



Members of the rock band Red Rider take aim at commercial centre of pop in their accessible debut album

# Red Rider rocks into pop charts

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When singer-songwriter Tom Cochrane first heard Red Rider perform at the El Mocambo in Toronto, he was so impressed by the rock group that he went backstage after the show and offered to audition for the spot of lead singer.

That was two and a half years ago. Cochrane had dropped out of the music scene after recording a solo album and some singles that didn't go anywhere. But now Cochrane — and Red Rider — have their sights set on North American records charts with the Canadian and U. S. release of their first album, *Don't Fight It*.

The RCA release is one of the most polished, most accessible debut rock albums to come out of Canada in a while. Cochrane and the other four members of the band, Ken Greer (guitar/keyboards), Peter Boynton (vocals/keyboards), Rob Baker (drums) and Jeff Jones (bass) take aim at the commercial pop centre of rock music, in between the buzzsaw simplicity of new wave and the high volume, guitar-oriented approach of heavy metal groups like Rush and Triumph.

## Short history

Ottawa audiences get their introduction to Red Rider tonight at the Civic Centre. The band is scheduled to open for April Wine.

"At this point, the band's had a short history," said Cochrane in a phone interview from Montreal. "Red Rider was formed in 1976. I joined late late in 77 and Jeff joined shortly after I did. Jeff is from Chicago. He'd played with several groups, including Ocean; he'd also attended the Ronnie Hawkins' 'School of Fine Arts'."

Cochrane, who wrote about 80 per cent of the material on the album, says the fact that the band recorded the album in three sessions in Los Angeles and Toronto over a period of several months made for a stronger first effort.

"By taking those breaks between studio sessions, we made a better recording. That kept the creativity flowing. It's not fashionable to do it that way anymore, but it worked for us."

Cochrane also gives credit to Michael James Jackson, who produced the album. Jackson has impressive credits — he's worked with such groups as Pablo Cruise and Little Feat.

For a band that's been around for four years, Red Rider hasn't had much exposure. They've played some West Coast dates, survived a disastrous Maritime tour and hit most of the major centres in Ontario.

As the musical spokesman for the band, Cochrane tends to take himself seriously. "Change is the lifeblood of any artist and pop music is no exception," he says, commenting on the differences between his solo work in the mid-1970s (which included the soundtrack for Al Waxman's film, *My Pleasure is My Business*, based on the Xaviera Hollander book) and the music he's writing for Red Rider.

## Bit of new wave

"Sure, there's a tendency to adapt to the time. You can hear a bit of new wave in our music. But there're still lots of similarities to what I was doing in 1975.

"I work from a gut feeling when I write — I go with that. Originally the band played a lot of funk music. That was a natural thing since it's more technically demanding. Now we don't do 'high-brow' rock; what we do is simpler music."

Cochrane hopes the 'simpler' sound of Red Rider catches on. Already the single released from the album, *White Hot*, has entered the *Billboard* chart. Coming up later this year are possible U. S. tours with the Little River Band, Prism and Foghat.

"We're also considering a move to Vancouver since our management is based there," says Cochrane. "To contradict Tom Petty, you can't live like a refugee." Refugee status seems like the last thing Red Rider has to worry about.