

ENTERTAINMENT TODAY

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An Invincible review

Michael Jackson's new CD isn't Bad. Too bad. D3

Giller-bound book?

Reviewer Nancy Schiefer calls River Thieves a 'remarkable' novel. D8



LIONA

GIRL WITH GUITAR

Classical guitarist Liona Boyd has played with almost every kind of musician, but her new neighbour might be a bit of a stretch.

BY JAMES REANEY
Free Press Arts & Entertainment Reporter

A new neighbour with a famous set of pipes has just moved in across the road from Canadian guitar superstar Liona Boyd's home in Beverly Hills 90210.

It's Black Sabbath's vocalist from hell, Ozzy Osbourne.

Don't expect duets just yet.

"Too bad, we're not very compatible. Now if it was Eric Clapton," smiles Boyd of her new neighbour's musical rep. Osbourne and his manager-wife are apparently retreating to Boyd's neighbourhood from another part of Los Angeles. Ozzy fans were camping out on the lawn of that previous abode on the Sabbath and every other day of the week. Boyd's neighbourhood is a little more secluded.

Boyd still hadn't met her new neighbour when she embarked on the tour that brings her to London next Saturday. Her husband has been keeping an eye on the Ozz-man's property and Boyd is ready to be a good neighbour.

"We'll have him over for tea and shortbread cookies one day," she promises.

On the tour, she's playing in her new Latin-influenced style, along with Toronto guitarist Pavlo and his band. In both of the evening's sets, Boyd starts solo. Then, it's Pavlo time. Then, the two combine their string figures.

"Ozzy's not 'Latino' though. You got to have the 'Latino' blood," she says when it is suggested Osbourne might want to join in the fun.

The tour is supporting Boyd's new album, *Camino Latino*. It includes Canadian guitarists Pavlo, Oscar Lopez and Jesse Cook, Los Angeles-based duo Jorge Strunz and Ardeshir Farah and other guitar-slingers. An early edition of *Camino Latino*, minus material featuring a vocalist from Mexico, will be on sale during the tour. The CD will be released early next year.

"I've always had an attraction to Latin music. I guess because I used to live in Mexico," says Boyd, who also speaks Spanish. "I've included a number of Latin pieces in my concerts over the years. Then, I noticed there was a whole generation of guitarists doing this 'nouveau flamenco' Latin pop and they're selling like crazy, of course."

It seems the only tough thing about going Latin was shooting the *Camino* cover. Boyd's team decided a path ("camino" in Spanish) in the California desert would be the perfect backdrop for a spectacular shot starring Boyd, her bare legs and guitar.

"It was 110 degrees when I shot that photo. I suffered for that photo. I was walking on the sand covered in cactus spines," Boyd laughs.

Everything else about the project has gone smoothly — even with the recording being done on both U.S. coasts and in Canada.

Boyd had already performed on a Strunz and Farah recording, helping her find the Latin groove. But another *Camino* guest, Deep Purple's Steve Morse, might be a surprise.

But not to Boyd. Morse is a fine Latin-style player when he isn't busy smoking on the water. Besides, rock guitarists have been on Boyd's playlist before. Among her score of albums is *Persona*. That's the one with British stars Clapton and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. Boyd wore zebra-patterned pants on the cover for that one.

It's no surprise she's paired with Pavlo on the tour. He has been a Boyd fan for years.

"When Pavlo was a little boy, his father took him to three of my concerts," she says. "I guess I inspired him and he told me I was his role model."

For his part, Pavlo and his bandmates rocked Sunfest 2001 with riffs and runs, including a revved-up visit to Never on Sunday. At the Victoria Park world music fest, the band was already looking ahead to the Boyd tour. They all vowed they would turn down the volume when it came to accompanying

her. Pavlo used to crank his guitar way up when he played the part and parts of guitarist Alex Lifeson in a Rush tribute band called YZY, after one of the Canadian rock group's classic tunes. Pavlo band bassist Randy Rodrigues took the part of Rush's Geddy Lee. Flashy bouzouki player Spyros Gazetos was their roadie in those days and is a bandmate now.

Those tribute details about Pavlo's past come as a surprise to Boyd. But, hey, Alex Lifeson, The First Lady of the Guitar knows all

about Lifeson. The Rush guitarist and Boyd were part of a Canadian guitar summit in 1987.

It's all part of a rich life taking in 20 gold and platinum records, the Order of Canada and five triumphs as the top classical guitarist in North America, as voted on by the readers of *Guitar Player* magazine. Her recording career began in 1974. A year later, she made her New York debut at Carnegie Recital Hall. In 1976, she was bringing a crowd here in London to its feet.

In 1998, Boyd summed it all up by releasing her autobiography, *In My Own Key — My Life in Love and Music*. In it, she talks candidly about her affair with former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, as well as sharing humorous road stories.



PAVLO: playing in concert with his role model

"I was a little peeved at some of the Canadian press when my autobiography came out. They sort of perceived it as a kiss-and-tell book on Trudeau, which really it was not," she says.

"Pierre had read the book and he loved it. . . . We were together eight years and he had no problem with it. . . . It came out right when the Monica Lewinsky scandal hit and the Canadian press was a bit hard on me. But I'm really proud that I wrote a book on my whole life."

Still, there is at least one chapter yet to be written about The First Lady of the Guitar and Ozzy, the oddest couple of neighbours in the music biz.

Boyd has played for Prince Phillip and other royals and campaigned for animal rights. Ozzy has urinated at the Alamo and bitten a dead bat.

Told the Oz-mouth is said to have a thoughtful, lyrical side, Boyd sounds skeptical.

"Maybe when we get to know each other, maybe I'll bring it out," she says.

Maybe, just maybe, the *Liona-Ozzy* thing will happen, a latter-day Ozzie and Harriet from heaven and hell. After all, Boyd has been able to make music with just about everybody else.

"You know never know. Maybe I'll be touring with Ozzy next."

► **What:** Concert by guitarist Liona Boyd; Toronto guitarist Pavlo and his band are also on the bill
► **When:** Nov. 10 at 8 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m.
► **Where:** Dundas Street Centre United Church, 482 Dundas St. E., at Maitland Street

► **Tickets:** \$30 for reserved seating on floor; \$28 general admission to balcony, plus service charge where applicable; proceeds will benefit Ontario's multi-organ transplant program and London District Catholic school board's music education program; call 672-1967

IN LONDON