

"Ian Botham ... is that you?" says Bryan Adams. No Bryan, he's a cricket star. Willis, Randall, Mosey ... the familiar names pour tinnily from the Sheraton's paging intercom. Cricket seems to be this reporter's karma.

Adams is restless, mischevous, enjoying his first taste of Steinlager. Much better than Fosters ...

Although he's really only known in this country for the 'Cuts Like a Knife' single (from the album of the same name) the 24-year-old Canadian has been around for several years. Dogged touring resulted in airplay for his album *You Want It, You Got It* in early 1982, first in New York State and then the rest of the USA and back home in Canada. He now has a strong following in both countries and in Germany.

"It was fate in a way but in another way it was a lot of hard work and perseverance," he says, explaining his success. "I wasn't about to let my record die. I did an extensive amount of club touring and showcasing and getting up and playing to virtually no one, just to make believers. Looking back now, I'm really glad we did it, because I really paid my dues."

You come across in much of your press as very ambitious. Is that true?

"Yeah, I'm extremely ambitious. Ambitious, workaholic ... you name it. Basically, what it boils

BRYAN  
ADAMS

Pacifica I'm Yours.



Bryan Adams, Takapuna Beach.

down to is that I love what I do and I believe in it. And if I don't believe in it, who will?"

You've written songs for people like Loverboy, Ian Lloyd and

Prism. Are you more ambitious for your songs or for yourself as a performer?

"I've found I'm more ambitious for my songs rather than for me. But it ends up being me anyway. My first love was songwriting but I think I would have been a frustrated artist if I'd been just a songwriter. I found touring was a good base for my writing, a testing ground to see what worked. From touring and playing to different audiences I developed a whole new attitude to songwriting."

Have you had the time to write songs for anyone else lately?

"I have, but it's difficult to discuss them because they haven't happened yet. In the last little while I've had songs recorded by Bonnie Raitt and Ted Nugent and other people. I've managed to keep a lot of my older catalogue in movement because the songs are still good songs, they were just never given a chance. I've written

for a couple of artists lately who I'm very happy about and I just hope they do the songs."

Can you ever see yourself reverting to being solely a songwriter?

"No, not any more. It's getting to the point where people really want to come and see the Adams. They want to come and see the guy play because I give everything I've got on stage and I really enjoy myself doing it."

Foreigner's Lou Gramm sang on several songs on *Cuts Like a Knife* — are you keen to carry on bringing in other people to help on albums?

"Well, the reason I worked with Lou on the record was that I enjoy the fact that I can challenge my own abilities with someone as great as him. Making music is challenge and if you don't challenge yourself you get bored. Lou is a fantastic singer and it was great to have him sing with me. It's an

accomplishment in my career because someone I've admired I can now try and parallel."

For the last five or so years, Adams has co-written with Jim Vallance, who plays bass and keyboards at writing sessions but is on this tour on drums — the first time he's been part of the live band. While Adams looks every inch the modern young rock star, Vallance is slightly balding, bearded and bespectacled.

The pair's songwriting partnership works on a pretty much even basis, with both writing music and lyrics, working off each other. Adams is reluctant to discuss their work until Vallance arrives, which he does, fresh from a trip up to One Tree Hill to survey Auckland.

Many American reviewers have applauded the lyrics on your records. Is that something you consciously work on?

"Well, it's really just about straightforwardness. I find myself writing about situations that are very common," says Adams. "People take them very seriously. For example, there's a song called 'Heaven' that's doing very well in the States at the moment. It's on the soundtrack for a film, a dreadful film, and the amount of mail I've gotten from that song is remarkable, it's not even a single. So Jim and I have a lot to be proud about, that we've been able to touch a lot of people in a lot of different ways. That's the most gratifying thing about songwriting — that you can say something in a song that people can understand and relate to and actually be moved by as well. And that's what I'm trying to do."

You're younger than a lot of the people you've worked with (support tours include the Kinks, Loverboy, Foreigner and Journey) — do you still get treated as a youngster?

"No, people don't really treat me that way. It's time for young blood, I'm sick and tired of hearing about these old farts. It's time for us young guys to go out and do it — bands like myself and Def Leppard."

What to do you think of the youth music coming out of England at the moment?

"I can handle quite a bit of it ... but I get bored very quickly."

With the Top 40 success of 'Cuts Like a Knife' you're beginning to

become something of a pop pin-up yourself. Do you have any trouble lining that up with the more serious aspects of your work?

"I don't really think about it to be honest. Now and then when somebody comes pounding on my door and asks for an autograph I think 'gee, what have I done to deserve that?'"

Is there an ultimate aim in what you're doing?

"Making records is an achievement in anyone's life and I think anyone who's done it will certainly concur with me that there's a certain ... you sort of immortalise yourself doing it ... not that that's necessarily important. You challenge yourself to better yourself each time and a lot of people crack under that pressure — is this better than the last one, are my fans going to like it, am I going to be able to maintain this quality, am I ever going to dry up?"

"My biggest problem is I don't take it seriously. If I took it seriously I suppose I might get down on it. But the reason I'm here in New Zealand and Australia is I think it's a gas. It's a paid vacation as far as I can tell."

And indeed, the energetic Adams is to have a fine time here, making friends and being taken nightclubbing, swimming windsurfing.

He has returned home to begin work on a new album in New York on April 1 ("a very appropriate day for me"). It'll probably be the album that really breaks it for him.

Bryan Adams is likeable, witty and unpretentious. His belief in what he is doing is strong and genuine. But I find it odd to hear him talk about "challenges" in a genre that is so dead and limited; how he can see himself progressing for 20 years amid the soporific sludge that is American FM rock; how he can single out such bands such as Foreigner as "greats."

In his energetic Western Springs Police support glimmers of good songs shone through occasionally but were all too often bludgeoned into oblivion with clumsy, bland, repetitive "rock" playing. It seems a waste.

But then Bryan Adams will probably make more money than I ever will.

Russell Brown

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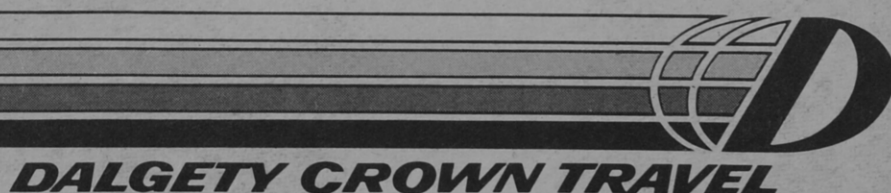
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