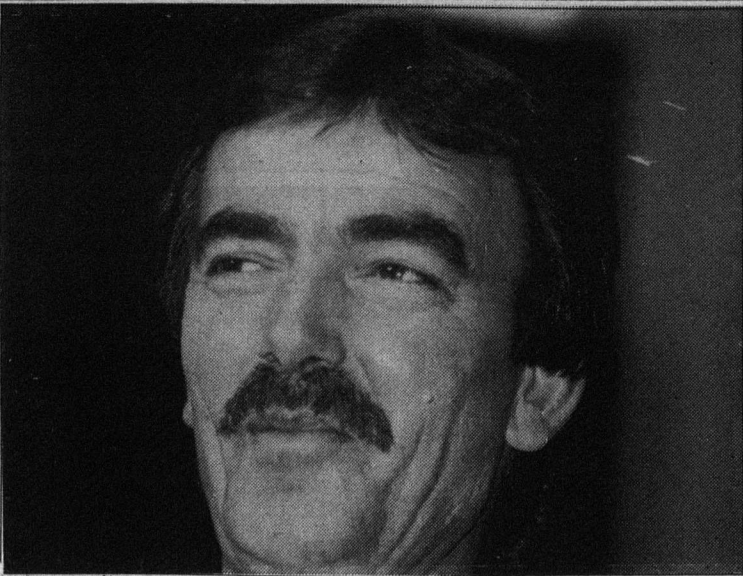


The Young and the Gateway



Eric Braedon, Young and Restless' Victor.

photo Martin Schug

by Gilbert Bouchard

ITV and Diet Coke sponsored the Edmonton leg of The Young and the Restless promotional tour, as Michael Damian and Eric Braedon visited River City. Three thousand eager fans turned out last Saturday afternoon at Northwood Mall. The mainly female, mainly young audience oohed and aahed and were driven to near ecstasy by the very presence of these two titillating TV sex symbols.

The Gateway managed to avoid the rush and interviewed both performers before the mad crush that afternoon.

Eric Braedon, better known to the Young and the Restless fans as Victor Newman, emigrated to America from Germany as a teenager and has appeared in dozens of films (Planet of the Apes, Lady Ice) and television programs (Hawaii-Five-O, Gunsmoke) is certainly no rookie actor. The Gateway spoke to Mr. Braedon at the Westin Inn last Saturday:

Gateway: For my first dumb question, what do you think of Canada?

Eric: I really can't form any opinion since I've only had a cursory glance of the city outside my hotel room window this morning, but I find Canadians in general very nice, and very different from Americans, more like Europeans.

Gateway: How do you feel towards your adopted nation, do you consider yourself more European than American?

Eric: I still have a lot of ties with Europe. I think the fate of every immigrant is to feel enormous conflicts - you're forever torn. Some who leave for political reasons can disown their homelands, but most always have longings.

Gateway: Did you have any troubles changing over from movie - nighttime TV work to soap operas?

Eric: It was extraordinarily difficult to adapt to the soap operas. For the first few years it was quite

depressing. Creativity is limited by time and we shoot 82 pages a day, which is the fastest pace in the world. Once I reconciled with these differences I began to enjoy it. It was not love at first sight but a developing romance.

Gateway: How did your acting peers react to your changing over to soaps - did you get some condescending remarks, etc., from your fellow movie-nighttime TV actor friends?

Eric: Well, no. I've been doing other things for so long to be different from my acting peers and I would dismiss any one who would be condescending towards my work. And now everybody in LA wants to get into soaps; people are realizing that soap actors can portray some very demanding characters. Soaps allow a development of character that is totally impossible in nighttime TV. Most nighttime TV is boring and no longer holds my interest. Nighttime TV characters are two dimensional. Film still holds my interest, and so do plays. I'm going to France in November to do a film. My character on the soap will be going on some sort of a trip for the duration of the film.

Gateway: Are you bothered by the attention you receive being a soap star?

Eric: It's very hypocritical of most actors to say that they are bothered by most of the attention they receive. I find it mostly pretentious to hear actors say that the fans bother them. The basic desire of an actor is to exhibit his emotions and his feelings - if you don't like the attention, get out of the business. The nature of the art is to want to communicate with the public, and most actors don't think this problem out to the end.

Gateway: Have you ever had problems with fans - for example, overzealous fans, or real obnoxious ones?

Eric: I can count on one hand the unpleasant experiences I've had with fans. It's the commitment you make. There are always areas you can have privacy. Also, in LA, people are very blasé about the whole thing.

Gateway: What about your future? What do the next five years hold for you?

Eric: That kind of long term projection is a luxury that an actor cannot have. I just hope to continue making a good wage, keep on acting, and keep healthy - hoping that the world won't blow itself up with that bunch of idiots rattling bombs.

Gateway: Do you think that actors are less politically involved than they were in the past?

Eric: There was more political involvement in the sixties but that was the general trend. Like any other group there are some who care and some who don't.

Gateway: But do the studios and networks get upset over politically active actors? For example, Ed Asner?

Gateway: I don't think so. Asner simply made those utterances in a position where he shouldn't have. He shouldn't have made those statements as President of the Actor's Guild. He used his position as President without concern for the people in the guild who didn't share his concerns.

Gateway: Any last comments?

Eric: Politically we must think things through, particularly in the realm of international politics (primarily as it concerns the US-USSR confrontation). That conflict has taken almost religious overtones; the division of the world into good and evil - a stupid, ridiculous and unobjective point of view. The world is never split into those simple black and white camps. I grew up in a country split by war; grew up in the bombings and rubble and I cannot stand those people in positions of power who've never known war or its horrors, and stand there flexing macho muscles of power, and cry for revenge. It sickens me to no end.

Michael Damian, (nee Michael Damian Weir), the 21 year old sex symbol of ITV's The Young and the Restless plays Danny Romalatti, a rock singer currently involved with Lauren but the object of Tracy Abbott's desire. Which woman gets him is yet to be decided. The Gateway spoke to the bubbly Mr. Damian at the Westin last Saturday before he was almost torn apart by three thousand rabid fans.

Michael's first comment before the interview began was to praise the quality of the Margaritas in the Westin's lounge, and to also praise the quality of Edmonton's female population, several members of whom kept on interrupting the interview for autographs, but c'est la vie I guess.

Gateway: I don't know where to start this interview.

Michael: How about the beginning?

Gateway: OK by me.

Michael: Well, I was born in San Diego, California, April 26, 1962. I'm one of nine kids, six girls and three boys, lots of women. I started singing at eleven with the rest of my family (The Weirz) doing dances, college gigs; we even played everywhere in the San Diego area. Then we moved to LA about six years ago to get closer to the action. We played all the clubs in Hollywood till about four years ago. Then I left the group to go solo, and I had a hit single (She Did It). Then the producers of the soap saw me on American Bands-and. They were looking for a new face - someone to pull in the younger audience - the 18 to 24 year olds.

I started on the show the very next week.

Gateway: Does the hectic pace of the soaps get to you?

Michael: No, I've been lucky and get to get out of the State a lot, at least twice a month.

Gateway: Is there a problem with your getting too involved with the character of Danny?

Michael: No, I push Michael Damian a lot, I don't think there's

much of a problem here.

Gateway: How long will you stay on the soap?

Michael: A couple or years at least, I'll probably do a movie later this year, and maybe go on tour. I've an out clause in my contract to do movies.

Gateway: Do you get frightened in large crowds of fans?

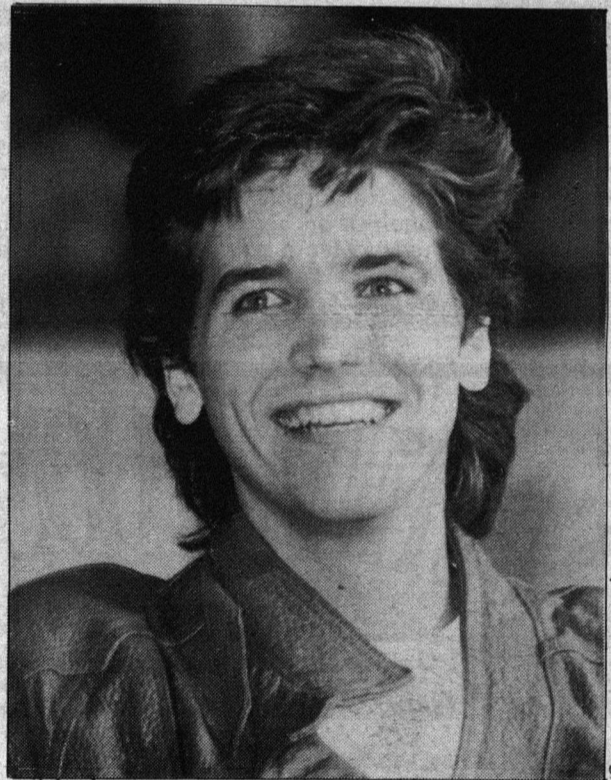
Michael: There's always fear, you have to take chances, I had 10 girls faint and hospitalized in a riot during an appearance in Toronto.

Gateway: Do you miss not having had a normal life, in the past or now?

Michael: I don't know what a normal life is, I'm happy doing what I'm doing. If I wanted a normal life, I would have taken a different path.

Gateway: What do you think of soap opera acting?

Michael: It's very intense. In soaps there's no diffusion. Tight shots - very straightforward - there's you, the other person, and the camera. It's not like you can drive around or walk down the street. It's a big challenge to memorize 25 pages of script a day.



Michael Damian, Young and Restless' Danny.

photo Martin Schug



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