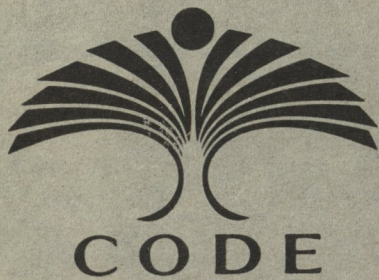
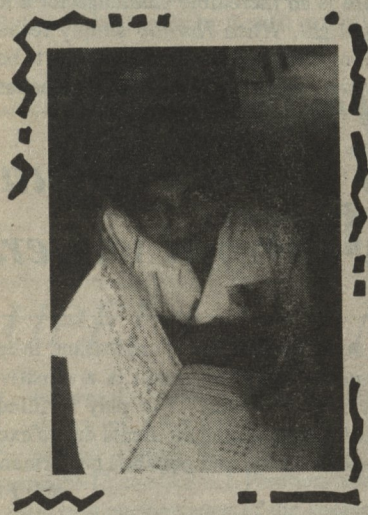


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The Way Things Are Going

The X-Press interviews Jann Arden
by Darcel C. Kirvan

DRESSED IN FADED BLACK JEANS, A white t-shirt and a black jean jacket, Jann Arden looks like the girl next door, except for her electric blue guitar case. But looks can be deceiving.

Like most girls next door, Arden, 31, is friendly and down-to-earth. What distinguishes her is her dry wit and her unique record deal. *Time for Mercy*, her debut album, is a joint effort between A&M Canada and A&M America. The two companies share in Arden's promotion which allows her to remain a "domestic" artist in Canada, while being guaranteed support in the states.

Inspired by the music of the Carpenters, Petula Clark and Abba, Arden says her music "is running down the road of pop." Her hit songs include "Will You Remember Me," "I Would Die for You" and the new release "I'm Not Your Lover."

Arden, a Calgary native, began writing songs and playing the guitar when she was 15. Like most singer/songwriters, Arden sang in lounges and restaurants (as a singing waitress) before being "discovered."

"I even played trumpet in a band for a while, if you can believe that. But it ruined my lipstick, so I quit," she said laughing.

Arden is still adjusting to her new found recognition. When she gets noticed on the street, "I always think 'who are they looking at?' Then I think, 'oh my God, I think they're looking at me.'"

"The thing about being a new artist," she said, "is that people hear the songs but they don't know who it is. They can't put a name and a song together. It just takes a long time."

When writing music, Arden requires complete silence, white paper and black ink.

"If I'm really desperate I'll use a ball point...but I'll transfer it later and I'll crumple that up and throw it away. It's not superstitious. I just like the feel of a good pen."

And when creating lyrics, "I just sit down

and mumble," she said. "I'm mumbling my way through things all the time. It's like this barbaric, guttural prehistoric process. And then I'm always thinking 'where the hell have I heard this before? Oh great I just wrote this last week.'" While she is humorous in person, Arden's music tends to deal with the serious side of life.

"I think it's just about balance," she said. "I think I have to have a serious outlet. I mean I tend to joke around so much, it's almost a defence mechanism to all the shyness and you know, like anybody, I just want people to like me."

Most of Arden's songs deal with love, because she believes that love is "the quest of humanity." But contrary to popular belief, her first release, "Will You Remember Me" is not a love song.

"I wrote it as my obituary...I thought I was not going to see the light of day. You know when you feel so sick...This is what I want to leave behind, so people know that I tried to do the right things."

Being remembered as a good person is far more important to Arden than being remembered for her music. "It's not who you are, it's how you treat people."

"I can't say that I know this is exactly what I want to do for the rest of my life," she said. "People always wait for these bells to go off, 'this is it.' I don't think that happens. I think people are more diverse than that...I think you have to keep moving."

