

**MAYA
AT
YORK**

**STATE
OF
THE
HEART**



Maya Bannerman on the town.

Paula Todd

Maya...the woman in the brilliantly coloured skirt with crazy red hair and a scintillating smile...Maja...the poet in black who delivers her message in clipped syllables to the pointed pluck of a violin...Maja...the elfin creature wearing a man's white dress shirt who sips Rosehip tea with me in her livingroom. This is a performer. An actress. A singer who came dangerously close to losing her voice to cancer a few years ago and who has since been possessed of steady insight and poignant determination.

She's coming to Founders Hall on September 18th to play at the Orientation Dance and will bring Allen Booth on keyboards, Bill Cleveland on drums and guitar player, Colin Linden, with her.

Excal: You are coming to York to perform with the Ceedees this week. How do you feel about that?

Maja: I met the Ceedees at the Theatre Festival last May and I love them. I was amazed that there was such a good group around. For awhile I wanted them to back me up, but it became obvious that we were different bands with our own material. I took their bass player, Doug Cameron, for a while, so there's some common ground. I think the show will be great.

Excal: How would you describe the type of music you play?

Maja: Well, someone in the business would ask me that and I would let them slot me into something like "new wave cabaret", but I'm really doing what I've always done. It depends upon the place. Before I moved to Toronto, I fingerpicked a nylon string guitar. In Toronto I use a guitar pick. The influence for my music comes from the environment--not so much the music I hear, but the pace of life. I like playing downtown so my music is faster, to suit the city. Really, the music could be anything as long as it suits my words.

Excal: You've been compared to Lene Lovitch. Is that legitimate?

Maja: I've only heard a little of her music and when I was in England a little while ago, I met her managers and asked them what they thought. They were surprised by the comparison and said I didn't sound like her or anyone else they had heard.

Excal: Did you have any success in England?

Maja: I took some of my songs and they were interested in recording one of them, but basically, they felt my lyrics were too sophisticated for them right now. I took that as a compliment.

Excal: How has your scare with cancer of the thyroid affected your music?

Maja: The doctor told me the cancer had been growing since I was a child which shocked me. The thyroid affects emotions and I had this as I grew up which must have affected me. I am a singer and a Taurus, which is linked with the throat, so the whole thing was cosmic! I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life and losing my voice for an entire year was a powerful experience. It all came together then, and I consider my voice a gift; I have a mission of sorts. Now I want to make a contribution to society, not just sing for myself.

Excal: Do you write songs that will sell or are they from the heart?

Maja: Yeah, they are definitely from the heart. I might make up the stories in the male-female songs, but a piece like "Call Me on the Telephone", was written under a highly emotional experience. I write about things that happen to us all.

Excal: Do you write all your songs?

Maja: Most of them except for maybe four, like "Eat" which Doug Cameron wrote. The guys tend to write hits, but I write what I feel. I like them to be popular but that's not the most important thing. Allen does all the arrangements.

Excal: Your music is great to dance to. Is that important to you?

Maja: Yes. It's great when people get up and start dancing right in front of you and they are singing all the words.

Excal: Performing keeps you very busy. Does that interfere with your personal life?

Maja: Well, I've had to make a choice between a serious relationship with anybody and travelling with the band. I think right now I would be pretty intolerable to live with. I have no ties and I want to do a single and tour so I put all my energy into that.

Excal: As a woman and an artist, what principles are important to you?

Maja: I feel that I have to be very strong. I have to be aware of my own integrity so that I am not crippled by what others think of me, or what the reviewers say. I am glad that I am not in my late teens. As a woman, I am insecure. But I have a responsibility as a professional human being to project a good image. I don't wear low cut things on stage. I don't want people to look, particularly at my body. I don't want to threaten men or women; I want to appeal so that I am not playing to half an audience which I think many women performers do.

Excal: Is there a message in your songs? What do you want to tell your audience?

Maja: I want to let them know that they are not alone in what they feel and I want them to feel better for that. So I do not mind sharing things with them that might be embarrassing on another level, because it might help someone else. I think life is wonderful and I'd like others to feel that too.

The Orientation '82 Dance in Founders

Getting oriented with the Ceedees

Paula Todd

While it may seem that electric inexperience is requisite to some of the new music roiling out of downtown bars these days, there are bands whose texture and diversity are a product of their past.

Consider the Ceedees, the group that will be sharing the evening with The Maja Bannerman Group on the 18th.

Curtis Driedgers, the soft-spoken, articulate "driving force" of the Ceedees, has been on the scene for almost ten years and the extraordinary eclecticism of his musical experience lies at the centre of the Ceedees' appeal.

An artistic weave of ska, reggae, calypso, country and new wave, the Ceedee sound is an extension of the singer/songwriter/performer who hasn't been able to get away from entertaining, despite stints with university and such diversions.

"I've been playing since I was 13, and had bands all through high school." During university, he played with a bluegrass band and later, with a commercial rock group. Then he quit and reconciled himself "to never playing again."

"I worked as a gardener, but came home every night and wrote songs," Driedgers recalls. The scratch paper piled up and he wanted to do something with the material. More interested in recording the songs for "posterity" than in gaining recognition, he is, nevertheless, "satisfied" with what seems the inevitable commercial success of the band.

Of course, along the way (the Ceedees are about three and a half years old), he's lost some musicians (like Mick Kent to Martha and the Muffins). "The variety has proved valuable though," Driedgers says,



Photo: Himbara

Curtis of the Ceedees

From bluegrass to green grass, weeding keeps him happy.

"I'm still the main member and the sound has, therefore, become more focused. I write all the songs. Actually, my biggest problem is saying 'no' to musicians who want to work with us."

Currently, the Ceedees are playing clubs like the Horseshoe and the Rivoli downtown and the Toronto audiences love them. "The music is danceable and people are always saying, 'Your music is really good. It's different.' It has all the elements of rock 'n' roll. You can dance, scream and it's loud, but I've got something to say."

The native of Leemington, Ontario has managed to survive as a Canadian artist with a different sound because "Gardening has allowed me the time to work with my music and to tour."

Seeing Curtis in a garden, fingernails black with soil, makes an odd picture when you've watched

him jumping on stage the night before: "The people I garden for know that I am a musician. In fact, some of them helped me, financially and emotionally, with the first album."

The band's name has a relationship to his earth work. "Sure anything that has to do with seeds is important," but he likes the infinite word play of the name he has chosen. "It is my initials; it is a lot of things. People just do not know what it means."

TONIGHT 8:30
The Spoons in concert
with Britain's John Otway
in Burton Auditorium
Tickets \$6.00
in Central Square

CYSF

**MOLSONS AND CYSF PRESENT
ORIENTATION '82**

Thursday September 16/82 8:30 p.m. Burton Auditorium

THE SPOONS with Special Guest from England John Otway
Reception with the band to follow.
Ticket Price: \$6.00

Friday September 17/82 **ORIENTATION EXTRAVAGANZA.**
Bearpit, Central Square

12:00 p.m. **Radio York Live**
Join the festivities of the new old new Radio York featuring **COUNTDOWN '82.**

1:00 p.m. **Geoff Young Jazz Band**
Come and listen to the finest in new jazz.

2:00 p.m. **Mike Carbone**
Master of illusion, comedy and fire-eating.

2:40 p.m. **Yorktones**
Let York University's very own calypso steel band entertain you.

Saturday September 18/82 8:30 p.m. Founders Dining Hall

Dance featuring two of Toronto's finest groups, **The Maja Bannerman Group** and the **Ceedees**
Tickets: \$4.00

REEL AND SCREEN free opening night presents academy award winner *Network* — Best Picture, Best Actor '76. Starring Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway and William Holden. Plus York film graduate Alan Novak's satirical short on life at York *Mondo York...* and *Three Stooges...* and *Krazy Kat...*

Watch for upcoming features: *Clockwork Orange* and *Altered States* — October 2, and *Shining* and *Wolfen* — October 9.