

## Flashing lights turn on in five-week concert tour

By Sean Smith  
Source: *excalibur*



Flashing Light, Matt Murphy

TORONTO (CUP) - "Yeah, I'm in the bathtub," admits singer, guitarist and musical wonder Matt Murphy of the Flashing Lights, purveyors of some of the finest pop music this town has to offer. "I hope you don't mind."

As Murphy speaks, the gentle splish, splash of the water around him only reminds me of the fact that he is freshening up for the five weeks his band will be on the road.

The Front Man War tour was supposed to be a send-off for Thrush Hermit, who were to call it quits at the end of the last show.

However, a high white blood cell count in the veins of their lead singer Joel

Haskett forced Thrush Hermit to stay at home. The Front Man War ended up being a one-two attack with the Flashing Lights and Montreal's Local Rabbits.

"Thrush Hermit, Jale, Hardship Post and the Inbreds were all friends of mine who started in the same place and at the same time," says Murphy, pondering the list of bands from the Murderecord's roster who have all broken up over the past few years.

"It makes you think about where you are in respect to them. It's too bad really. It's lonely when someone in your neck of the woods calls it quits."

Murphy is no stranger to breaking up. His former band, the

Super Friendz, called it quits in 1997 after releasing two long players and an EP to critical acclaim.

The move from the Super Friendz to the Flashing Lights was a smooth transition, according to Murphy, as the Lights picked up where the Super Friendz left off.

As with Super Friendz, the Flashing Lights rely heavily on Murphy, whose penchant for straight up rock and roll which borrows from the best traditions of the last three decades, remains unchanged.

The group recently released *Where the Change Is*, an album plump as the ripest fruit with sweet pop tunes that are as melodically catchy as they are lyrically. While his hooks are simple, Murphy has no fear of walking the fine line between ripe and rotten when pushing for all the sweetness his songs can handle.

"I try to make my songs sound as trite as possible," states Murphy bluntly. "There are a few on the record that are just throw-aways but I wasn't afraid to make them really gooey. If you are going to write a pop song, you might as well

make them as catchy and simple as can be.

"The kind of music I want to make changes all the time," he adds. "It has to be melodic for one. Not a lot of things I am hearing these days is really inspiring me. I heard the new Beck single and it was really predictable and almost cliché even for him. My instinct is to go for more sparser."

Simpler might be a better word for the Flashing Lights, although Murphy confesses to be currently enjoying a binge of more complex recordings including Brian Eno records.

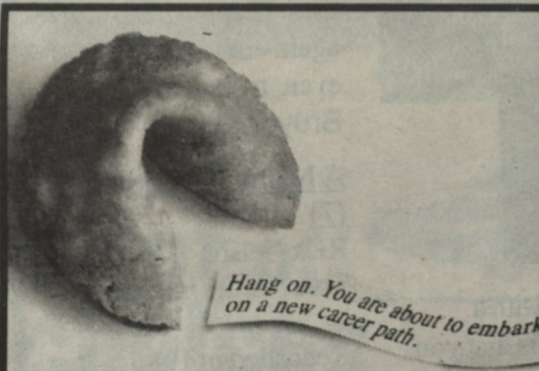
"Any one who's heard *Where the Change Is* will find this funny, but there's

a million things you can do with your record," he says. "You don't have to have freaky sounds on it, or some prominent Moog bit. The bass-drums-guitar combo isn't the be all and end all of rock music but there's so much you can do within that combo."

On that note, Murphy pulls the plug on the interview and the tub simultaneously.

With a new album to brag about, *High School*, the band's second single in rotation at Much Music and with a fresh new scent, at least for the moment, Matt Murphy prepares to hit the road.

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