

Portrait of a talented songwriter



Colin Hunter
Within earshot

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Imagine ambling into a dimly lit hotel bar in a city you've never visited before. You order a stiff drink and flop into some tattered velvety chair in the corner. You're bored, alone and in an unfamiliar place.

Just this one drink, you tell yourself, before you retire to the lumpy bed in your room and try to drift off amid the glow of infomercials. But then you hear some pretty piano chords coming across the room, and you look over to see a young man with shaggy blond hair tapping out a tune.

It's soft, melancholic music that barely breaks through the din of boozy conversations, but it still grabs your full attention. "I've played it cool, called it smart," the musician sings. "Been untrue, I know I've broken someone's heart."

You wander over, drop some bucks in the tip jar on the piano lid and settle back in your chair to listen all night.

This scenario is entirely fictional. It's what my wandering imagination concocted as I listened to the new album by local singer-songwriter Allister Bradley.

Whether Bradley has ever played a hotel bar for tips, I haven't got a clue. But it certainly wouldn't surprise me.

You know the Billy Joel song *Piano Man*? If it weren't about Billy himself, it could easily work as a biography of Allister Bradley.

This new album is Bradley's second — somewhat punningly titled *Too* — and it is a portrait of a sensitive, talented songwriter who has clearly been influenced by the likes of Joel, Sting, Elton John and the rest.

Though the album begins shakily with the so-so sad song *Not Today*, it gains momentum with the standout track *Me*



and the Ghosts of St. Andrews.

By momentum, however, I don't mean excitement. This is a low-key album full of love songs and crying-by-the-window-on-a-rainy-day laments.

At times it teeters perilously close to muzak, but is saved from that by the nice interplay of piano with guitars, drums and surprisingly pleasant doses of accordion. Bradley's style of music is certainly not for every occasion, though if you're planning a quiet introspective evening at home — or in a hotel bar — it would make for a fitting soundtrack.

Check out Bradley's CD release concert at May 29, 8 p.m. at The Gig Theatre. Tim Louis and Bunmi Adeoye open. Tickets are \$20 at the door.

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Are you in a local band with a new CD release? To have it considered for a review, please drop it off at The Record's reception to the attention of Colin Hunter, or mail it to his attention c/o The Record, 160 King St. E., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4E5.

Selected CD releases this week

The Canadian Press

- 3 Doors Down — *3 Doors Down*
- Aerosmith — *Greatest Hits 1973-1988*
- Alien Ant Farm — *Best of Alien Ant Farm*
- The Band of Heathens — *The Band of Heathens*
- Regina Belle — *Love Forever Shines*
- Jason Blaine — *Make My Move*
- The Byrds — *The Very Best of The Byrds*
- Cam'Ron — *Public Enemy No. 1*
- Carolina Liar — *Coming to Terms*
- Common — *Time Travelin'*
- Miles Davis — *Kind of Blue*
- Dokken — *Lightning Strikes Again*
- The Dresden Dolls — *No, Virginia*
- Foxboro Hot Tubs — *Stop Drop and Roll*
- Johnny Hallyday — *Live at the Montreux 1988*
- Julianne Hough — *Julianne Hough*
- Scarlett Johansson — *Anywhere I Lay My Head*
- Janis Joplin — *Greatest Hits*
- William Joseph — *Beyond*
- Kenny G — *Songbird: The Ultimate Collection*
- Travis Kidd — *Midamerica*
- Jesse McCartney — *Departure*
- Joy Division — *The Best of Joy Division*
- Mudhoney — *Lucky Ones*
- OutKast — *Big Boi and Dre Present... Outkast*
- Ozzy Osbourne — *The OZZman Cometh*
- Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers — *Greatest Hits*
- The Pussycat Dolls — *When I Grow Up*
- Sam Roberts — *Love at the End of the World*
- Rod Stewart — *Still The Same . . . Great Rock Classics of Our Time*
- Donna Summer — *Crayons*



TOP 30 MUSIC VIDEOS

W/O LW	TW	ARTIST	TITLE	W/O LW	TW	ARTIST	TITLE
11	4	Jordin Sparks f. Chris Brown	No Air	12	11	Panic! At The Disco	Nine In The Afternoon
12	3	Flo Rida f. Timbaland	Elevator	2	24	Kardinal Offishall f. Akon	Dangerous
11	1	Mariah Carey	Touch My Body	4	21	Kanye West f. Chris Martin	Homecoming
6	9	Madonna f. Justin Timberlake	4 Minutes	4	22	Theory Of A Deadman ©	So Happy
9	6	Britney Spears	Break The Ice	5	23	Ray J. f. Yung Berg	Sexy Can I
13	7	Faber Drive ©	When I'm With You	3	25	Girlicious	Like Me
6	10	Usher f. Young Jeezy	Love In This Club	15	12	Miley Cyrus	Start All Over
11	8	Sum 41 ©	With Me	15	16	Feist	I Feel It All
16	2	OneRepublic	Stop And Stare	1	29	Mariah Carey	Bye Bye
6	13	Hedley ©	Never Too Late	2	28	Protest The Hero ©	Sequoia Throne
5	14	Leona Lewis	Bleeding Love	1	30	Metro Station	Shake It
7	15	Lil' Wayne f. Static	Lollipop	NEW	--	Coldplay	Violet Hill
15	5	Jonas Brothers	When You Look Me In The Eyes	8	20	Sara Bareilles	Love Song
6	17	Simple Plan ©	Your Love Is A Lie	NEW	--		Cancer Bats © Hail Destroyer
3	19	Rihanna	Take A Bow				
4	18	Sam Roberts ©	Them Kids				

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