

Multimedia CanLit: Television and Music

A full-frontal assault on your senses, courtesy of Canadian YA and multimedia



Setting the Stage

Long ago, it was the book. Then, the cassette. This was followed by the CD, as well as the video cassette—in either VHS or BETA. This, too, was followed by the DVD. Soon, Blu-Ray formatted discs and digital downloads will become the popular format for young adult patrons to borrow from our libraries.

These different formats have given young adult readers new and different ways to experience the stories they've come to love. For instance, *Where the Wild Things Are*, which was once a favourite bedtime story, is now a major motion picture, with a DVD and audio sound-

track release due to follow.

Canadian young adult literature bears no exception to this rule. Although the amount of media-crossover items is small in comparison to other national markets, there are still several hot-item Canadian YA "brands" that library readers of all ages will gravitate toward.

In the following pages, please consider our recommendations for both television shows and music that could benefit your library's collection of multimedia Canadiana.

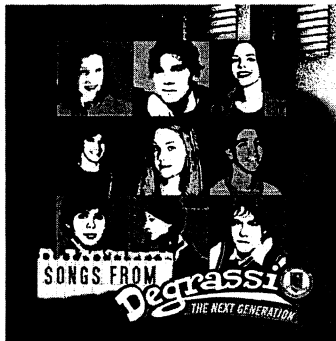
Degrassi

Canadians have been following the lives and stories of the families in and around De Grassi Street in Toronto since the late 1970s. Starting off with *The Kids of Degrassi Street*, and moving through *Degrassi Jr. High* and *Degrassi High* to its present incarnation, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, the *Degrassi* franchise has become synonymous with not only Canadian teen drama, but also television for teens that is realistic and pulls no punches.

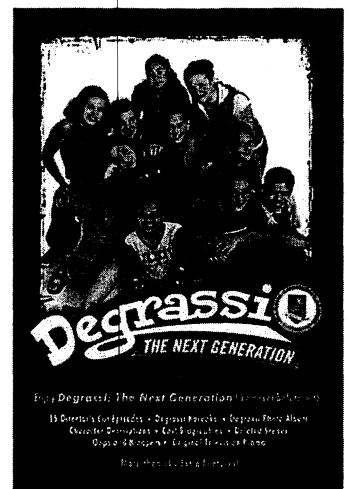
Given its popularity, *Degrassi* is bar none the most important part of a Canadian YA multimedia collection. Although no collection, especially a YA collection, is impervious to changing tastes and fads, *Degrassi* items are sure to be frequently circulated so long as it stays current.

Given the number of books, CDs, and DVDs on the market, developing the *Degrassi* section of a multimedia collection is easy to do, but a little involved. Listed below is a handy guide to help round out the corners of the collection:

Step 1: Start your collection off right by going straight to the source – begin by collecting *Degrassi: The Next Generation, Season One*. Consider following this up by picking up the other seven seasons on the market, stretching from 2001 to 2008.



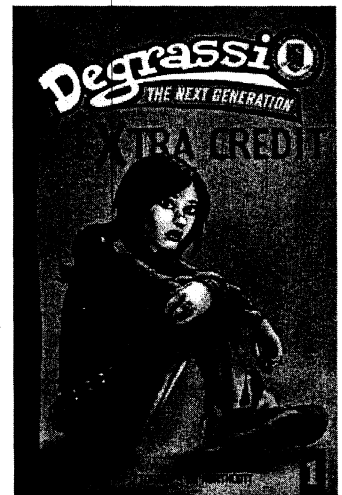
Step 2: Consider purchasing the soundtracks to the series. *Music From Degrassi: The Next Generation*, and *Songs from Degrassi: The Next Generation* will complement the DVDs by featuring bands featured on the programme, such as Sam Roberts, Skye Sweetnam, and Jakalope.



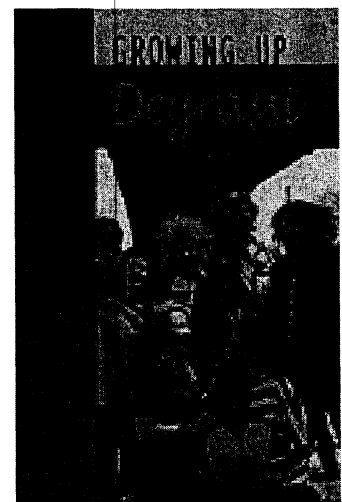
Step 3: Double-check to see if your YA Collection has *Degrassi: Extra Credit*. Extra Credit are a series of graphic novels that move into details about the lives of various TNG characters. For instance, in *Turning Japanese*, Ellie encounters sexual harassment at a new part-time job, and turns to her friends for advice.



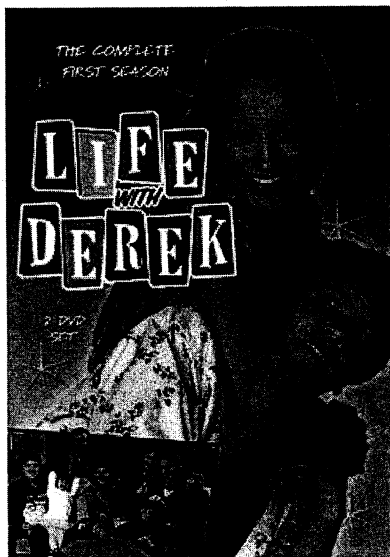
Step 4: Go Retro. Part of *Degrassi: TNG's* popularity lies in the plotlines that spill between generations and characters from previous series, and *Degrassi High – The Complete Series* gives us all the drama we need to understand. If teen patrons don't get a kick out of Spike, Snake, and Joey's antics when they were teens themselves, they will at least get a laugh from the big hair and stone-wash jeans.



Step 5: Graduate. For either the hard-core *Degrassi* fan or burgeoning scholar in our midst, Michele Byers' edited collection of essays, *Growing Up Degrassi*, will help teens understand the wider community of *Degrassi* fans they are a part of, and also how the series has shaped not only their lives, but likely the lives of their parents, too.



Life With Derek



Although not nearly as popular as the *Degrassi* franchise, *Life with Derek* has created a following in the early YA bracket as a television show about trying to adjust living in a new nuclear family. Playing on the *Brady Bunch* motif of a fused family, *Life with Derek* follows Casey as she must meet and deal with her new step-brother, Derek. Derek, and his siblings Edwin and Marti aren't bad people, but they nonetheless drive Casey up the wall. The first two seasons are now on DVD, as *Life With Derek: The Complete First Season*, and *Life with Derek: Let The Games Begin!* Be sure to complement these with the series' paper-



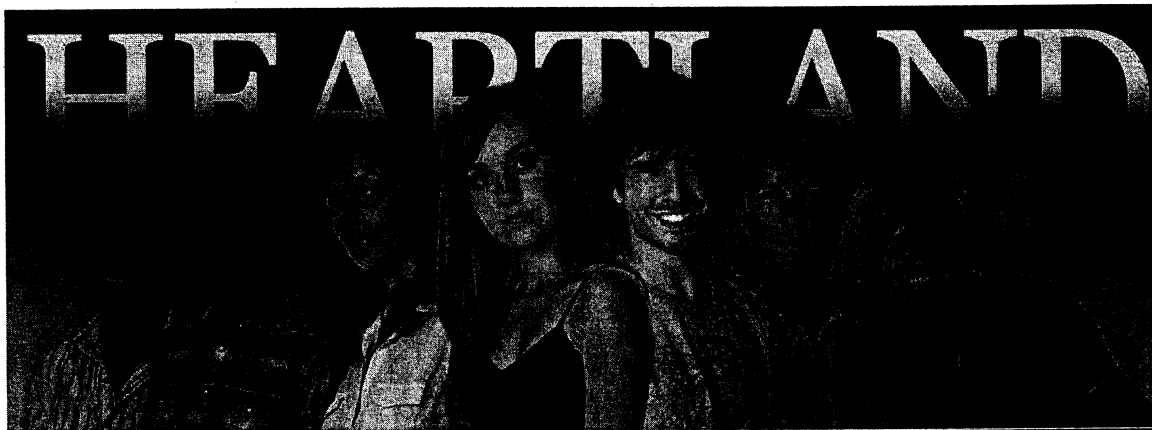
back novels, such as *Life With Derek: Breakup Blues* and *Life With Derek: The Dating Game*.

Heartland

Heartland isn't wholly Canadian, but its adaptation into a television series by the CBC has garnered a lot of favourable criticism and many fans. The original series of books by American author Lauren Brooks follows the life of Amy Fleming, who must deal with the recent death of her mother, a horse trainer in Virginia. The CBC's Production of *Heartland* now situates Amy's life in rural Alberta, and maintains a similar presence in the other characters, like her worldly sister, Lou, and gruff grandfather, Jack.



The first 2 seasons of CBC's Heartland is set for DVD Release in mid-2009.

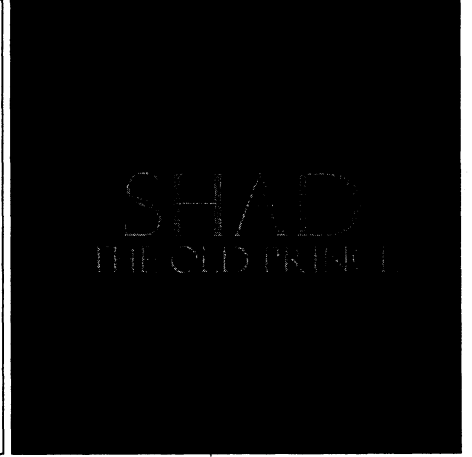


Canadian YA Music Suggestions

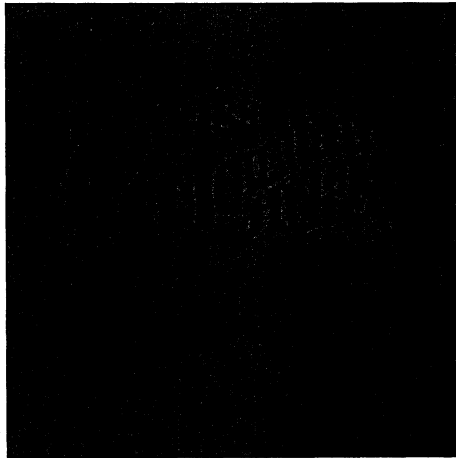
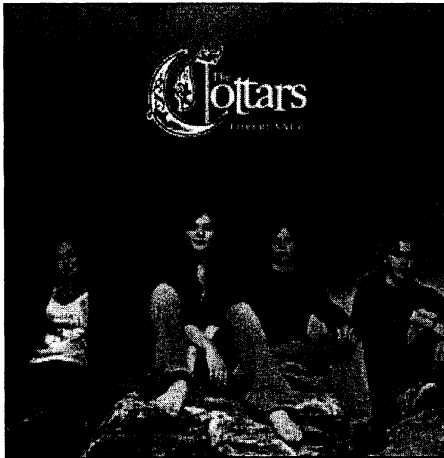


Representing Hobbema, Alberta War Party's *The Reign* embodies true Hip Hop. War Party hammers home a message of triumph over the social, cultural and political adversity that aboriginals have faced since colonization. War Party has made a noteworthy contribution to the Canadian and international Hip Hop scene.

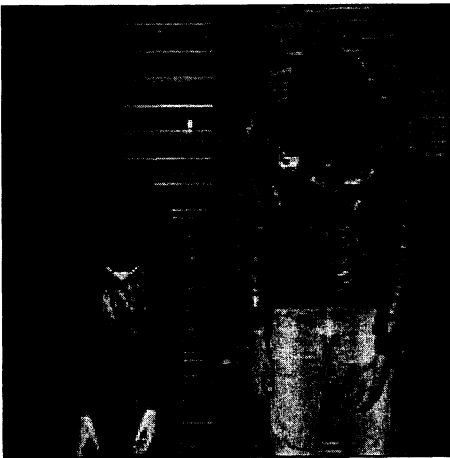
A product of London, Ontario Shad's brand of conscious hip-hop is accessible, warm, humorous and most of all intelligent. *The Old Prince* suffuses his experiences through a humanistic prism of living with his parents, trying to save money, falling in and out of love and standing up for he believes.



Currently consisting of three teenagers and an older guitar player Cape Breton's the Cottars are international sensations since completing a US tour with the Chieftains in 2006. Their third and latest album *Forerunner* is a continuation of their blending of traditional Celtic music with pop rock sensibilities.

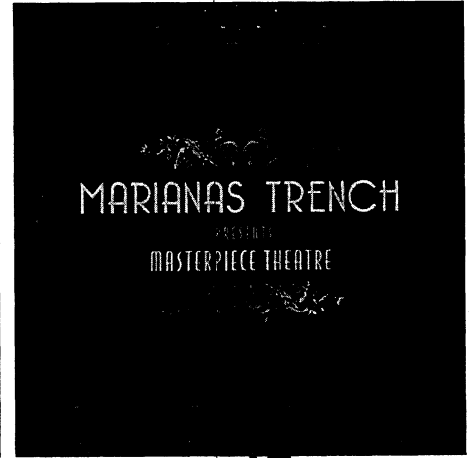


The Grass Mountain Hobos are fun loving youngsters based in PEI whose musical styling is firmly grounded in the traditions of the Grand Ole' Opry and Western Swing. Their self titled debut is a rollicking good time that will have country/traditional fans lining up to check it out.



A product of this wired age Toronto's Crystal Castles' self titled debut album is alluring in its aural familiarity and yet alien in its jarring posturing. This electronic duo embraces glitch pop via heavy video game sampling, voice distortion and high tempo, stutter stop production. A hit with the kids!

Vancouver's Marianas Trench is a pop punk quintet that is sure to be a smash with the youngsters. Driving guitars, plaintiff vocals and even a few power ballads for good measure. You can't go wrong! Their second release, Masterpiece Theatre is a must have for your YA collection.



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