

# Buck 65 is keeping secrets

From the East Coast to Paris, hip-hop goes on record

East coast rapper Buck 65 is set to tear up the radio waves once again.

If this comes as a surprise to you, now you know how his record label felt.

Buck 65 a.k.a. Rich Terfry produced his latest album secretly, without telling his label or even getting any money from them.

"When I rolled into Toronto a few months back for the MuchMusic Video Awards, I saw a couple of my label guys and said, 'Hey, give this a listen,'" Buck says to chartattack.com.

"I handed them a CD and they're like, 'What is it?' 'Ahh, it's a new record.'

"So, I didn't go to them for any money and I kind of just made it really fast and quietly, no budget – home recordings for the most part. It was nice to kind of return to simplicity that way, and maybe do myself a favour by not creating debt for the record before it comes out."

On the as-yet-unnamed album, Buck had some help, but even now won't reveal the name of his collaborator. The album will be a follow-up to Buck 65's last studio CD, 2005's *Secret House Against the World*.

Buck 65 has also confided to chartattack.com that he was contacted recently to join a hip-hop supergroup.

"Two heavyweight guys in, for lack of a better term, indie hip hop, contact me recently and said they had an idea for a supergroup," Buck declares. "They said, 'It's gonna be us, and we want you to produce the whole thing.'

"So I love having that kind of chance, to just be a producer and DJ. I'm really excited about it because it's gonna be kind of a blockbuster," he says.

ICON is looking forward to everything this Nova Scotian has to offer, whether he wants to give us all the details or make us wait for them.

—Laura Waterhouse



— Courtesy Controller:Controller

## Controlling: controlling Nirmala

Jenny Yuen  
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Nelly Furtado thinks Controller:Controller singer Nirmala Basnayake oozes "rhythmic sexual assertiveness," but the band's frontwoman says she is more the shy type.

The Toronto disco-death punk band toured Ontario and Quebec last month and it was on the road that Basnayake honed her sexually-charged expression in her song, *Maneater*.

"(Nelly Furtado's) a huge artist, and for her to say nice things about our band, I just want to thank her," Basnayake says to ICON.

As for whether Basnayake really is a maneater: "I was not one of the girls who had planned her wedding from a young age, and planned for a groom to slot in," she says. "Maybe I would settle down, maybe I wouldn't."

But she did. Basnayake married a health-care worker last year and on the band's debut 2004 EP *History*, he gets a nod

on *Sleep Over It*, where she cites medical insurance codes.

Now, on the recent *X-Amounts*, Basnayake with band members bassist Ronnie Morris, guitarist Colwyn Llewellyn-Thomas, guitarist Scott Kaija and drummer Jeff

**"Maybe I would settle down, maybe I wouldn't"**

— Nirmala Basnayake

Scheven, are continuing to create dark music that makes even the most drone-like crowds in Toronto pick their feet up.

The band has just completed the video for the first single, *Poison/Safe!* – which seems to take place in the futuristic world of the Aphex Twin – at the Scarborough Bluffs escarpment. Surprisingly, the inspiration for the shoot comes from sci-fi writer John Wyndham's *The Crystalids* and not from a Freddy Krueger movie.

"When people found that

out, we had a lot of kids saying it was their favourite book or that they had read it in school," she says.

With a Sri Lankan heritage, the Ottawa-born and raised Basnayake moved to Toronto seven years ago, and adores that the city is quite pedestrian-friendly.

"Coming home from Stratford last night, and going across College and seeing all these people out and lights on makes me happy to live here," she says.

Basnayake has been compared to Blondie's Debbie Harry, but as flattering as she says that is, she really makes her voice her own.

For now, Controller:Controller is focusing on releasing another single and working on their third album. They took the summer off to reacquire themselves with loved ones.

"I don't want to say family, because the band is family," laughs Basnayake. "We spend so much time together that it's like family. We bicker and we take care of each other."



— Courtesy prsguitars.com

## Get down, get brown

Why did Sum 41 guitarist Dave (Brownsound) Baksh walk away from a multi-platinum-selling band this year that unleashed millions of albums worldwide?

Baksh recently told JAM! Music that he was a "cookie-cutter depression case" who felt distant from other Sum 41 members.

The decision took over two years to make.

"The biggest decision was whether I wanted to go out and be a detriment to this band and just be doing it for the fans," Baksh says.

Turns out, feeling distant had a lot to do with musical tastes.

"As a guitar player, growing up, I always used to practise the entire album of *Symbolic by Death*, you know what I mean?" he says.

Though Baksh gave up on Sum 41, he certainly hasn't given up on music.

The Pickering-based musician currently seeks a singer to round out his new band, Brown Brigade, loosely described as a hybrid of heavy metal and reggae.

Baksh has more than 20 demos, without vocals, in waiting, while his manager fields phone calls from labels interested in the "Brownsound."

—Nina Dragicevic



— myspace.com



— tragicallyhip.com

## Avoiding a nautical diaster

Many music artists take on causes – animal rights, poverty, racism. But for The Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, one environmental issue in particular has hit too close to home.

Downie toured solo and performed at three ports on Lake Ontario recently to draw attention to two issues: how lakefront communities are affected by decisions made regarding ports and lakes, and how little say they have in the matter.

The Hip have had a recording studio in Bath, Ont., for 10 years, where Downie says LaFarge Canada plans to build a plant to burn tires and plastics.

"I just assumed people smarter than me were taking care of it," he tells Canadian Press. "I'm learning how few rights we have. A little bit of what this tour is about is bringing back that voice for communities."

— Nina Dragicevic

## Zahava: feels like Shania

World-class impersonator kicks up heels for her parties

Timmins' Shania Twain has many admirers, but none bigger than Zahava, the one-woman tribute show to the country superstar.

Dressed in a black corset and miniskirt, knee-high stilettos and black dinner gloves, Zahava is ready to perform as Twain. But it takes her a long time to put herself together.

"It usually takes two hours to get my makeup done," she sighs. "A 20 minute show takes all day to prepare for."

But she's not complaining. "Shania" plays more than 100 corporate events a year, singing famous hits such as *Man! I Feel Like a Woman!* and *Forever and For Always*, where she gets everyone in the audience wearing a tie to line dance.

"They're not at their desk, they're not answering phones. Once they get into it, they don't want to go back to work," she says.

Zahava (who, like Madonna,

only goes by one name), is one of Hollywood Heaven's performers. Her career as a tribute artist began on New Years 2001. She was performing with a band in Toronto and someone requested a Shania Twain song. The rest is history.

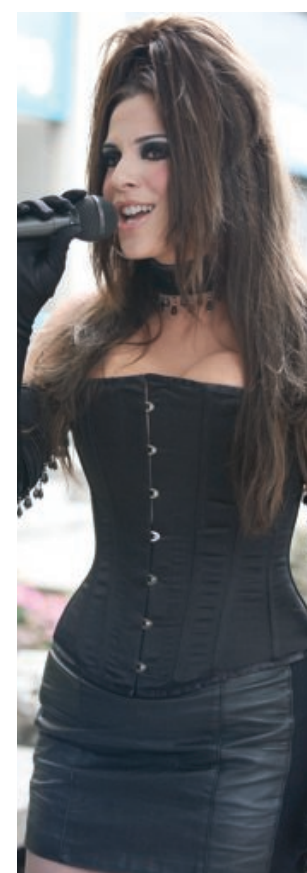
Zahava has met the real Shania a few times while dressed up to look like her.

"When she was signing autographs a few years ago, I was one of the lucky ones who was able to meet her and I was all done up," Zahava says. "I signed a poster for her and she said, 'Is that me or you?'"

A singer since she was nine years old, Zahava says she loves Twain for her music, her style and because she's a positive role-model for young girls.

She hopes to continue playing the superstar until she's at least 70. "All my experiences representing (Shania) have been great," Zahava says. "She is my icon."

— Jenny Yuen



— Laura Gallella photo