

Smith proof positive it's never too late

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THIS WEEK

Randy Smith's first memory of holding a guitar is bittersweet.

While his father advised him "to hold it the other way" if he was to learn to play the instrument, the seven year old swore off the instrument.

It wasn't until he was 14 that he was re-introduced to the guitar, courtesy of an uncle. Three simple chords and \$29 later, Smith purchased his first electric guitar.

Musically, things happened quickly after that for the Peterborough man, laying the groundwork for his current music career, the latest highlight of which is the release of his second CD, **Randy Smith**



Never Too Late.

At age 16, Smith hooked up with his first band, Stray, playing covers of Monkeys and Rolling Stones songs every other Friday at a church in Scarborough, for \$35 per gig. What followed was a band called Misty Blue, which did the Toronto-to-Kingston circuit, playing popular songs from the 1950s and 1960s, and developing a faithful following in the process.

But in 1981, Smith put down his guitar again -- this time for 14 years -- as he found Jesus Christ. Attending church at the Selwyn Outreach Centre in 1995 with his wife Michelene and their family, Smith became re-energized musically. He spent the next five

years as part of a church worship team. He now credits God and his spirit with blessing him with the ability to write music from the heart, all while retaining his influences of James Taylor, Dire Straits and Stephen Curtis Chapman to name a few.

Never Too Late -- his debut CD was titled Right Now -- is a 12-track, heavily brass-infused effort produced by Dan Washburn -- who also co-wrote many of the tracks -- and recorded at Haggarty Sound Studios in Peterborough.

"I'm really pleased with how the new album turned out," says Smith, - 53.

"I think there's too much music out there that's wrong and hurtful. What I wanted to do was music that was inspirational but not

too preachy. I'm running into people now who are really impressed, saying it's fun, refreshing and new. You can't help but get a good feeling when you hear that coming back."

The album's title: Never Too Late, taken from one its tracks, is perfect for where Smith is in his music career.

"That really has a different meaning for as many different people. It has a lot of applications. It's never too late to follow your dream."

Songwriting, notes Smith, is relatively new to him; an undertaking he first tackled in the mid 1990s. He describes

the experience as a journey, one in which he's discovered much about himself and the world around him. Strangely enough, his style sees him write the music first and 'then add the lyrics.

"For me, this is about a message and putting out a good song," notes Smith, crediting both Washburn and Barry Haggarty with being "major influences" in the final product.

For his part, Washburn is very impressed with Smith's work ethic and talent.

"As a singer and a songwriter, he's come a long way from before that first album ... he's really making up for lost time," notes Washburn.

"There isn't one given style on the album but several. I think that's what made Right Now such a great project.

"The music is still very diverse in nature but there's a stronger message lyrically that really stands out. Randy is growing musically."

Ahead, notes Smith, is a third CD. He's writing now with hopes of being back in the studio next winter. In the meantime, anyone interested in obtaining a copy of Never Too Late can visit www.randysmithmusic.com

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