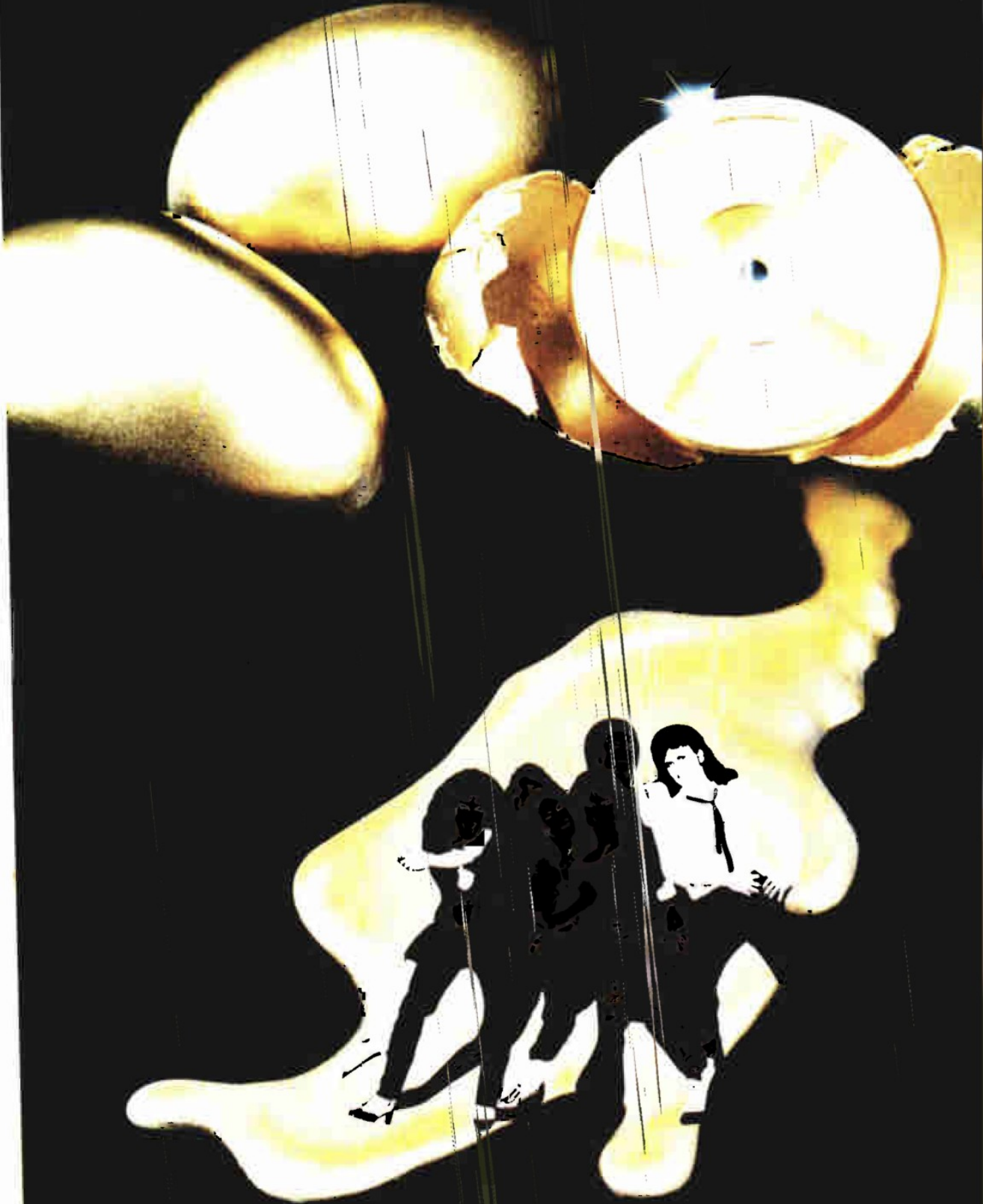


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Cover story: Solid Gold Records debuts Toronto



Dixon and Propas launch Solid Gold Records



Steve Propas and Neill Dixon

in the CN Tower for the occasion, and will be featuring the music of their label's debut act, Toronto. The band will be in concert with Chilliwack that evening at Hamilton Place. The first single by Toronto, Even The Score, has just been released.

The idea for the label came about last summer because of several reasons. There was frustration over the lack of control by the artists as to what went on their albums - the graphics, the production and so forth. Dixon and Propas found a great deal of difficulty in launching new acts with major labels. And without their own label, they could not give their acts the attention needed in terms of advertising, promotion and working around the groups' schedules. Dixon and Propas decided to go ahead with the idea.

An ad agency was approached for help to get a working image for the new record label. They wanted a well-defined musical image that had a touch of glitter about it, yet they also wanted a prestigious sounding name. Solid Gold Records was suggested, and Dixon and Propas found it most suitable. Said Neill Dixon, "It was a good name to come up with. It gives an immediate identification. When people hear it, they'll think it's been around for quite a while, or that it's a lot bigger than a new company would be." Strangely enough, the name had never been trademarked; rather, it had only been used for compilation packages of hit records. Solid Gold Records cautiously began as a production house. "We weren't 100% convinced about being a full-fledged label distributed by a major," said Dixon, "We just acted as a production house to start with. But we had the same frustrations even as a production house. So we said to heck with it, we're gonna do it with the whole ball of wax. Solid Gold Records is now a full-fledged label."

Lee Silversides was hired as the national promotion manager for Solid Gold Records, and A&M will handle distribution and promotion for the label. Joint Communications was hired to test the debut album by Toronto at a consumer level, and designer Hugh Syme and photographer Michael Gray were employed to do the album cover. Under Silversides, Solid Gold Records has a competent staff of eight.

Finances for the new label came

in the international market than having a domestic Canadian label. We're not going to have a dozen acts on the label: we have no desire to do so. We'll move each act one at a time, and as each act gets launched and becomes successful, then we'll move on to the next. There's no rush at all."

Dixon and Propas had very definite criteria in looking for acts to sign to the label. They felt it important that the bands in question be able to reproduce their recorded sound faithfully in a live context. Solid Gold was not interested in 'non-entity' studio acts either; bands must tour outside the studio. Propas also added that they didn't want any one-hit wonders, that Solid Gold artists must perform and record music that has substance and longevity.

The premiere act for Solid Gold is Toronto, formed out of the remnants of Rose. Said Dixon, "The band Toronto had a lot of things going for it that we felt were important for a new act. They had a lot of stage presence, and a lot of charisma. They also had exceptional vocals, and a very powerful lead singer (Holly Woods). She has a very distinctive voice that's recognizable. People will be able to identify her from her voice." Dixon also found other important positive qualities about the band. The working attitude was good and there were no prima donnas. Toronto also had three prolific songwriters who were consistently turning out high-calibre material.

Toronto was kept in the studio for a year and they did three high quality demos which generated interest from buyers; but Dixon and Propas said no to selling the demos at that time. They felt the band needed more time in the studio to work on pre-production, as the demos weren't strong enough to launch the act or to stimulate foreign interest. But now, Toronto is ready, and Even The Score b/w Tie Me Down has been released as the first single, with an album titled Looking For Trouble to follow shortly. A full-scale promotional campaign, including T-shirts, teaser ads and in-store displays, is being launched to promote Toronto, currently on a 45-city tour of Canada with Chilliwack.

Propas said it would be unrealistic to want all of the acts managed by Dixon Propas on Solid Gold Records because previous commitments could

very easily make that impossible for those acts, and some acts may be satisfied with their own labels. Dixon & Propas, however, aren't averse to signing acts from other management companies. Currently, they're in negotiations with the Good Brothers, whose contract with RCA has come to a close.

Dixon and Propas was formed in 1974 to manage and consult in the entertainment field. In the first two years, clients included the El Mocambo, the Jarvis House, the Ports Of Call, the Colonial, Le Coq D'Or, Fryfogels and the Beverly Hills, all in Toronto. Outside of the city, they handled the Riverside in Oakville, St. Regis in North Bay and Mattagami in Timmins. CFTO TV in Toronto was also a client.

In 1976, Dixon & Propas became the entertainment consultants to Ontario Place for booking talent into the Forum for the 1977 season. The attendance increased over 52% above that of the previous season, and Dixon and Propas secured the contract for 1978 and again for the following year. Dixon & Propas have managed the Raes, the Good Brothers and have recently added Chilliwack to their roster. The newest member is of course Toronto, in whom Dixon and Propas have a lot of faith.

Steve Propas graduated from McGill University in 1970. He promoted concerts in Montreal and presented shows at the Montreal Forum, Place

Des Arts and Autosade from 1970-72. In 1973-74, he managed acts, including the Bells, Natalie Cole and Peter Nyro, with New Directions in New York and Los Angeles.

A graduate of Hammersmith College in London, England in 1968, Neill Dixon owned and managed Grumbles Coffee House in Toronto for three years, but gave it up when he couldn't obtain a liquor license for the place. He was Ontario Promotion Manager for RCA Records, and National Promotion & A&R Manager

for GRT Records. At the same time Dixon was the entertainment consultant for the El Mocambo, the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Colonial Tavern.