

BLUES MATTERS!

AWARDS FEVER!
FRUTELAND JACKSON
GINA SICILIA
ALEX TINTINALLI
DOWNCHILD
JAMES BLOOD ULMER



OTIS TAYLOR

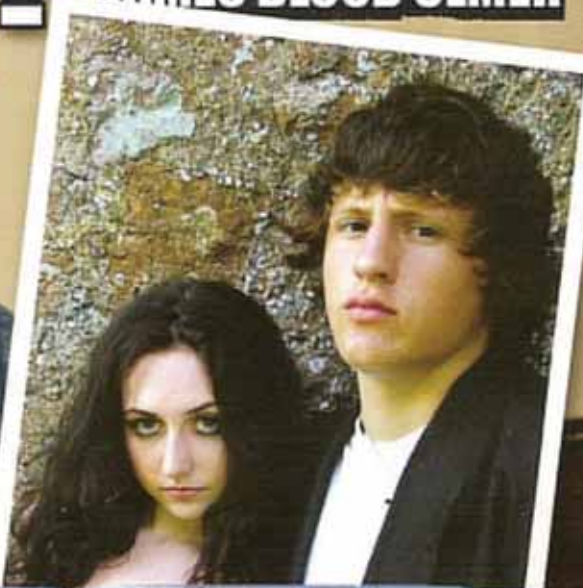
Classic debut remembered

ASH GRUNWALD

Sings for a new generation

MEMPHIS MINNIE

Grand lady of the Blues



THE MALCHICKS

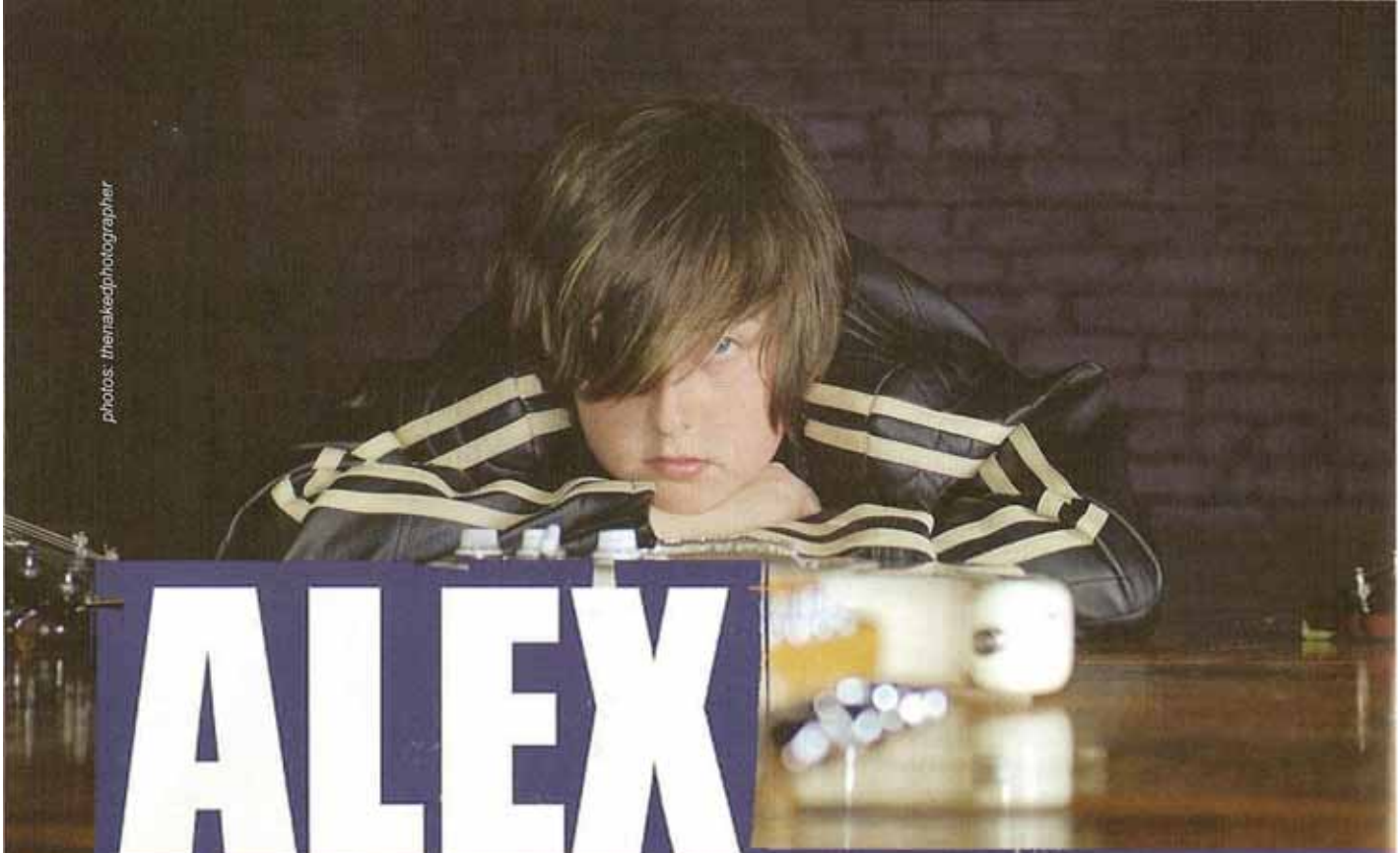
Teenage Blues

"The message is always love.

We are all connected."

ERIC BIBB

Continues to woo music fans around the world



ALEX TINTINALLI

TALENTED GUITARIST ENJOYS EARLY REWARD

Merv Osborne shores up teenager's bid for success

From counting numbers to counting beats, writing essays to writing songs, young Alex Tintinalli is balancing adolescence with being a recording Bluesman.

Picking up a guitar only five years ago, Alex has established himself as a frontman and performer of note in his homeland of Canada. With his family backing him (literally, his father being part of his band's rhythm section) all the way, the just-turned 16-year-old Alex already has a well-received debut album under his belt and, probably more satisfactorily, the support and appreciation of his community, who recognized his talents by nominating him in the Leading Edge category of 2008's Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Awards.

If "Nothing To Lose", the title of his 2007 debut, indicates how the youngster feels about starting his

career in the music industry at such an early age, his continually-acknowledged abilities as a band-leader and musician surely suggest he only has everything to gain in adulthood...

BM: I understand from an early age you liked to entertain family and friends...

Alex: I liked to do comedy skits and sing pop songs to my family and make them laugh as much as I could. I probably started around the age 2 or 3.

Later, when I was about 8 years old, I was a big "Austin Powers" fan and used to entertain friends, family and teachers with impersonations of the various characters.

Did your family influence you at all musically?

Yes, my family were into music a lot. They played music all the time in the house and the car. My dad is also a bass player. He played in many bands growing up. He stopped for awhile to raise us kids, but started again when I decided I wanted to play.



“The songs on my album, ‘Nothing To Lose’, were not autobiographical, because I haven’t had much experience in life.”

He’s been my bass player now since our first band. I think I just might keep him around for a bit. My mom just loves to listen to us. My brother and sister started playing instruments when they were younger but didn’t stick with it.

It was at the age of 11 you first picked up a guitar, how did this come about?

My brother had a guitar, which he never really played. At that time, my friends were starting to play guitars, so I thought I would try to play. I loved

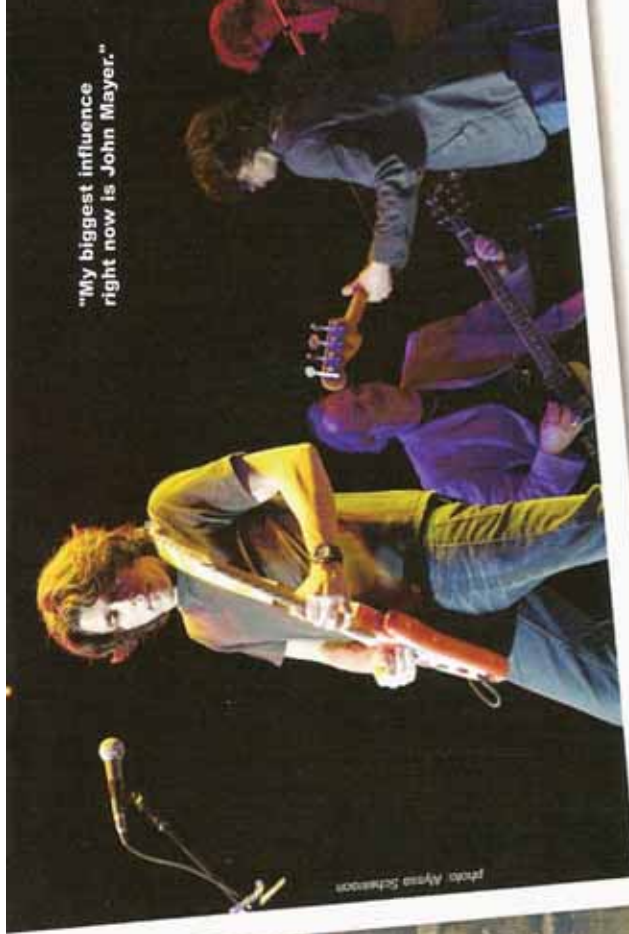


Photo: Myra Schaefer

“My biggest influence right now is John Mayer.”

and incredible songwriters.

Where does Dr. Dre fit into the picture?

Some of Dr. Dre’s beats are quite catchy and, to me, are better than a lot of other rap and hip hop artists. This also inspires me.

Who would you compare yourself to?

I compare myself to myself, not anyone else. I try to be a better musician and performer all the time...

Your debut album, “Nothing To Lose”, is an incredible piece of work for someone so young, but what is more astounding is that you wrote eight of the songs. Does songwriting come easy to you?

Songwriting - the lyrics - is not as easy as writing the music but, when there is a certain mood, it sometimes comes out.

Do you have a set process to write?

I don’t have a set process to write. When I get the feeling and the mood of something - and think of my experiences - then I apply it to some of the songs I’m writing.

The subject matter is sometimes surprisingly mature for someone so young...

The songs on my album “Nothing To Lose” were not autobiographical, because I haven’t had much experience in life yet. They are basically characters that I wrote about. Just like writing a fictional story.

I know you’ve been well received in Canada. How about elsewhere?

My album has been received well in the US. I’d really like to be received in the UK, so I can come over there and tour. That would be great!

I play guitar when I wake up in the morning, and when I come home from school pretty well everyday, and any other time I can. I have never had a problem getting my school work done and playing my guitar. I usually attend a local jam one or two nights during the week. So far so good with my school marks. Also, I am still taking guitar lessons, as there is so much to learn about playing and performing. My teacher and mentor, John McKinley, always challenges me with new things.

Do you play any other instruments?

I also like to play a bit of drums and bass guitar.

How long have you been gigging and are there any problems associated with your age?

I’ve been gigging since I was 12. I have had no problems associated with my age, so far. This area that I live in - is pretty open to having me play.

Who are your influences?

My biggest influence right now is John Mayer. Other influences also include Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Clapton, Buddy Guy, Ben Harper, Jack Johnson and Dr. Dre.

John Mayer is one who really impresses me right now - also James Blunt. They’re great musicians

the sound of it, so I kept playing around with it. My parents realised I was serious, so they started me taking guitar lessons.

Growing up, what music were you listening to?

When I started playing guitar, the music I most listened to was punk and classic rock. Then I started jamming at the local bars. Most of the music played there was Blues, and I realised it had a lot of soul to it - I liked that! The feeling and soul is what attracted me to the Blues. To this day, all types of music appeal to me, as long as it has a good feeling to it.

You have made astounding progress in a short space of time. How does playing and practice fit in with your schooling?

ALEX TINTINALI

Unlike B.B. King, you seem totally at ease singing and playing at the same time. Furthermore, fronting your own band is a massive responsibility. How do you cope with the pressure?

Playing and singing just came naturally to me, so it wasn't a big deal. Fronting my own band took some time but it wasn't too stressful. My dad has done a lot of work, so that helped.

There are keyboards augmenting the recorded sound. Do you use these live?

Yes, keyboards are a part of our band - played now by Brian Voll, who is 15 years old. During the recording session on the album, we had a fine local musician play keys for us and his name is John Lee. John has played with Blues legends, like Mel Brown, the late Dutch Mason and Matt Minglewood.

I guess from the album photos, the Fender Strat is your guitar of choice...

The Fender Strat is my first choice. To put it simply, it has been right for me since day one. I also use a Gibson Les Paul, an Epiphone Alley Kat and a Martin Acoustic-Electric. I am currently working on a project of putting together a custom made Strat-like guitar, that's very exciting.

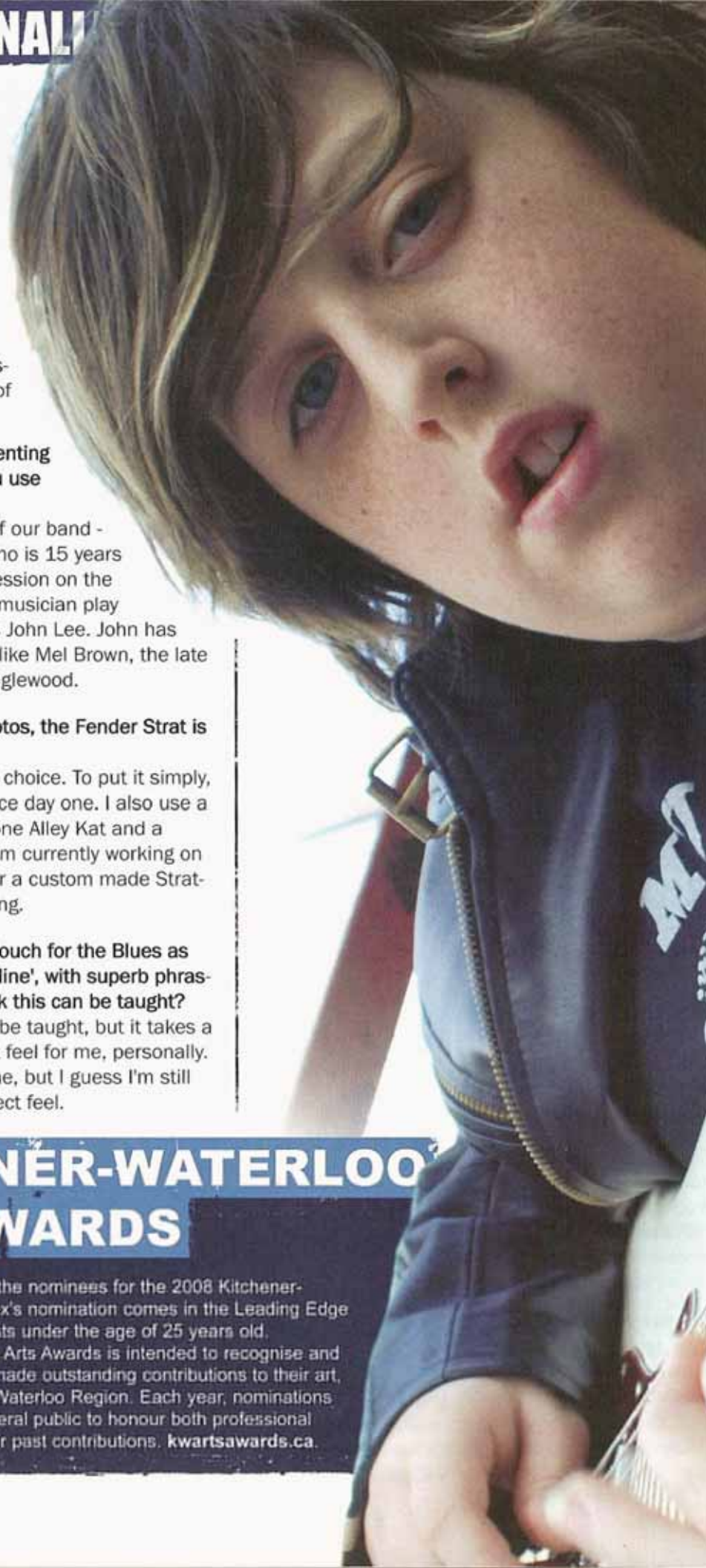
You have a great feel and touch for the Blues as evidenced in 'You Will Be Mine', with superb phrasing and timing. Do you think this can be taught?

I think in many ways it can be taught, but it takes a long time to get the perfect feel for me, personally. It may come natural to some, but I guess I'm still working on finding my perfect feel.

KITCHENER-WATERLOO ARTS AWARDS

Alex Tintinalli is amongst the nominees for the 2008 Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Awards. Alex's nomination comes in the Leading Edge category, which is for artists under the age of 25 years old.

The Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Awards is intended to recognise and honour artists who have made outstanding contributions to their art, and to the cultural life of Waterloo Region. Each year, nominations are solicited from the general public to honour both professional and amateur artist for their past contributions. kwartsawards.ca.



ALEX TINTINALLI

'Life By The Drop', written by Doyle Bramhall and Barbara Logan, is the only acoustic tune on the CD. How do you feel about acoustic tunes, and does the acoustic guitar feature much in your set?

I have always liked acoustic tunes, so I wanted to put in a little variation of music to my album. I think you can express yourself with different feelings.

You live in Ontario. What is the Blues scene like both locally and across Canada?

Ontario has many Blues festivals during the summer months. Also, there are many small bar venues who bring in Blues musicians. We are members of the Grand River Blues Society in our area, which is a strong Blues music promoter. There are many other parts of Canada with strong Blues scenes.

Have you ever shared a stage with any of the great Blues names, and does appearing at something like the Chicago Blues Festival appeal?

I have recently played with Blues legend Mel Brown, who has played with all the greats himself. I also opened for The Yardbirds last year, and shared festival stages with Jeff Healey and David Wilcox. I would love to play at the Chicago Blues Festival. That's one of my dreams.

Have you done any of the major festivals either in the States or Canada?

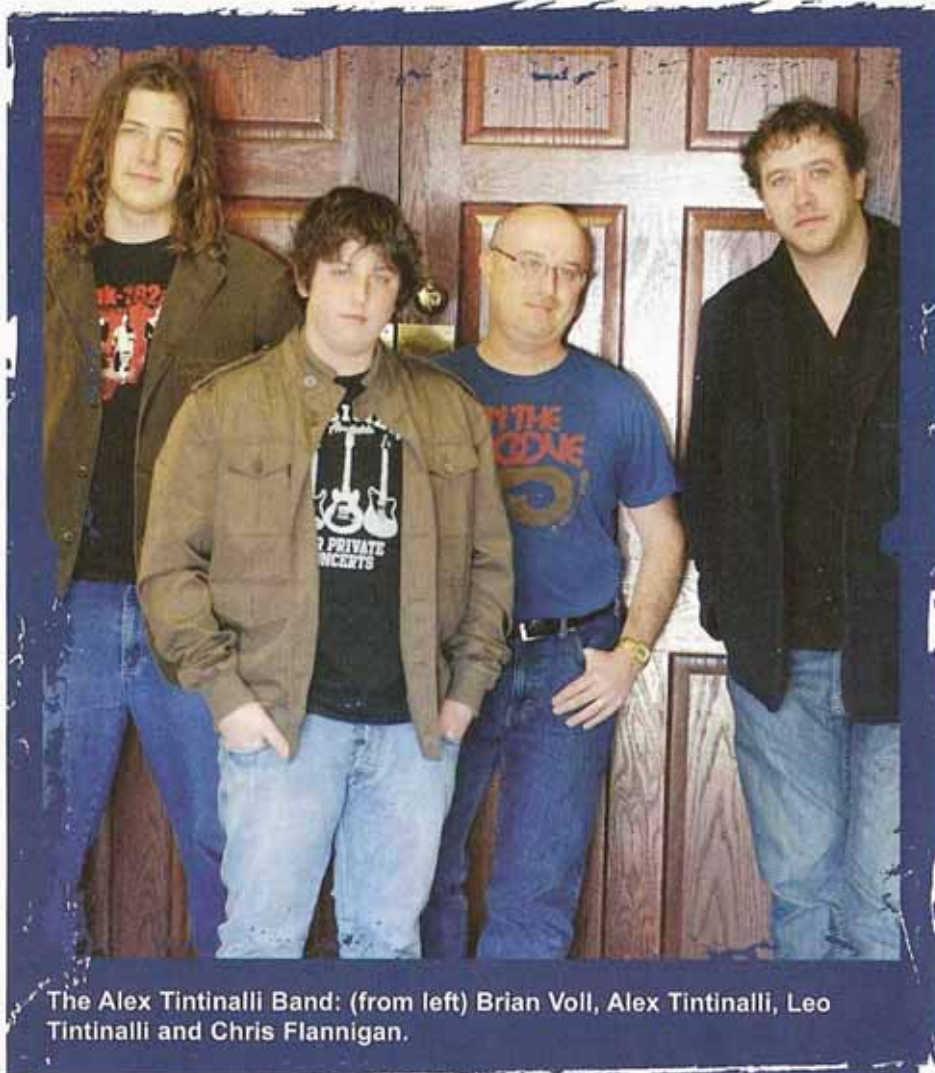
Last summer we (my band and I) played in three Blues festivals in Ontario, which included Kitchener, Goderich and Niagara Falls.

Do you get to play much outside Canada?

I haven't played outside of Canada, yet. We are hoping to play in the US, probably the border cities, next year. Possibly, the following year we can tour in the UK and Europe - that would be an exciting experience.

What does it mean to you to be nominated for The Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Award?

To be nominated for the award is quite an honour,



The Alex Tintinalli Band: (from left) Brian Voll, Alex Tintinalli, Leo Tintinalli and Chris Flannigan.

as it officially recognises me and my contributions as an artist to the community.

I suppose extra special that it's the general public who gave you this nomination...

It is very special to be nominated by the public. There are a lot of talented young artists in Kitchener-Waterloo and to be one of the nominees is really cool. It's a great feeling.

How aware of the awards were you prior?

I've heard about the Arts Awards before, and know some artists who have previously won, but never imagined that I would be nominated.

What offshoot benefits can you expect to see from this nomination, and what would you gain from winning? I understand winners are revealed in June...

Just being nominated for this award has already increased my credibility as an artist... To win this award can only be that much better.

Is there a new album in the pipeline?

Yes, I am working on my new album right now. I have about five or six songs already written. I know the title, but I'm not revealing it, as yet! **MO**