

Music

Eddie Schwartz: *He hit them with “his best shot”*



By

DAVID EISENSTADT

Toronto-born Eddie Schwartz is a Canadian rock and pop star, singer, songwriter, producer, and musicians’ advocate.

Bet you didn’t know he wrote Pat Benatar’s “Hit Me With Your Best Shot.” That ‘80s tune is featured in the TONY-nominated Broadway and Off Broadway production, “Rock of Ages.”

Add Paul Carrack, Joe Cocker, Rita Coolidge, the Doobie Brothers, Peter Frampton, Lawrence Gowan, Martina McBride, Meatloaf, Robert Palmer, Carly Simon, and Donna Sommer to his scorecard. Those artists have all recorded hit songs written or co-written by Edward Sydney Schwartz who, since the late 1970s, has had over 200 songs recorded and performed - either by others or himself.

This award-winning Toronto-born musician has produced four albums and 20 top singles in the US and Canada. So, with this column, my thanks go to Eddie’s cousin and my friend, Dr. Martin Schwartz, for this introduction. The son of Gordon and Miriam (née Friedman) Eddie Schwartz lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

He told me that “In the late 1900s, most of my creative peers left Toronto, mostly for Los Angeles. I was struggling creatively and financially with a young family to support but received an offer from a Nashville music publisher in 1997, which I accepted. There I found a vibrant and welcoming music creator community with lots of opportunities for a songwriter with a track record. My kids grew up there and as a family, we have deep ties to Nashville, but my wife Joanne and I split the warmer months back in Toronto and Muskoka, Ontario cottage country.

Eddie was recognized for “Hit Me With Your Best Shot,” by SOCAN,



EDDIE SCHWARTZ
wrote Pat Benatar’s “Hit Me With Your Best Shot,” one of 200 songs he’s either written for others or performed himself.

having received its 2021 Cultural Impact Award, “created to honour music by a member that has had a lasting cultural impact in Canada and/or beyond its borders”.

“I loved working with Lawrence Gowan in the early ‘90s who is an enormous talent as a writer and a performer, but for the most part, I write for myself. I am very hard to please and very hard on myself creatively. I rely on my music publisher colleagues to get the songs I write to artists and producers,” Schwartz said.

Schwartz “has received multiple Juno, BMI (renamed PRO CAN) and SOCAN (Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada) awards, including PRO CANADA’s prestigious William Harold Moon Award for lifetime achievement. His songs can be found in millions of games, dozens of movies and television shows and his career sales exceed 65 million units,” according to the Songwriters Association of Canada.

His career began after graduating from Toronto’s York University as a Music and English major in 1976. Schwartz played guitar for Charity Brown’s backing band and in 1979 signed a solo contract with Infinity Records. His self-titled debut album, “Schwartz,” was released in 1980, which included his first Canadian hit “Does A Fool Ever Learn.”

Two of his tunes, “Special Girl” and “All Our Tomorrows,” written in the early 1980s, have become Canadian classics,” reported songwriters.ca

“I write both lyrics and music, and my lyrics, in particular, have been influenced by my Jewish heritage. Some years ago, Amy Sky and I co-wrote a song called “Everything Love Is.” The bridge lyric is very much derived from the Passover Haggadah. Since we are both Jewish, the rest of the lyrics in that song owe a great deal to an early Jewish devotee to the teaching of Jesus (Yeshua) of Nazareth, Saul of Tarsus, aka St. Paul.” He has also co-written with Sky’s talented husband, Marc Jordan, and all remain friends.

Schwartz, over the years, has been influenced by many artists and songwriters who have come from many different religious and cultural backgrounds, “but two other Jewish music creators, Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan are certainly at the top of my list. I think the poetry and parables of the Torah, and singing as a central shared expression of our beliefs and experiences as a people, profoundly influenced me from an early age. The understanding of how powerful these elements can be when music reinforces the narrative of a lyric has been a huge influence on me,” he told me.

In the early 2000s, Schwartz became increasingly involved in advocacy for creators’ rights and copyright. Active in various music industry organizations, he “has been a board member of PRO CAN, SOCAN, CARAS (Canadian Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences) and in 2007-2008 “was simultaneously president of the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Association of Canada”, which he helped found, he said.

In 2010, he was elected Vice President and then became the first North American-based President of the International Council of Music Creators in Paris with over 500,000 music creator members on five continents. Schwartz was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 2012.

“Making music for a living has never been for the faint of heart, and the challenges facing creators today are more daunting than ever. The good news is that the power music and creativity sustain us in other ways, and profoundly so. Making music has kept me alive in the multiple means of that word and for that I am deeply grateful. I am happy to expect that it will continue to do so for some time.”

David Eisenstadt is the author of UNDER THE RADAR – 30 Notable Canadian Jewish Musicians – available on Amazon.ca in paperback and e-book versions. He is the Founding Partner of tcgpr.com and a graduate of Carleton University’s School of Journalism and the University of Calgary.



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