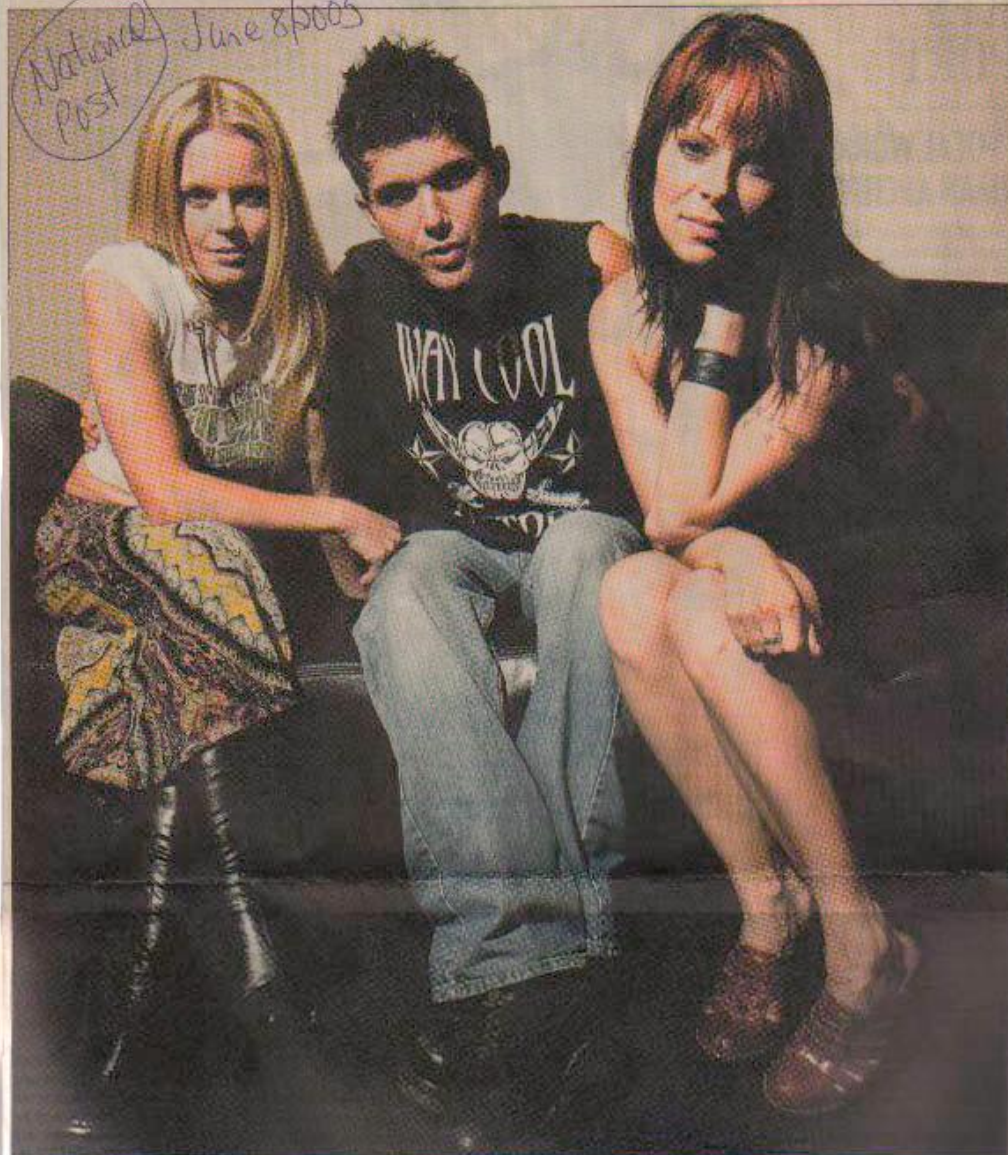


Thanks to the reality show *Rock Star*, the next lead singer of Australian band INXS could well be Canadian



Deanna Johnston, J.D. Fortune and Tara Stone are among the 14 rockers vying to become the next Michael Hutchence. **By Vanessa Farquharson**

THE NEW SENSATION

BY VANESSA FARQUHARSON

The next lead singer of INXS might be from Kingston, Ont., or Montreal or Halifax or Toronto. Of the 14 contestants on Mark Burnett's upcoming reality show *Rock Star*: INXS, four are Canadian — and three of them were in Toronto yesterday to talk about how they ended up going from the local bar circuit to auditioning for one of the world's biggest bands.

"I actually had a dream last year that I auditioned for INXS at my grandparents' house, and now it's a reality," said J.D. Fortune, a 21-year-old who was born in Mississauga and raised in Nova Scotia. "Except, of course, it's not my grandparents' house. But just the fact that I'm competing for this is appropriate, because

INXS is one of the reasons I became a musician. The first song I learned to play was *Devil Inside*."

Fortune says the only part of the show he's nervous about is performing in front of the band, knowing he's being held up to the high standards of his predecessor Michael Hutchence, who committed suicide eight years ago at a hotel in Sydney, Australia.

"As far as filling the legacy that is Michael Hutchence, I'm ready for a lot of backlash," Fortune said. "You need to cut your own stone, though, because no one is replacing him."

Although Fortune is tattooed up both arms and describes his own style of music as "rock, but with a harder edge than what's currently on the radio," he's also written songs for children's TV show *Bayblade* and performed

John Lennon's *Imagine* at a post-Olympic ceremony for Jamie Salt and David Pelletier.

"I've been trying to break into the Canadian music scene for the past 10 years," he said. "But, like any industry, it's very small and it's especially hard if you're growing as an artist. So this show is a great launching pad, for all of us. Whether we win or not, this is our break."

"There's so much love in the industry," adds Deanna Johnston, 26, who lived in Kingston until she was 23, then jumped to Vancouver before finally settling in Los Angeles. The first song she ever had to learn was *Don't Stop Believin'*. "I don't have any regrets about my music, but I do wish I

when I was 16, I could have been on the show. I would have loved it."

Fortune, who is currently in the final round of the show, says he's been in the industry for 10 years, but he's never been on a record.

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