

# Local Music

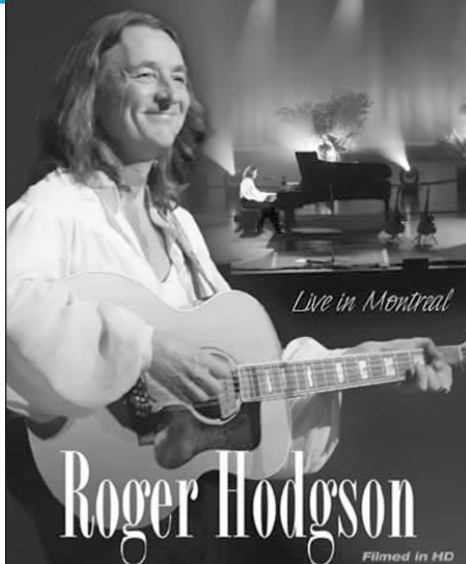
BY KEVIN KELLY

CD REVIEWS, MUSICIAN PROFILES AND MORE



## EVEN IN THE QUIETEST MOMENTS

### Take The Long Way Home



Songwriting legend Roger Hodgson brings his signature voice and intimate show to Newfoundland shores.

**A**s a co-founder of 1970's English rock supergroup Supertramp, Roger Hodgson was responsible for writing some of the greatest rock and roll songs from that era.

From *Give A Little Bit* to *The Logical Song* to *Take The Long Way Home*, *Dreamer* and *School* among others, Supertramp sold over 60 million albums while Hodgson was with the band. Two of those albums, *Crime of The Century* and *Breakfast In America*, eventually sold over a million copies in Canada alone.

Hodgson left Supertramp in 1983 after the album, *Famous Last Words*, focusing on his family, his spirit, working at his own pace. After releasing two solo albums, 1984's *In The Eye of The Storm* and 1987's *Hai Hai*, Hodgson was out of the spotlight, mostly. He continued to release albums, but didn't tour much to support them.

But it didn't mean his songs were out of the spotlight, however. In May 2005, Hodgson was honored by ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers)



**“He has a very unique voice and I think he’ll go wherever he wants to go to.”**

— Hodgson on *Idol* Craig Sharpe

in recognition of his song *Give A Little Bit* being one of the most played songs in 2005, thanks to a recent hit cover version by the Goo Goo Dolls.

Hodgson will take to the stage solo at Mile One Centre on Nov. 6 to bring his music to local fans. It’s his first cross-Canada tour in 23 years and he promises an intimate evening of music. He recently released a platinum-selling DVD, *Take The Long Way Home: Live in Montreal* which gives a little preview of what to expect.

Whether playing keyboard, guitar, or piano, the songs are intimate in their performance, just his unique voice and at the most, one or two accompanying instruments. The songs are at their core element.

*The Herald* recently had the chance to speak with Hodgson about songwriting, his career and working with the *Canadian Idols* this season, including Newfoundland’s Craig Sharpe.

“You can see the feeling that is created when these songs are stripped down to the way they sounded when I wrote them,” Hodgson states about people’s reaction to his live show. “There’s a certain magic that happens for people when they hear them in that form. I love the intimacy of the solo shows.”

He says he feels “right at home” on stage.

“I’m having a whole new love affair with these songs again,” he says. “I’m finding that I love these songs more than ever.”

He says that even with the fact it’s been quite a number of years since these hits have been written, people still love and enjoy them.

“I’m just really amazed how they’ve stood the test of time so well,” Hodgson states. “For me, as the guy who sings them, that’s even more amazing. I never get tired of them. When I get on stage, I want to give it my best.”

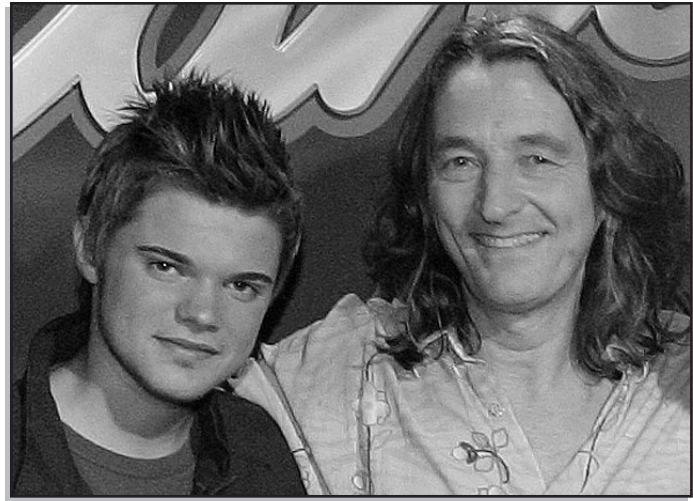
#### A SHARPE VOICE

Recently, a whole new generation experienced Hodgson’s music when he mentored on the popular TV show *Canadian Idol* along with Dennis DeYoung, known for his work with Styx. Hodgson really liked mentoring to the young *Idols*.

“I felt very much like a protective, proud parent,” he states of working with the *Idol* contestants. He says the Top 7 that he worked with were a fabulous group of individuals including a certain young Newfoundlander, Sharpe.

“My heart went out to him,” he says of the Upper Island Cove native. “He may be very, very young, but I know why he did so well. He has a voice with a lot of character to it and I was so proud. He

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has a very unique voice and I think he’ll go wherever he really wants to set his mind to.”

#### SONGWRITING 101

Hodgson approaches songwriting in a unique way. He mentions to *The Herald* that it is very much a process.

“Each song is very different,” he states of his approach to songwriting. “A song like *Dreamer* literally exploded out of me one day, lyrics and everything. It must have been the mood I was in. I grabbed the tape recorder and put it down, started arranging it, putting harmonies in. It was very quick.”

But despite that example, there is a usual formula to Hodgson’s songwriting.

“In general, when a song comes to me, it is a three to four week process,” he states. “I liken it to a brief love affair, when a new melody just grabs a hold of me and goes round and round in my head the whole time. It has that consuming quality to it, like falling in love.”

After he left Supertramp in 1983, Hodgson admits it was a little difficult being out of the group dynamic.

“I was 14 years with the band,” he says of his old mates. “It was an incredible adventure and learning experience. I learned a lot about myself, and human nature, and the highs and lows of both adulation and criticism.”

Having experienced the ups and downs of fame, he’s reflective of his accomplishments. “There’s a lot of pitfalls when it comes to fame and success,” Hodgson says. “There’s not a handbook that they give out, and you have to navigate those waters yourself. Your whole external world changes dramatically.”

One of his songs is called *Time Waits For No One*, and it’s a good philosophy on Hodgson’s career and the changes in his life over the years. However, the songs that Roger Hodgson creates leaves an indelible mark on the listener and makes us all *give a little bit* more in our lives. Maybe that’s why fans connect to his sound so well. ▲

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