

Lovin' the solo life—for now

Andre Ethier

With Greg Keelor and the Sadies
Saturday, 28 October at 8pm
The Powerplant

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Staff

You may not have heard of Andre Ethier, but the Toronto-based singer/songwriter has been a powerful ace-in-the-sleeve in the Canadian music scene for more than a decade. Having tasted modest but lasting success as the front man of Polaris Prize-nominated The Deadly Snakes, Ethier is now quietly building up critical praise of his own with the release of his second solo album, *Secondathallum*.

Right now, the stakes are much higher for Ethier than with his prior solo endeavor—2004's exhaustingly titled *Andre Ethier with Christopher Sandes Featuring Pickles and Price*—mainly because he doesn't have The Deadly Snakes to fall back on anymore. This year marks the end of the band after ten years of spitting out messy garage rock, a far bigger lifespan than the average band, but surprisingly, it's a passing that Ethier will not mark with sadness. Not even a Polaris Music Prize nomination could keep the weary band together.

"We're not swayed by prizes," Ethier laughs. "Everyone was just trying to grow in different directions. Just the idea of trying to pull together a band that had been formed when we were 18 and 19 years old seemed a little unrealistic at this point. It's fine with me, though; it's not like I don't see those guys anymore. I see them all the time ... it just won't be us doing any shows. It's not strange, it's good."

This lack of sadness and regret is surprising, especially given the length of The Deadly Snake's career, but Ethier appears to be in a different songwriting mindset now.

"I think it's really important, and exciting and fun to write with other



people and have that camaraderie," Ethier continues. "But [a Solo career is] a whole other world where you become in touch more and more with what you're able to do yourself."

Not having the pressure of a band on your back is especially handy for Ethier. He can write about what's most important to him, which in this case happens to be his recent marriage.

"It's nice to not be at the whims of a band that wants to tour," Ethier says. "I'm going out right now, but I chose that myself, it wasn't like everyone decided that they want to tour and I'm forced to go along. I'd rather have

[this], where I can pick and choose when I feel like doing anything or not doing anything."

Reinforced by having a Mrs Andre Ethier waiting back home, Andre seems quite content to remain a solo act for as long as he keeps creating music—not that it would be difficult to quickly put together a band, though, if he felt the need to.

"I think I'd like to do more and more things without bands," Ethier states. "[Solo]'s kind of where I'm at right now. Whenever I need musicians, I can always throw a pickup band together, and yeah, it's good."

Gladiators, I'm still a slave for you



ROBB MYROON

It's happened to all of us at one time or another: you're flipping randomly through the numerous TV channels late at night and you stumble along a gem; one of the greatest shows of all time. The satisfaction and delight are indescribable, but all the way through, you're haunted by the fact that this feeling will drift away when the hour is up. That's right, I'm talking about *American Gladiators*—and why this show doesn't exist anymore is beyond me.

Let's put this in perspective for a moment. Take, for example, the immense popularity of *The Price is Right*. Don't you think more people would watch it if, when the contestant came running down the aisle, Bob Barker jumped out of the third row and absolutely levelled them with a hit that would impress Chuck Norris? Clearly the answer yes, which demonstrates why *American Gladiators* should be brought back on the air.

The show lasted for seven seasons, mainly through the early 1990s,

crowned seven male and female champions, and was even taped in various international countries. It seemed like the perfect show, a reality that many of us dream about when we see that cocky jock walking around with a stick so far up his ass we can see his prostate hanging out. I have to admit I got a strong feeling of contentment when I saw some arrogant cretin bulldozed by Nitro as he went for the middle cylinder in Powerball.

Massive collisions, ripped competitors and crazy games; it's all over the TV these days, except not all at once. *American Gladiators* had it all, and then some.

Huge collisions aside, there are many more reasons to love the gladiators. They were more than just a source of entertainment; they were role models for both sexes. Lower-intelligence guys could see how ripped they could actually get if they started taking steroids, while the smarter ones suddenly understood

why school was so important in obtaining a stable career. The girls, on the other hand, felt beautiful no matter how ugly or fat they normally thought they were, just as soon as they saw the sickening ripples of muscles on Zap and Jazz.

But let's get to the point: perhaps *American Gladiators* was more than a brute-force battle between severely mismatched contenders. In fact, it was much more than that, and you know it. Even though every event was important to the score, it always came down to the Eliminator, the final event, where the first person across the line won, bar none. Yes, it was a true metaphor for life, where each of our daily tasks counts, but in the end, what truly matters is the end result. Or maybe we all just love watching Turbo beat the crap out of some random guy with a giant Q-tip.

Massive collisions, ripped competitors and crazy games; it's all over the TV these days, except not all at once. *American Gladiators* had it all, and then some. They served quiet justice to all the conceited losers out there and were our role models for a variety of reasons. I say bring them back, sign up some contestants and let me get back to loving a show that should have never gone off the air. I'll still watch *The Price is Right*, though, just in case a third-row ambush is waiting.

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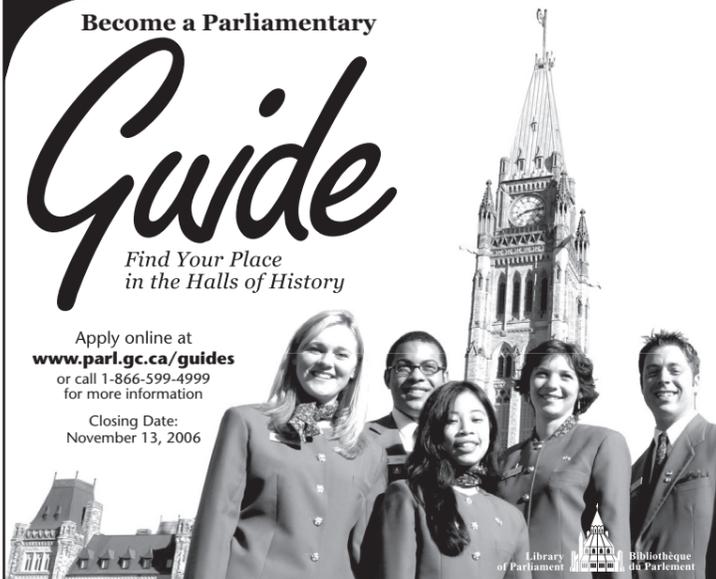
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