

Making records, not singles

Our Lady Peace's Raine Maida discusses his plan for longevity

BY GREG MCFARLANE

Fresh from the release of their sophomore album *Clumsy*, Toronto rock group Our Lady Peace entertained a large following of just under 1000 at the McInnes Room Saturday night. The all-ages gig was opened by PF Station and Change of Heart.

The band treated fans to a loud and energetic show, performing new songs, as well as selections from their breakthrough debut album, *Naveed*. That energy sped through the audience like a rocket as fans jumped, danced, moshed, and crowd surfed (against the wishes of concert organizers) along with frenetic vocalist Raine Maida. The singer, however, was more subdued than usual (although it was hard to tell) due to two herniated discs in his back.

Our Lady Peace opened their set with a haunting rendition of "Car Crash", which sounds a lot better live than on CD. From that point onward, Maida's voice took centre stage as the group performed hits including "Starseed", "Naveed", and the first single from *Clumsy*, "Superman's Dead".

Before the concert, Maida commented on the lyrics of "Superman's Dead":

"The song comes from the black and white series that used to be on TV. He was a real hero back then that you could look up to. But something has been lost because now we have Beavis and Butthead. It comes from the way that media manipulates children regarding [how they should act]."

Many of the other songs from *Clumsy*, including the title track and "4 am", were written in a darker and more personal manner than most fans are used to hearing from Our Lady Peace, something that Maida attributes to less ambiguity in his

songwriting.

"[Inspiration] comes from personal experiences," he said. "The lyrics [on *Naveed*] were a little ambiguous. They have shifted more to where the storytelling aspect has come out more. I just reveal a little more about myself," said Maida.

The vocalist also discussed the pressure Our Lady Peace felt as a result of playing with such renowned acts as Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, as well as Van Halen.

"When you play with Plant and Page, there is so much history there and the music is so incredible that you expect to take [your music] to another level," explained Maida. "[The pressure] is very subconscious, but you realize it when your songwriting is not what it should be."

That being said, Our Lady Peace found it rewarding to play with larger acts in the United States.

"[Playing with Van Halen] verified that our approach to music — our openmindedness to songwriting — was to treat it like a craft," said Maida. "We learned about being professional. Now we practice writing and analyzing songs for the better part of our day. We are trying to get to the level where we can play whatever we hear."

However, during the concert dates in the United States, the band members felt themselves putting undue pressure on themselves. As a result, they decided to escape from the limelight in order to concentrate on *Clumsy*.

"We decided to get away from everything — Toronto, TV, Muchmusic — and we went to a cottage north of Toronto. We scrapped a lot of the songs we had written and started fresh," said Maida.

Fans have been eager to hear the results of that hiatus. *Clumsy* recently debuted at number one on Canadian music charts, and that position was well deserved. The disc is loaded with strong singles, and Maida hopes that this overall strength of the CD will put them among Canada's premier bands.

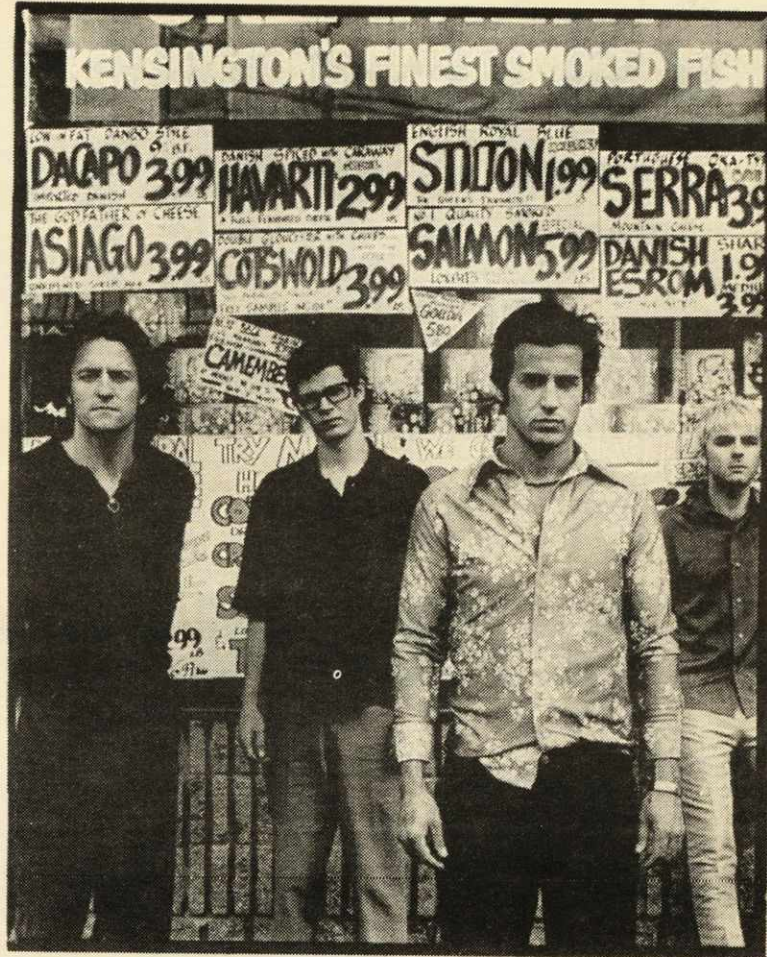
"Hopefully we will be one of the bands remembered in Canada for the nineties," said Maida, who included I Mother Earth (personal friends) in this elite group. "The last few years, music in general has been depressing. There haven't been any bands for fans to hold on to. Our goal is to write songs that will outlive the band."

Still, Maida was optimistic about Canada's flourishing music scene, and the growing quality being put forth by career-oriented bands north of the 49th parallel.

"It is a healthy scene," said Maida. "In the [United States] it is so hyped where bands are held up on the strength of one single, and then they disappear because they only have one or two other good songs. The bands in Canada are making records — and virtually the whole record is strong."

Projections about *Clumsy* and the Canadian music scene aside, Our Lady Peace has again resumed their rigorous touring schedule. Their legendary touring undoubtedly led to the surprising success of *Naveed*, which has sold upwards of 500,000 copies in North America. The band attributes their ability to tour ceaselessly to having the right blend of characters in the group, as well as to hard work.

"The dynamics are right," claimed Maida. "The music suffers when bands stay together for the wrong reasons."



As well, Maida noted that touring with bands whom they respect has helped them to keep a high energy level on stage.

"If we [tour with a band] that we don't give a shit about, creatively we could be stifled. Change of Heart is a band that pushes the night to a certain level, and it forces us to keep that level," said Maida of Our Lady Peace's opening act. "You want someone, like maybe I Mother Earth, to push you creatively."

Fans in the Maritimes should expect to see Our Lady Peace in the future, despite their lack of radio play here. Even though they have received little airtime, they have always had fair-sized audi-

ences for their concerts.

"It's always been positive (at Dalhousie). However, like other parts of Canada, the market is too small for our type of music. We just want to get to our fans because it is important for us to not forget about them," said Maida.

The show Saturday night was excellent. A lot of the fans in the room knew the words to songs from the new album, a general indication of good record sales in Halifax. The energy with which the band performed was second to none, and if the group continues performing like they did on Saturday night, fans can expect even bigger things from them in the future.

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