

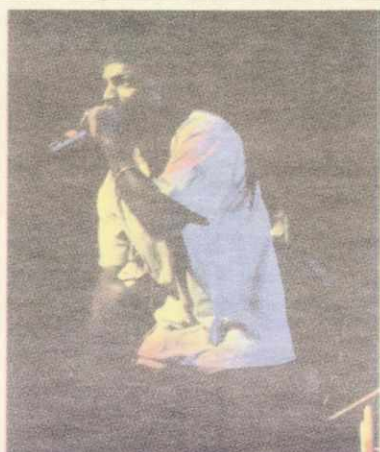
# ARTS & CULTURE



Butta Babies



Ice-T



Rascalz



Tricky Woo

## Canadian Music Weak: Hurtin'

Scrawls and Drawings  
by Jon Elmer

When I agreed to this adventure-rock-jamboree, the storyboard looked a whole lot different than what played out on the studio floor that is the super-highway and strip mall'ed bounty known as Southern Ontario – but what the hell, it was Canadian Music Weak (CMW) and I was going home (*Yo La Tengo* was also playing, but every story can't end perfectly, as we read on).

My man Frank, adorned with the tattoo of an anchor on his forearm and a *Stones* t-shirt that looked like he's given it 'heavy rotation' since the *Sticky Fingers* tour, told me that there were "three thousand bands here!" at CMW. Although Frank may seem a shade fantastic, it's true, even modest, that some 350 bands assembled on stages at 20-odd Toronto venues, playing 35-minute sets on the hour, each hour from 9pm until 2am; when you add the scores of

other bars and clubs hosting a flowering plethora of non-CMW gigs (sadly including *Yo La Tengo*, since CMW passes were worthless at these shindigs), as well as the dozen or more bands that played the Conference Centre at the Westin Harbour Castle, the tally looks markedly closer to Frank's non-sense.

While that all sounds well and good, with everybodywhoseanybody of the music game and shelves of high-profile media-types in attendance for this five-day treat there was one certain aspect of the week that was hurtin': Yo, where are all the good bands to?

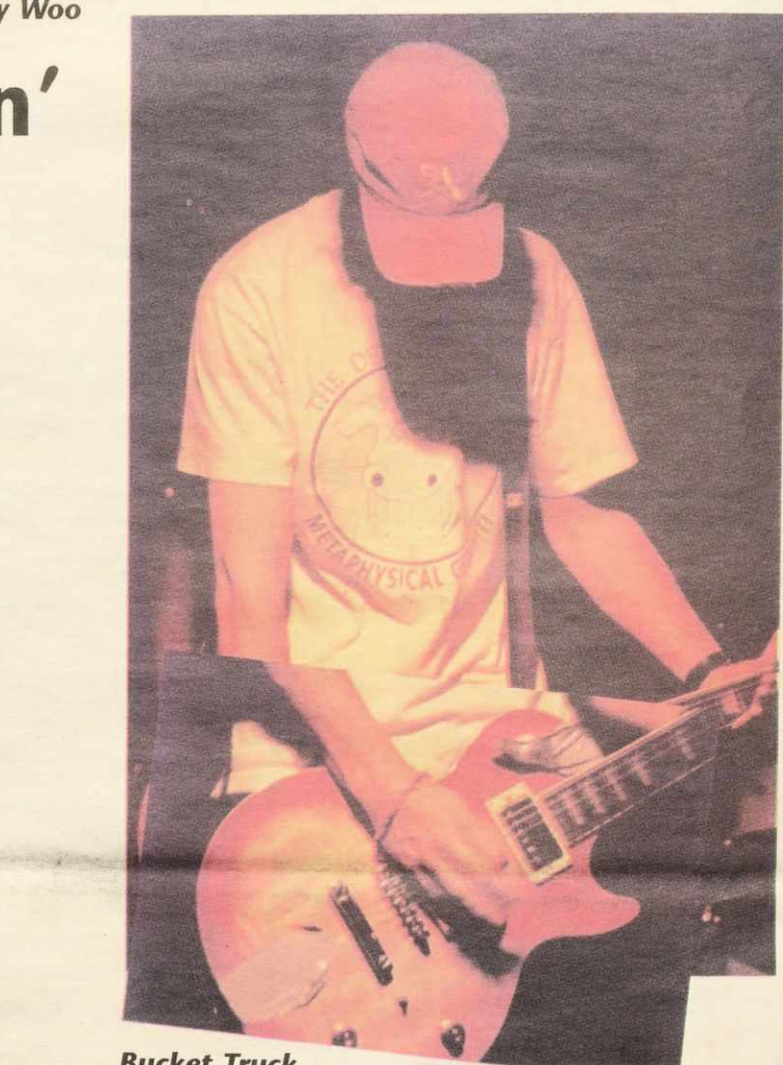
Beaverland products are making noise all over this globe, a point that is perhaps made all but moot by a conference which boasts the slogan "Where Music Means Business." Where was *Godspeed You Black Emperor* or *SIANSpheric*; *Herbalizer*, *Saukrates* or even *Kid Koala*? No *Julie Doiron* or the *Wooden Stars*; same for *Sinclair*, the *Bonaduces* or *The Weakerthans*. Even if your not

so indie, I didn't see any *Hayden* and there was no sign of *Choclair*, a rapper who in Sunday's keynote address *Ice-T* pegged as the one who will break the Canucks into the US hip hop market 'for real'. And this is scarcely scratching the surface, so many were missing.

Simply add a couple of these bands and the whole face of the event changes; but alas, 12 months of anti-creativity programming culminates in a week of also-rans, satisfactoriness and that-band-sounds-exactly-like groups (people still listen to *Rymes with Orange*?) who paint a mediocre scene of Canadian music, when the reality is so assuredly to the contrary.

Ah but just when all seemed doomed, just when the pundits began to spew their last 'this all sucks, I told you so', just when it looked like I was going to stay home and watch John Lurie's *Fishing with John*, just at that moment *Buck 65* (*Stinkin' Rich* of yesteryear) took 45 minutes out of his day to blow CMW up with his dope-ass'd blend of the turntablist mastery and old school lyrical styles.

He wasn't the only one either; in fact, it was hip hop that saved this week from complete abandon. *Mathematik*, *Butta Babies*, *Citizen Kane*, *Da Grass-*



Bucket Truck

*roots* and the *Rascalz* all flexed what is now almost self-evident: it's hip hop's turn.

So now it's all over, the banal, mediocre reviews have all been printed; once hot CMW news has all but faded from *Much Music*; the bands are likely home now or back into the grind

that is being a touring rockstar at least; and all the record execs and industry types have gone back to their offices to work furiously on catching up with the Internet age that is pulling the carpet out from under their empires. And well, CMW you dudes missed the boat.



Buck 65



Rascalz