

**“LIVERPOOL OF THE NORTH”: THE STORY OF OTTAWA, CANADA’S MUSIC,
1960’s–TODAY. EXCERPTS FROM ALAN CHRISMAN’S BOOK:**

“IT’S A LONG WAY HOME”

Ottawa had quite the music scene in the 60’s. Part of this was because Canada and Ottawa had more direct connections to England than the U.S., so they knew about The Beatles before the rest of North America. And their 60’s bands, were very adept at re-creating that British pop sound. In fact, **Richie Patterson**, a mainstay and drummer in many of its bands, called Ottawa the “**Liverpool of The North**”.

Ritchie went to Fisher Park school with **Paul Anka**, backing him up in the Bobbysoxers. Anka was one of the first to make it out of Ottawa and become a teen sensation with “Diana” and “Puppy Love” in the 50’s, before moving to Vegas and writing “My Way” for Frank Sinatra.

Richie’s “**The Esquires**” were first influenced by Cliff Richard and the Shadows right before The Beatles took over. Scores of Ottawa bands formed and recorded songs and some albums. There were several places to play like the Auditorium, Pineland and clubs like the Chaudiere across the river in in Hull, Quebec and several church basements. And hundreds of kids would attend. Ottawa even had its own version of American Bandstand, **Saturday Date**, hosted by **Peter Jennings** who would go to ABC News in New York.

The best of these got recording contracts like **The Staccato’s** (who later became **The Five Man Electrical Band**) when they moved to California with their international hits “**Signs**” (‘Signs Signs ,everywhere, telling me what to do’) and **The Cooper Bros.** with their hits “Dream Never Dies” and “Rock and Roll Cowboys”, both influenced by southern rock. As Five Man’s writer, **Les Emmerson** said, Ottawa had the harmonies, Ottawa being but a homogeneous small town then. Ottawa also reflected its Ontario Irish and Scottish immigrant and Ottawa Valley country roots. Whereas as Toronto was more R&B, closer to Detroit and the U.S. Winnipeg was a tough city with the rockers, The Guess Who and Neil Young.

But by the 70’s, and the Beatles had broken up and pop music became solo artists like James Taylor, Cat Stevens, and Carol King and with the more Canadian nature and laid-back acoustic folk of **Bruce Cockburn**, and singer-songwriters like **Ian Tamblyn** and **Lynn Miles**, whom are respected in Europe and the U.S. In the mid- 90’s, **Alanis Morissette** made it big in L.A. with her female angst and “**Jagged Little Pill**”.

Ottawa, a pretty capitol and tourist attraction, now puts on big corporate festivals in the summers like the Tulip, Jazz, Folk, and Blues Fests (and Winterlude along the Canal skating Rink), with big crowds and international name. The Blues Fest is one of the biggest now in

North America. There are only a few regular places left to play these days like Zaphods, Irene's, etc., but the local audience is small, except during the big-name festivals. But there are several talented musicians still here performing and recording, anyway.

Ottawa's music height, though, was probably the 60's, when people didn't have so many entertainment distractions like DVD's and the internet. That's where Ottawa's music scene began and with its rare visionary entrepreneurs and local music supporters like **Harvey Glatt**.

HARVEY GLATT is an Ottawa music legend. He opened the first new record store chain, **Treble Clef**, in the late 50's. And he brought in the first big names to Ottawa with **his Bass Clef Concert Promotions** from first, **Pete Seeger** in 1957, to scores of others of all styles: **Dylan, Stones, Louie Armstrong, Belafonte, etc.** He also owned part of the legendary 60's coffeehouse, **Le Hibou**, where many later famous performers played and was instrumental in fostering Canadian and Ottawa talent, of which he managed several: **Esquires, Bruce Cockburn, David Wiffen, Ian Tamblyn**. There are many stories about his connections to many famous musicians, such as returning **Jimi Hendrix's hat to him** when he played the Capitol Theatre in 1968 and **possibly introducing Graham Nash, (later of CSNY) to Joni Mitchell in 1966**. Sometimes the artists would stay at his house, so he and his wife, Louise, got to know them. He also owned the first FM rock radio station, **CHEZ**. I got to know him better, when I started helping local musicians later, and I found he always gave me his honest opinion, which meant a lot to me. So in honour of his years of supporting music and his continuing instincts for recognizing talent I wrote the above, "**Ballad Of Harvey Glatt**".

“BALLAD OF HARVEY GLATT” lyrics by Alan Chrisman (folk tune)

When this was but a small town
He's the one who took a chance
and helped start the sound
that allowed us to get up and dance

Starting with that 1st Treble Clef store
Then he brought in the stars
Joni, Jimi, Lightfoot and Cash, and more
inspiring locals in the bars

Chorus:

Harvey's the Music Man
who always took a chance
made us believe we can
and got us up to dance

Soon he was behind The Children, 3's a Crowd,
Cockburn, Wiffen, Esquires, and MRQ
and Ottawa woke from it's cloud
It's time due, the legendary Le Hibou

Still to this day
in any local club or bar
you might see this discerning man
checking out a potential star
and encouraging them they can

c. 2012

“IT’S A LONG WAY HOME”

THE STORY OF OTTAWA MUSIC

(Original outline from 1995 for a proposed book on the Ottawa Music Scene)

By ALAN L. CHRISMAN

ORIGINAL CHAPTERS OUTLINE:

1. Introduction
2. Lumberjacks & Valley Roots
3. Puppy Love
4. Liverpool of the North-"Signs" in the 60's
5. Folks and a French Café
6. Fat City Blues
7. Singing Fools
8. Kanata Punks
9. Alanis
10. Harmonies in the 90's

Some of the better known musicians, who've come out of the Ottawa area:

Alanis Morissette
Paul Anka
Bryan Adams
Bruce Cockburn
Ian Tamblyn
Lynn Miles
Sue Foley
David Wiffen
Colleen Peterson
3's a Crowd
The Staccato's
Five Man Electrical Band
The Esquires
Cooper Bros.
The Townsman
Darnels
Scoundrels
Deuces
Heart
Eyes of Dawn
5D
Don Norman
MRQ
A Mythical Meadow
Canada Goose
Octavian
James Leroy and Denim
Bard
Valdy
Sneezy Waters
Tony D
Bob Stark
Lucky Ron
Fat Man Waving
Eight Seconds
Town Cryers
FurnaceFace
Crucial Moments
Drew Nelson
Charlie Major
Wayne Rostad
Back Alley John
Heaven's Radio

"IT'S A LONG WAY HOME"

THE STORY OF OTTAWA MUSIC

INTRODUCTION:

Ottawa has had a long history of talented artists of all types, especially musicians. In the 1960's particularly there was a very lively local scene for popular music.

There were literally scores of bands and places for them to perform. In fact, at one time in the mid-sixties, **as many as 15 groups were on record labels including popular bands such as The Townsmen, The Scoundrels, The Esquires, The Staccatos, and The Five Man Electrical Band**, etc. Some of these bands had local, regional, national, and even international hits. Well known Canadian **artists Bruce Cockburn, David Wiffen, Colleen Peterson, Les Emmerson, and Paul Anka** came out of this area and period. In the early 70's, coffeehouses like **Le Hibou** became legendary and bands such as **The Cooper Bros.** and **Octavian** gained success.

We believe that this history of music in Ottawa should be chronicled for future generations and for the current generation of up and coming artists and the public so that they will appreciate their roots and recognize its talent. It is our contention that there is a direct connection between the groups in the 60's and the Ottawa musicians of today. As **Les Emmerson of Five Man Electrical Band** says, **"Ottawa always had the harmonies"**. And today there is still an active local music scene with all styles of music from folk to blues to country to alternative, and such well respected artists as **Ian Tamblyn** and **Lynn Miles**, and with the amazing success of **Alanis Morissette**, we think there would be much interest in this story.

For the past while we have been researching this area, talking to its participants, collecting original recordings, and compiling discographies in hopes of writing and publishing a book on such. Alan L. Chrisman, believes he is qualified to do this project because of his many years experience in various aspects of the music business (running a record store, a coffeehouse, promoting and managing local musicians and organizing concerts, and the two Ottawa Beatles Conventions, etc.). He also has experience in reporting and publishing (having co-founded, edited, and written for two community arts papers). He has been interviewed by CBC, CKCU-FM, CHEZ-FM, and local TV. Mr. Chrisman also has had close contacts with many of the musicians the past several years. For example, enclosed are references from two of the most experienced and respected ones, Richard Patterson, of several Ottawa bands from **Paul Anka** to "The Esquires to **"3's a Crowd"**, and Les Emmerson of **"The Staccato's"** and **"Five Man Electrical Band"** fame. And he has conducted interviews with them and others. So we believe all of the above would qualify Alan Chrisman for such an important project as documenting **"The Story of Ottawa Music"**.

January 15, 1995

To whom it may concern,

My name is Les Emmerson. I have been involved in the music business since the early 1960's as a performer, composer, and a record producer.

It has been my pleasure to know Alan Chrisman for the past three or four years. I have observed his boundless energy in his capacity as a business man, a manager, and in showcasing new talent. He throws himself completely into projects, and always delivers thoroughly and promptly.

His knowledge, appreciation, and love of the music business is equalled only by his enthusiasm for it. I have no doubt that he is capable of compiling and writing the definitive history of the Canadian music scene.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Les Emmerson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Les Emmerson

Reference from **Les Emmerson** (songwriter and leader of **The Staccato's** and the **Five Man Electrical Band** - 1960's and 1970's Ottawa bands)

Canadian
Broadcasting
Corporation

Société
Radio-
Canada

Att: Alan L. Chrisman
ROCK THIS TOWN
Ottawa Music History
Project 1995 .

Jan 12th 1995

Re: Ottawa Pop Music Book: .



To Whom it may concern:

Because of the Key Role that I played in the development of the Pop & Rock Music scene in Ottawa during the 60's I've often been asked about putting it down in print . My Band in the 60's THE ESQUIRES won the first ever Canadian Music Award Now known as the JUNO AWARD . That was back in 1964 The Very same band is now credited with the production of Canada's First Professional Pop Music Video , and it has been seen Regularly on Canada's MUCH MUSIC .

Ottawa's Pop Music scene during the 60's was a wonderful time with So many Bands and Many places to play . Bands like The TOWNSMEN, The STACCATOS, THE 5-D , HEART, DON NORMAN & The OTHER FOUR, The EYES OF DAWN, MRQ, and so many more , and it should be said that most of Ottawa's Bands at the time all had records available .

There is a Rich Story to be told about the Early Ottawa Pop & Rock & Polk Musical Days . . And I support any effort to bring it all into print .

Ottawa did play a Key Role in the development of CANADA'S early days of Pop and a printed record of this time would be a welcome asset to many of the young people who have a Musical intrest in their Lives .

Richard Patterson
Music Programmer CBC Radio Ottawa Service .

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REFERENCE FROM RITCHIE PATTERSON IN Bands "THE ESQUIRES", "3's A CROWD", "CANADA GOOSE"

THE HISTORY OF OTTAWA 60'-70's MUSIC

The main Ottawa scene began in 1963 with The Esquires: Richard Patterson on drums, Clint Herily on bass, Paul Huot & Gary Comeau on guitars and Bob Harrington on vocals. During the summer of '63, after a good reception with a **Dick Clark** Tour, they were signed by Capitol Records. In September, "Atlantis" backed by "I've Lost My Girl" was released and was a big across-Canada hit. This was followed up in late '63 with "Man From Adano"/ "Gee Whiz It's You", which was another big hit (both hit #1) in Ottawa and resulted in the **Esquires winning the RSP Award, later JUNO**, for group of the year). Bob Harrington decided to leave during 1964, moving to England, and was replaced by Don Norman. He wrote both the next two big hits "So Many Boys" in fall '64. And "Cry IS All I Do" early '65.

By early spring '65, **The Staccatos released 1st. single, "It Isn't Easy"** on Allied Records, a big hit in Ontario and in Quebec was #1. They signed with Capitol, where The Esquires also were. The Esquires cut "What You're Doing", but were refused permission to release The Beatle's song by the record company. The Staccato's released "Small Town Girl" at the start of summer '65. July '65 saw the release of Darnell's "Every Other Guy", but then they break up as do The Esquires, sort of following the release of "Loves's Made a Fool Of You" (the old Buddy Holly song) in early August. Don Norman and Gary Comeau leave to form a new group: Paul Hulot becomes new drummer for Darnaells now called Townsmen, who cut and release "I'm Such a Dreamer" September '65. Fall '65 sees two new groups playing as The Esquires: Don Norman & The Esquires, and former member Richard Patterson with some former members of a group called The Barons. This resulted in a big court case for the name, finally resulting in Don Norman's new group being called The Other Four. Both groups were much harder rocking than before.

Fall saw big hits for: Staccato's ("Do You Mind"/ "Move To California") which hit across most of the country and The Townsmen and The Characters "Tell Me". In December '65, **Staccato's release first album "Initially"** and single **"It's a Long Way Home"**-another big hit (was covered by Jimmy Knox and Thee Group in the mid-70's as well). Winter/spring sees Don Norman & Other Four release 2nd single "Heaven in the Middle Of Town" and "Funny how Love Can Be". Both sides are very popular. "Heaven" as was "Dreamer" was written for them by Staccato's, "Funny" was an English hit for Ivy League in '64. The Characters release "Daddy Rolling Stone" which had been an early Who B side. Staccato's release harder rocking "C'mon Everybody". By summer, "it's a Dirty Shame" is a hit for Esquires in Eastern Canada: fast rising group, B.C. and The Cavemen change their name to 5th Dimension, and Townsmen release "we're Doing Fine"/ "Lion Sleeps Tonight". It's a big hit both sides countrywide, but overshadowed by Staccato's "Let's Run Away" in September. A giant hit, resulting in them winning RPM Awards for single and group of the year. In late fall, Scoundrels release: "Heartbreak Hotel" and 5th Dimension become 5d. Don Norman releases "Low Man"; 5D release "Baby Boy", Esquires "Love Hides a Multitude" and Dueces release "You Gotta Try".

By March, Staccato's release "Half Past Midnight" which won RPM single of the year in 1967. Eyes of Dawn release "Time to be Going", Scoundrels record 2nd single "To a Lonely Lady", but break-up prior to release as two members join other groups (Townsmen and 5D), but record is released anyway as "Nobody". Don Normand releases "You're Place in My Heart" and Those Naughty Boys release "Somebody Told my Girl". Around this time, there were about 15 or 16 local groups with recording contracts.

Staccato's release "A Wild Pair" album with The Guess Who, each group on a side. Townsmen release "He's in Town", Dueces, now known as The Heart) release "Treat Me Bad", both fair sized hits countrywide. By fall, Staccato's release "Catch the Love Parade", 5D release "Running Around in Circles" and "Get Out Of My Life Woman". MG & The Escourts, actually a Montreal Group who played here about every 2nd weekend and were given a sort of token local status, released "Next to Nowhere", a big eastern-Canada hit and "Remembering". "**3's a Crowd**" moved to Ottawa as a folk group, reformed here as folk-rock, release album in Dec. '68 (**produced by Mama Cass of The Mama's and Papa's fame**). 1st single "Bird Without Wings" (**1st recorded Bruce Cockburn song**), followed by "Let's Get Together". For some reason, the group and album became monster hits in Japan, and for a while they had a TV show. There were a couple of line-up changes, with **Bruce Cockburn and Colleen Peterson joining others like David Wiffen and Richard Patterson, and Ken Kobler**, who had been in **Buffalo Springfield**, was on bass.

This was actually the peak period of the Ottawa music scene (or just past it). Through '68-69, the scene changed quite a bit. The clubs and dances solely started charging more as they couldn't afford the groups. In '67, high schools put a \$300 top price for groups for dances at a time when **the Staccato's were making \$1500 a night**. With fewer places to play, groups began to breakup. **Sir John A Records**, which had been the home of most groups folded, and the mainstream labels, Capitol, Columbia, and RCA, were too tied up in Toronto and Montreal and didn't seem overly interested in this area. Through late '67 & '68, the scene still held with records by groups such as Eyes of Dawn ("Little Big Girl") and "Freeloader". But much of the music was listener-oriented rather than for dances, with crowds heading to Hull, and the newer groups weren't as good as **The Staccato's (who had moved to L.A. and became THE FIVE MAN ELECTRICAL BAND with their giant North American hit "SIGNS"**, or **The Esquires** and **The Townsmen** had been. Ottawa's heyday had passed, although there were still some reasonably good records by **MRQ** (old members of Esquires). Heart continued and a newer group, A Mythical Meadow, who had a big hit in late '68 with "You've Got That Lovin' Look", written for them by The Staccato's and later in '69 with "The Day Has Come" and "Oh Darling". The last groups to gain much prominence were **Canada Goose** by 1970 (former members of **Esquires, Townsmen. 3's a Crowd**) who had a good sized hit with ("Higher & Higher"), **The Cooper Brothers, James Leroy and Denim, Octavian and Bard and Rude** who got going in the early 70's, but it just wasn't the same anymore.

Above originally provided by Trevor Hutchison.

More by Alan Chrisman: [Beatlely](#)