

Band's new wave of popularity

VANCOUVER (CP) — When Tom Cochrane, lead singer-songwriter for Red Rider, was running along the sand at Vancouver's Wreck Beach earlier this week, it wasn't because he needed the exercise.

It was because his Toronto-based band was filming a rock video of a new song, *Can't Turn Back*.

The video — intended for

MTV exposure in the U.S. — is part of the band's plan to ride its new wave of sudden popularity since the January release of its third and most powerful album, *Neruda*.

The band has just completed a 60-date American tour with Pat Benatar and REO Speedwagon. A concert here Tuesday launched Red Rider's first Canadian tour in more than a year.

In 1981, the band toured with such acts as the Kinks, Doobie Brothers, J. Geils, Marshall Tucker and Journey. Then Red Rider encountered a \$60,000 setback — all its equipment was stolen from their truck parked outside a New York Holiday Inn.

Someone forgot to insure it.

Instead of touring in 1982, Red Rider spent almost a year honing *Neruda*.

Cochrane, 29, based the album's central character on Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who died in exile shortly after the 1973 military coup that ousted the Marxist regime of President Salvador Allende, who died in the process.

Cochrane explained in an interview following the filming of the video how Neruda became his inspiration.

"I bought a couple of his books in Edmonton, just as I was writing the songs for the

new album," he said. "I became intrigued with Neruda. He was very streetwise and very mystical. I wanted to work that into our music."

Cochrane uses Neruda as a metaphor "for this character who stumbles through the album."

But *Neruda* isn't a blatantly political album, although several songs have political overtones, especially *Napoleon Sheds His Skin*, which takes subtle shots at right-wing Latin American politics.

Instead, Cochrane has tried to capture the spirit of Neruda's fierce struggle for individuality and freedom of expression.

Cochrane sees a parallel between Neruda's populist poetry and today's rock and roll "Rock is rebel street art".

Cochrane studied journalism at Toronto's Ryerson College before turning his pen to rock and roll.