

Peterson interview from page ten

of an English influence in Canadian pop music than there is in American pop music. This belief is supported by the fact that a lot of English bands have broken in Canada prior to breaking in the States: Super Tramp, Nazareth.

On the other hand, it's really hard to pinpoint where a band is from. If you hear an album or a new tune on the radio, it's to the point where you can't tell if they have a British accent half the time.

In terms of quality, I would say that right now, Canada isn't producing the calibre of artists that England is, or for that matter, that the States is producing.

Gateway: Why?

Peterson: Quite frankly, I don't know why Edmonton is in the state that it is. It's not very popular to say that there's not much happening in this town talent-wise. Everybody goes around saying that there's a lot of great talent. I don't see it that way at all.

Paul Hann is the only person I work with in Edmonton really. There are people coming up. Hopefully they will persevere and get better and better, but you can't really call this area a hotbed for talent. Winnipeg has a lot more happening for it. Vancouver even more so. Calgary is a lot worse than Edmonton.

Gateway: I'm wondering about Paul Hann. He has an image. The label that comes to mind is "Cockney Cowboy". Is that Paul Hann, or is that Peter White [Hann's songwriter], Paul Hann, and Holger Peterson?

Peterson: I suppose because the three of us were involved in getting into the same kinds of country music at the same time, in other words sort of turning each other on to different things, we all had an indirect influence. Pete came up with the Cockney Cowboy thing.

Paul has lived the Cockney Cowboy thing on stage. It's a pure theatrical device on stage that Paul can feel comfortable relating to. Quite often for an artist, when he is on stage, he has to develop some kind of persona outside of himself. It's Paul's trip more than anything else, because he's taken it to the point that it is.

Sometimes he regrets that image, but he's become much more of an entertainer now than anything else, so it suits what he does.

Gateway: You've just released an album by Crocuss. Tell me about how you discovered Crocuss, and just what that band is all about.

Peterson: I first saw the band in a tavern in

Edmonton when they first came through.

I met a couple of people in the band when they were backing up various people at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. I met Bill Wallace and Mark LaFrance, the rhythm section. I was totally impressed with their music from the first time I saw them. At that point they had only been together for a few months.

I tried to help them out in many ways over a period of about two years. I was developing Stoney Plain Records at the same time, but wasn't in a position to get involved in a rock band that I felt had that much potential. They always seemed to be on the verge of signing a major deal. They were scouted, I think, by every major company in Canada. They had L.A. management for awhile.

For one reason or another these deals kept sliding by. I was always around. Finally, after hanging out with them for two years, I made them an offer. Basically, I told them realistically, as an independent label, and as a small label which hadn't undertaken a commercial project like that before, that what I was offering had certain limitations. They felt that we could work together. That was almost two years ago. The relationship has sustained at this point.

Right now they are without management, so I help them out in that way as well. At the same time that I made them an offer, they did get an offer from R.C.A., and decided to go with me, which made me feel really good. The relationship started right from the very beginning, in a situation where we were all willing to learn together.

I felt that their biggest asset was the fact that their music had international appeal. Right from the very beginning, I pursued that by attending various international conventions, and negotiating international deals on their behalf.

By the time their first album came out in Canada, we had already confirmed releases for most of the world for the first album. Now with the second album, once again it's being released by various companies internationally.

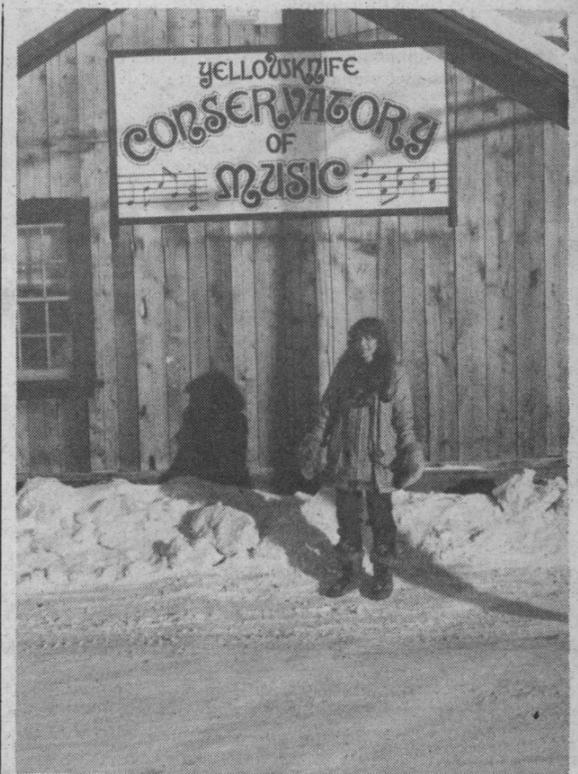
Gateway: How is Stoney Plain Records going? Do you have specific plans for the future?

Peterson: We're up to about thirty albums now. On most of the licensing deals that we have, the artists will be around ten years from now, and the records will be selling ten years from now, and the records will be selling ten years from now: Vassar Clements, the Dillards, John Hartford, Mason Williams, Robin Williamson, Geoff Muldaur and Amos Garrett, New

Grass Revival, Lenny Breau — people like that. Their records are continually selling, so I can count on a certain number of sales every month.

The more records that I have in the catalogue, obviously, the higher the revenue is every month.

In terms of projects in the future, I can only keep picking away at this Crocuss thing until I recoup all the money that I've invested to this point. Hopefully I'll make a little bit of money, and then we can start all over again, which is what you do, gambling all the time.



She's standing in front of her Conservatory of Music in Yellowknife, but on March 9 she'll be in SUB Theatre, Ursula, C.B.C.'s new recording artist and television entertainer will be singing an entire program of original material in English, German, French and Polish. A bit of everything from the land of the midnight sun.

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