

S.L.O.A.N.

Sloan is, without a doubt, the flagship pop band of the Maritimes. Since 1992 this band has been releasing quality albums on both DGC (Geffen Records) and their own label, Murderecords, which MCA distributes in Canada.

The band consists of Jay Ferguson and Patrick Pentland on guitars, Andrew Scott on percussion and Chris Murphy on bass. During Halifax On Music, the East Coast's big festival celebrating the thriving Canadian music scene, I had the chance to talk to Murphy about the direction the band has taken with their new album among other things.

Sloan gained fame back in 1992 when they released their first LP, *Smeared* with the undeniably catchy single "Underwhelmed" which catapulted them into fame. *Smeared* was followed up two years later by the critically acclaimed, yet commercially unsuccessful *Twice Removed*.

Upon the release of their first album, fans much ballyhooed Sloan as the Nirvana of the North, with references to Halifax as the Seattle of the East. *Twice Removed* saw a cleaner recording with a more classic feel -- a radical, and unexpected change which did not seem to please their label or their fans. Word of DGC's discontent with the band ran rampant through the Internet and Canadian press along with rumours that the band was going to break up. Although the band did take a hiatus, they returned to the scene at the close of 1995 with news that they would record another album -- *One Chord to Another* -- which has been well lauded with both critical and commercial praise since its release in June of this year.

In the past, Sloan has had slickly produced albums, but with their latest effort, the production was scrappier to the point of the drums being recorded on a 4-track cassette player. "We could have done it higher quality, but we just went for a certain recording. We wanted our recording to have a character," said Murphy about *One Chord to Another*. The addition of horns and other instrumentation onto this album has definitely broadened the pallet of the band. Although there is still a change in their sound from the previous releases the change is "a bit more linear. [Murphy] can tell that this is the same band."



The switch in style between the first and second record was obviously radical, and although OCTA doesn't have such a dramatic change in style, Murphy wishes to "continue to be radical [because] part of wanting to be the best is broadening [your] musical pallet a bit."

Since their beginnings, Sloan has frequently been compared to the Beatles, what with their four handsome members, poppy melodies (especially songs like 'Coax Me' and 'Autobiography', which are obviously Beatles influenced) and mass appeal. Probably the biggest similarity between the two bands is that fans tend always to have a favourite member and/or song writer. "Everybody in the band is important. The perfect band

would be where everybody in the band had twenty-five percent of the fans. If it were always just [one member] or something, then the band wouldn't be equal and [he] should just step back or something." Murphy's sentiment of band equality is a fair one, but when asked if he seeks attention admitted that he thrives on it and likes to be in front playing the bass although he is a prolific drummer.

Accessibility to their fans has always been easy for the members of Sloan as the address and phone number for their company, Murderecords, is readily available to anyone to write them or purchase any of the albums on this label. However, with the rabid breed of fans that seems to surround the band, one would wonder if their accessibility proves to be problematic. According to Murphy, accessibility is important and he doesn't mind it too much, but there is a limit and "people calling [him] at home and stuff" is completely unappreciated. The fact that he and his bandmates are currently in the limelight also makes them fodder for rumours and innuendo regarding their personal lives. "Sometimes [the invasion of privacy] drives [Murphy] nuts, but [he has] a pretty long fuse."

"When I look at these records [*Smeared*, *Twice Removed*, and *One Chord to Another*] side by side, it's so exciting, and I feel like my own favourite band. I can't wait until there are ten of them. I think it would look just cool," said Murphy about the work that the band has already done. Thousands of fans would echo this sentiment in a second, and thousands more are waiting for the next seven records.

SLOAN

One Chord To Another

(Murderecords/MCA)

Would you please, welcome to the page...SLOAN! It is true that *One Chord To Another*, the latest album from Halifax's flagship pop band Sloan, is not exactly new to stores or to avid MuchMusic watchers. The album was released on June 21, of this year, on Sloan's own label Murderecords. Almost immediately the first single "The Good In Everyone" received superhit video status and reached number 5 on the nation's music station's hit parade. With the increased exposure came an increasing amount of popularity that the band has never seen.

One Chord To Another certainly lives up to the hype and should no doubt deserve a mention as one of the best albums of the year. With all four members of the band taking turns writing and singing, each song becomes increasingly fresh in terms of the whole album. While Chris Murphy

(bass) delivers 5 songs to the 12 track album, Patrick Pentland (guitar) weighs in with 3 songs, including the first two singles. Jay Ferguson (guitar) and Andrew Scott (drums) each add 2 songs.

The album takes a jab at the recent retro craze that has sprung up in the past few years.

The song "The Lines You Amend", for example, uses an obvious CCR ripoff, most likely in jest.

From the 4 track recording style for the drums, to the stereo guitar production, Sloan has taken the best recording techniques of the late 60's and early 70's and put them into the context of a very obvious 90's sound. Such songs as "Autobiography" and "Anyone Who's Anyone" are somewhat reminiscent of the early Brit Pop invasions, but other tracks like "Take The Bench" and "Everything You've Done Wrong" see the band exploring other regions and times to form something that has rarely been done with such pop sensibility; the horns certainly help these two songs as well.

One thing that has made

