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by Geoff Ineson

Rumours of Sloan breaking up have been put to rest for the time being. This interview was recorded earlier in Vancouver. After searching cyberspace the data was found and inquiring minds are gratified for a few minutes longer...

Gaz: If you were at home right now and pressed play on your cd player what would you be listening to?

Chris: John Lennon *Plastic Ono Band*.

Gaz: Tell me about some of the changes you've gone through from being a suburbanite teenager to becoming a well-celebrated musician. Say for example you're walking down the streets of Halifax...

Chris: Well-celebrated... I don't know... you've seen this? Well certainly in Halifax, I think anybody who knows about our music and would know who I was, I'd probably know them unless they were really young and so there might be some little kids who go "wow, it's Sloan." I'm totally still suburban and sheltered. Even downtown Halifax is pretty tame. Sometimes people that I know get upset. Sometimes it causes tension with people who are real friends... the whole sort of 'fan' and 'friend' thing. I really wanted originally to eliminate the 'fan/star' barrier and be just friends with people that I meet other than the band. For some reason you're in a band and they think you're really cool.

Gaz: What sort of lyrical style do you aim at in your songs? How intentional or spontaneous is your narrative?

Chris: Well... I mean, I must say... I totally admit that I try craft things so that I use word play and stuff sometimes. It's almost obnox-

ious, really. I think it's a sort of a Canadian thing, an overt sense of irony, a wink into the camera in the video. And I'm sort of guilty of that too, but we've all seen *Spinal Tap*, and we all know that 'rock posturing' is embarrassing.

Gaz: Does playing in Vancouver again make you nostalgic at all for the days before you signed with D.G.C.? Was there less pressure then?

Chris: One pressure is that the tickets are \$15 now, which is very embarrassing, and our little mandate is that as often as possible we want to keep tickets below \$10 and have all-ages shows. Some places, I read in our contract, that they're not all going to be all-ages shows and whatever — there's nothing we can do about that — but I didn't know that there wouldn't be any \$15 tickets. Yes, you're right in knowing that we got signed after they saw a show we played in Vancouver. Our first show in Vancouver was terrible because we played the Commodore Ballroom which is huge and there were only thirty people there. Sometimes I'm nostalgic, and sometimes... On our record we have a song called "Coax Me" which is an allegory type song about the difference between being on a major label and playing just for yourself.

Gaz: Are there any regrets looking back along those lines?

Chris: Sometimes I wish we could start over and do things differently. We have within the band major conflicts, not always major, but we always fight about the way things should be done, and it's not always just the musical side but we also fight about simple things... "Well, I want to travel in a van," "I want to travel in a bus..." Well, OK we'll travel in a Winnebago,"

"Well, that burns a lot of gas, so we'll stay in the Winnebago and save money," "No, we got to get hotels." There's fighting all the time like that. And the thing is when we were starting out none of us knew what was going on, we didn't solicit radio and we didn't solicit record companies or anything, it was something that just really fell into our laps. We were fortunate and grateful but we didn't have a system for doing things, we had never played outside of the city before. I just want to make sure that we don't get into a situation or position that we expect to be treated a certain way or with a certain amount of respect or something because we're in a band. I want to make sure we're gracious. But sometimes I am nostalgic for the idea like when we first came out here, and although we lost a lot of money, we did it, we slept on peoples' floors and we don't do that any more. We have huge fights where I want to sleep on peoples' floors and make money when they want to sleep in a hotel and be comfortable. But we love each other.

Gaz: With Nirvana gone do you think Geffen considers you they're number one 'milking cow'?

Chris: I don't think so. We are on Geffen which is an American label, but because we are from Canada we get a big push in Canada and Canada considers us a priority. But there's so many people on Geffen: Teenage Fanclub, Sonic Youth, Hole, and Wheezer. I think that D.G.C.'s got enough bands, I don't think that Nirvana being 'out of the way' clears the path to having the really big push from Geffen. No, we're well. Geffen does pretty well for us. Artistically, we're allowed to do basically anything we want. It's the best major label in the world, for sure, so we're really lucky. I don't know, the States is really hard, we've barely scratched the surface as we're not particularly big, and our second record is so different from our first record it's basically starting over again. It will be interesting to see. I think our new record is wicked. That's one aspect of the title *Twice Removed*, once removed being from Canada, and twice removed being not from Toronto.

Gaz: I've read about Sloan's side project, Murder Records, and I wanted to know if it is a one-horse label called Thrush Hermit or is there more panning out?

Chris: Oh, yeah. So far Murder records is almost a farm team for Sub Pop. Eric's Trip went to Sub Pop, Hardship Post went to Sub Pop and we put out their records. Now we've put Thrush Hermit out who I don't think will go on to Sub Pop but bigger and better things. We'd like to have the philosophy where we don't want to trap bands into multi-record deals. We're distributed by MCA and I think they'd be mad that we don't do things the way we should or the way industry does. We just let them go when they feel they're ready. We don't say, "no you have to make two more records for us." So we try to be fair about it but, on the other hand, I think we're going to lose our shirts. We've also put out Al Tuck and Hip Club Groove and Stinkin' Rich.

Sloan rocks Montreal



by Shant Pelly

Well, I had a long-winded story to start off my review of Sloan's show at the Spectrum in Montréal on February 18, but I've decided to leave a lot of it out. Suffice it to say that it was quite the experience.

Anyhow, upon arriving in Montréal, I donned my scarf, gloves and toque only to remove them all after realizing how warm it was there. With my kit bag and my duffle bag both slung uncomfortably over my shoulders, my girlfriend and I proceeded to my friend's place to drop off all of our stuff.

When we arrived, we were supposed to meet up with several people we'd been emailing over "sloan net" (an internet discussion group about the east coast music scene). We had never met or even seen these people, and I had only ever talked to one of them, Tara, over the phone. I had asked each to call me on Saturday afternoon.

Well, we missed Tara's phone call. However, by some fluke, in a city of approximately 1.2 million people, I managed to find Tara walking down Sainte-Catherine's Boulevard. All I had to go by was "look for a short, brown-haired girl in braids, with four friends." I just couldn't believe it. I also have to mention the shirts Tara and her friends were wearing. They had fuzzy felt letters which spelled out "Sloan" on the front, and "Rules" on the back. After a couple of quick photos, we made final arrangements to meet at the show.

Later in the day, we stepped out of the car to find Patrick from Sloan, and MacKenzie the Underdog from Hip Club Groove on their way to play some pre-gig video games. We left them to go grab a cheap meal at Burger King before

the show.

At the door, we were greeted by shouts of "Sloan tour t-shirts, 10 bucks!" It turns out that two guys were selling bootleg Sloan shirts. I found this rather amusing (as did the band who, as far as I know, purchased a few).

We arrived at the gig, and caught the end of the local rabbits' performance. I dunno; they haven't really caught my ears. We met up with the 'Sloan-netters' inside and then some of us went up front for Hip Club Groove and Sloan.

Hip Club Groove took the stage and were well-received by most, except for a few people who were yelling things like "get off the fucking stage" and "we want Sloan." They were in good form, though, and did stuff from their *Trailer Park Hip-Hop* ep, like "Kick em in da Face" and "Jizz" and some freestyle as well. Some onstage goofing around also added to what was, all in all, a really good performance.

Then, there was Sloan. They put on a good show, that definitely gave the fans their money's worth.

The show opened with a great version of "Marcus Said" a song they haven't played in a long time. Sloan ran tightly through a set that included a lot of material from their two albums, *Smeared* and *Twice Removed*. The show closed with Andrew coming out from behind the drums and trading places with Chris for the guitar and mic so he could perform "People of the Sky." I really like this song, and it was nice to see him appear to enjoy performing it for once.

Then it was over. I finally got to see Sloan in a city other than Halifax, and didn't hear them complain about it having been a sloppy show, as they always say about their hometown shows.



Jay Ferguson of Sloan

PHOTOS: SHANT PELLEY

