

# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## anatomy of a label

### murderecords

By Melissa Buote

Murderecords was formed in 1992 by Halifax's premiere pop band, Sloan, back in the days when they could not find a place to put out their own records. Not only could they call this label home, but they also released recordings of their friends, who today include Jale, the Super Friendz, Thrush Hermit and the Local Rabbits.

"Right around the time Sloan saw no one interested in them, everyone became interested and they signed with Geffen," wrote Colin MacKenzie in an interview conducted over e-mail, "Geffen said it would be ok to put out an EP on Murderecords if they really wanted to." And so, Murder was born with the release of the *Peppermint EP*.

The label was named by band member Andrew Scott. Why Murder? Who knows? Chris Murphy designed the logo, insinuating that "murder" stood for a murder of crows. Clever. At least now they don't look like maniacs.

Run by Colin MacKenzie (Managing Director), Chip Sutherland (Business Manager as well as Sloan's manager and lawyer) and the members of Sloan, this label has everything going for it. The men in Sloan have become well rounded entrepreneurs according to MacKenzie. "Jay [Ferguson] and Chris [Murphy] spent a year doing

grunt work, art, stuffing letters, etc., as well as keeping a keen ear out for good sounds. Andrew Scott is our man in Toronto, and Patrick [Pentland] helps with our news letter and spends a great deal of time writing songs."



Murderecords is touted as having a definitive East Coast sound with the melodic pop of all of the bands that make up the label. Until recently, the entirety of the roster was made up of Halifax bands, but Murder has branched out by signing the bluesy Local Rabbits from Montreal and licensing some albums from Chicago's Flydaddy Records. Murphy and Ferguson have the last word on who gets signed onto Murder, but the entire management team must come to a consensus.

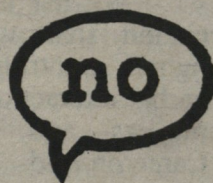
"There is no sound, but we know it when we hear it. We are not going crazy looking for new acts, what we are doing now is concentrating on the music that is being made

by the Super Friendz, Local Rabbits, Sloan and a few 7" projects."

Universal Music, also known as MCA, manufactures and distributes most of Murderecords' music, so this label is not one of the many trendy Canadian independent or "indie" labels. What they have is a 'P&D Deal' or production and distribution deal. "The system has different levels, one level is 7" and 12" vinyl and cassettes we feel like putting out -- this we do all on our own. Then there is level 2. This is the P&D deal. Level 3 is if they decide they really think a CD will do well, then they put a little more work into it than just a P&D deal."

Five years after the creation of Murderecords, things have definitely changed, yet are somewhat the same. Sloan have had and finished a major label deal in the States, and are back onto releasing their albums on Murder. *One Chord To Another* has become Murder's and Sloan's best selling release after going gold in November of '96. Murderecords is still helping out East Coast talent and developing and promoting musicians and music.

Next Week:



Various Artists  
*Big Shiny Tunes*  
Muchmusic

Are you looking for a mixed CD alternative to dance and techno? Look no further because it's Muchmusic's *Big Shiny Tunes* to the rescue. This compilation features eighteen fairly recent songs from artists such as I Mother Earth, Sloan, No Doubt and Moist. You name a hot group of today and they are probably on this album. Before I listened to this CD, I had seen ads on television and I was very interested to see what it was like. A lot of the bands I had never heard of before, such as Limblifter who sings "Tinfoil" and Poe who does "Angry Johnny". They are really good. The only negative factor of this album is that "Sweet Dreams" by Marilyn Manson, whom I do not like for obvious reasons, is on it. Almost everything on this album is stuff that normally would not get played on Q93, so it's cool to have. The songs are mostly a blend of rock and alternative (whatever that is). I suppose that if you really wanted to dance to this stuff you could, but if you are looking for Electric Circus material, try *Dance Mix '96*.

Rating: \*\*\*\*  
By Emilie Adams



*The Courage to Be Yourself Journal*  
By Sue Patton Thoele  
(Conari Press/Raincoast)

Journal writing is often the best way for individuals to attend to ideas, thoughts, and feelings that many times go repressed and unexplored.

This journal, a companion to the national best-seller, *The Courage to Be Yourself*, offers encouragement to women through quotes from the book, as well as lessons and exercises. It is a good concept if used in conjunction with the book, but alone it relies on the effort and openness of the writer. A journal is only as effective and helpful as the writer is at channelling her thoughts to paper. Journal writing does not require a fancy book with elaborate quotes. Still, this does make a nice gift idea.  
K. Heatherington