



BRYAN ADAMS

**THE NEWCANADIAN
SPEAKS WITH THE
HOME GROWN ROCKER**

Craig Silverman

He's the British Columbian kid who turned into a global rock star, the dirty blonde we'll always remember wearing a flannel shirt and jean jacket, collar up. Bryan Adams and his no-frills rock have spawned numerous number one singles and albums around the globe. He now makes his home in England and tours the world with a band that is made up of many of the same guys from his earlier albums. In recent years, he has taken up photography, and just released his 14th full-length album, *Room Service*.

The NewCanadian caught up with Adams via e-mail and discovered he still dreams of Canada, avoids Tim Hortons like the plague and wants to set the record straight about "Summer of '69."

Where are you right now and what is your dominant emotion?

I'm in Switzerland and the dominant emotion is getting ready to rock out tonight.

Imagine you are sitting in front of the Bryan Adams who has just released his self-titled debut album in 1980. What do you want to tell him?

I'd tell him not to sleep with Pam from Pittsburgh. No seriously, I'd say, "Get ready, because the next 20 years are gonna be an amazing ride."

Which one musician would you most like to play a duet with?

I've been thinking about that lately, as I'd like to do another duet for my acoustic album next year. I'm thinking older rocker—I don't know exactly.

Whom would you most like to photograph?

David Bowie.

Favourite guitar?

My 1960 cherry red Fender Stratocaster.

Favourite camera?

1959 Rolleiflex 2.8.

If you could never touch one of them again, which would you discard?

The camera, unfortunately...

What made you take up photography?

I used to carry a camera on tour in the early days. My band members asked me to destroy some of the photos, as they were road snaps of us carrying on in buses and hotels, which I stupidly did! Lads on the road... Then I got interested again around the end of the 90s and pulled out my old Rolleiflex, bought a Leica and started doing more photos of the studio and road, which ended up on the sleeves of my records.

What was the first song you learned to play on the guitar?

House of the Rising Sun.

What was the first album you heard that blew you away?

Everything I heard blew me away! *Revolver* (The Beatles) was one.

You recently took a portrait of the Queen of England that has made its way onto a postage stamp in Canada. For someone

who has toured the world and has had so many hit singles and albums, was this an intimidating experience for you?

Yes, of course it was. It was a very nice experience and the results were amazing.

Your new album is called *Room Service*. Since you have spent a lot of time in hotels, what is your favourite thing to order from room service?

Fries.

What comes first to your mind when you think of Canada?

A weekend up in Georgian Bay.

Is there something you always must do (eat a particular food, see someone, visit somewhere, etc.) when you come back to Canada?

I have to make sure I don't eat any Tim Hortons, no matter how many corners they put them on.

You now spend much of your time in England when not on tour. Do you still feel like a Canadian?

What a question! Do you ask Gretzky if he still feels Canadian just because he lives in L.A.? Gimme a break!





At a recent concert at Wembley, you dedicated one of your songs to the British troops in Iraq. Do you consider yourself to be a politically engaged person? And what is your opinion of the current state of the world?

I consider myself a humanist. I did the dedication because it was the day the U.K. decided to send the Black Watch in to cover for the U.S. troops—and sure enough some of them died. I'm sure there were people at our shows who had family or friends there, [and] it felt like the right thing to do. As far as what I think about the world? You have to be the change you want to see.

I remember seeing a TV interview with you when you said your manager once told you that you were one of the great writers and singers of love songs...

I don't remember that.

...what makes a great love song and how, if at all, is that different from what makes a great love?

I wish I knew the answer to that question. I can only say that, once in a while, a good melody and a good lyric collide, [and] the same goes for two different people.

Are you still a vegan? If so, is that an ethical choice, health choice or both?

Yes I'm vegetarian and the choice was simple: I love animals, so I don't eat them!

Is it tough to be a vegan in England, which is known for its meat-heavy cuisine?

Not at all. It's actually tougher in North America, unless you are in a major city, in which case it's no problem.

Are you still a jeans and T-shirt kind of guy? Or did the fashion-forward video for *The Only Thing That Looks Good on Me Is You* have an effect on your style?

You can take the hoser out of Canada, but you can't take...

In some of your early videos and promo shots, you wore a leather jacket and a red-and-black checkered flannel lumberjack shirt. Do you still own those items of clothing? Would you wear them today?

I've got all of the ones that mattered from videos, etc., and I suppose I could wear them today... but it would be sort of sad if I had to resort to wearing the same manky shirt 20 years on.

What is the best thing you ever did for yourself?

Listened to my instincts.

What person have you met that impressed you the most and why?

It would have to be this doctor I met in Romania who runs a hospital for children suffering from AIDS. He has devoted his life to helping these kids, who were infected through inoculation during the Ceausescu regime. I was taken there by one of the envoys from the Canadian Embassy back in the 90s and I have since introduced a few key people to help him out, including the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Did you write the songs for this new album over a long period of time, or did they come in a concentrated period?

That's interesting you should ask that because I thought I had the album at one point and then a whole flurry of new songs started happening. It was amazing. *Open Road* and *Room Service* both happened at a similar time—that changed the face of the album.

Would you say there is an overarching theme to this album?

Maybe. Freedom, nostalgia, empty roads and empty hotels, trying to locate the missing cord!

Your song "Summer of '69" is a nostalgic look back at a classic young summer experience. Is there a summer in your life that is your "summer of '69" and why?

Well let's set the record straight here. "Summer of '69" is not about 1969. It's, like you say, about summer love. My summer was probably 1978, living in Vancouver on Kits Point.

What one word would you use to describe your life so far?

Blessed.