the onslaught. The people battling in the pit were ejected once in a while just from the enthusiasm of the other pit dancers or perhaps from exhaustion.

I did not venture into the pit but stayed on the edge taking the occasional flash photos of the band. The band and the audience in the pit seemed oblivious to the extra flash here and there. In fact, the occasional block by my fellow "Brunsie" and a bouncer prevented on several occasions the dancers from being hurled into me. People were not completely out of it but were just letting loose is how I saw it. Enjoying the music one likes does that.

Voivod consists of three members, Eric Forrest on base and vocals; Michel Langevin on drums and Denis D'Amour on guitar. Michel and Denis are from Jonquiere, Quebec and have been



I guess you need long hair for some jobs...  
Photo by Warren Watson

together for 13 years, producing 9 albums over that time. Eric Forrest, formerly of the Liquid Indians, is from Toronto and has been with the band for two years.

After the energetic show, I caught the band cooling down in a back room. I had a lengthy conversation with Denis. Commenting on the inspiration for his music, Denis said he likes Jimmy Page, Steve Howe and Alex Lifeson. The band also is more concerned with what they like. After all, they have to listen to it every night.

When asked why none of their lyrics are in French, Denis thought they would

be booted off of the stage. Writing English lyrics is not a problem for the band and English metal music is in higher demand than French metal music.

Denis' favourite memories with the band are playing in Berlin when the wall came down, and playing in Seattle. He commented further on Seattle being a grunge town. He felt that grunge lyrics may rely on talking about drugs too much. Voivod is touring in support of their current album, *Technology Kills* and will be through Moncton and Saint John. They are also looking forward to their upcoming European Tour.

by Pierre Huard  
Brunswickan Entertainment

A hard rocking time is how I can describe the event I participated in this past weekend in Halifax while at a rock show. The band was Voivod, and the place was the Birdland night club. As I entered the club, the smoke and ominous atmosphere set the stage for what was to follow. A loud sound not unlike a chain-saw erupted, and the show began - it was loud, fast and tight which inevitably drew you to the mosh-pit forming in front of the stage. The show was not polluted with smoke and a fancy light show, as the band relied mostly on the power emanating from the performance. After the show my fellow reporter/photographer and I had a chance to interview the band. After having answered all the staple interview questions we had a chance to spend time getting to know the

band. The first thing you realize is that there is no place in this group for inflated egos. They love what they do and enjoy meeting new people whenever they can. After a few beers, we discussed life on the road and the lifestyle associated with being professional musicians; they all enjoy the road, but do not lose contact with their families. As far as the drug culture associated with the business, Eric Forrest (bass and vocals), stated that heavy drugs such as cocaine or heroin were definitely not cool, and not part of their trip. Recreational marijuana use is the exception. After partaking in a little recreation myself, I was introduced to a man who is known as "Monk", who is their tour manager, I found out that Monk is a native to Fredericton and stays in touch with family and friends whenever his busy schedule permits. The release of the band's new CD *Technology Kills* is out and the band is supporting it with a tour that rocks.

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