

Folk singer Valdy striving for sincere stage image

by Rosa Jackson

Canada's leading folk artist, Valdy (born Valdemar Horsdal in Ottawa) took a few minutes from his hectic schedule to call *The Gateway* from a phone booth in Toronto.

He is in the midst of his 1985 Canadian tour, which will bring him to Edmonton's SUB Theatre Saturday night.

Valdy spends about 200 days of the year on the road, not only around Canada but in the United States and Europe as well. "I guess you could say I live out of a suitcase," he said.

However, he is not phased by this lack of any real home base. "It's the nature of the gig. I keep the home front in pretty good shape, though. My kids live with my ex-wives, so I don't feel that I'm neglecting them."

Obviously, a highly recognized artist such as Valdy must be primarily concerned with his music. He describes his style as "adult contemporary country crossover", and has been pleased with his success lately as he has been getting a lot of radio play.

Valdy would like to relate to anyone in the age group of "eight to eighty".

"I sing about real life joys and real life concerns," he said. "Mostly I draw from my own experiences, but some of it is fictional."

One of his favorite approaches is to take a humorous or sarcastic look at his subjects. "I like to poke fun at people who take themselves too seriously...I even have one song about the press!"

At present, Valdy finds that he is attracting mainly a crowd of high school and college

students at his gigs.

"I like to see the younger crowd out," he said. "I don't want to depress people with my music, but having kids of my own I am interested to see the world hang around so that they can grow up in it."

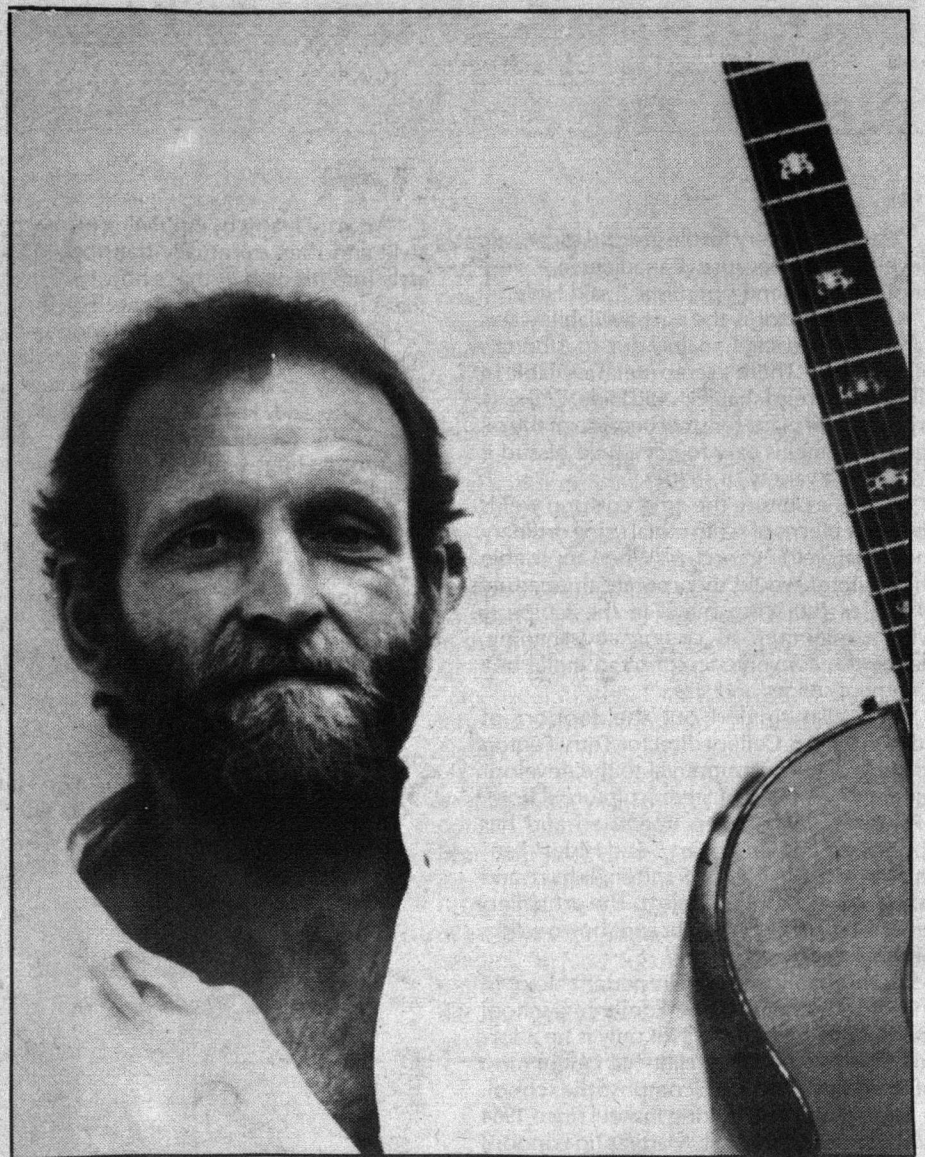
Valdy became involved in music at an early age: "I was eight when I started playing the piano, and thirteen when I first picked up a guitar. I turned professional in 1966, when I was twenty." He claims to have earned his success by "just playing."

He commented that his music is influenced to some extent by that of his favorite artists: "I tend to lean towards their styles, but it is not that noticeable to other people". He admires singer/songwriters such as Kate Bush, Bruce Cockburn and Jane Siberry and said that what gets his fancy in a song is "it's different layers, and the way it starts."

Valdy writes most of his own songs, but occasionally collaborates with other artists. One of his old associates, Dr. Bob Puzicka, is "an Edmonton native who is now a kids' dentist in Victoria." Together with Puzicka, Valdy wrote the popular songs "Leavin' Ain't the Only Way to Go" and "Easy Money".

On his tour, Valdy will be performing with Norman MacPherson (on electric guitar) and Connie Labeau (on electric bass). "The image I try to convey on stage is sincere and positive," he said.

Winner of two Juno awards and with four gold albums, the pleasant and affable Valdy will be performing at SUB this Saturday night.



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