

HoundsTV.com's Best and Worst Autograph Signers - Musicians - Canada 2008

Contributed by HoundsTV.com's
Thursday, 01 January 2009
Last Updated Thursday, 01 January 2009

TORONTO (HoundsTV) - Since it seems to be the time of the year when best and worst lists are everywhere. HoundsTV.com officially presents it's annual (ok, it's actually our first best and worst list, but annual has got to start somewhere.)

So who were the BEST and WORST music acts for greeting fans and signing autographs to come through Canada during 2008. We quizzed the people that know best, the celebrity photographers, the autograph collectors, and even a few fans to think about who were the best and worst of 2008...Richard

The Best Signers of 2008

1. AC/DC

Perhaps of all tours to hit Canada this year - none was more anticipated by fans and autograph collectors than AC/DC. It had been more than five years since the last time they breezed through Toronto and everybody remembers how fan friendly they were back then.

It was good to see things had not changed with AC/DC and they were still the same great guys in 2008. From the time they checked into their downtown Toronto hotel, until boarding the bus to play the sold-out stadium gig, to after lunch on Bloor St. the next day - Angus Young, Malcolm Young, Cliff Williams, and Brian Johnson (and yeah, and even the usually tough drummer, Phil Rudd) were signing champs and all round great guys greeting fans and collectors at every turn. AC/DC - The signing champs of 2008. And with a good new album and buzzed about world tour - probably the biggest rock band in the world right now.

2. COLDPLAY

Chris Martin and the boys spent a few days in Toronto during early August for two concerts and a few television and radio station appearances to talk up the new album. All the guys from the band were great about signing and always taking time to greets fans and pose for photos. There was especially a lot of attention on Chris Martin and he was a class act - always polite to fans and autograph collectors.

3. BACHMAN / CUMMINGS (The Guess Who)

Canadian rock icons Burton Cummings and Randy Bachman shared the stage for a cross Canada tour that found its way to Toronto during June. There was a time, not so long ago that Randy Bachman was not so good about signing autographs for collectors (and if HoundsTV was publishing a "bad" list back then - Bachman would surely have found himself on it.) But Bachman seemed to have a change of heart during 2008 and collectors reported he was much better about signing. As for Burton Cummings? Truly one of the nicest, most fan-friendly artists you could ever meet. Collectors are not even sure they have ever seen Burton turn down an autograph request. Cummings sometimes takes such an interest in the items that fans ask him to sign - he'll often talk with the collectors and share stories about the photos or albums he is autographing.

4. SHANIA TWAIN

Shania came back to Toronto for a few days during the summer when she had personal problems with her marriage. We could understand Shania not wanting to even see a fan or collector. But Shania still was gracious with fans who recognized her on the city streets and she still signed lots for the collectors who managed to find her. Through good times and bad Shania remains very gracious about giving autographs and greeting fans.

5. THE JONAS BROTHERS

Disney sensations The Jonas Brothers spent close to a week in Toronto gearing up for their North American tour. Wherever the Jonas Brothers went rabid fans were never far behind. The Brothers did not disappoint trying to make as much time for fans and autograph collectors where they could. It was usually under the watchful eye of their big security guard - but the brothers didn't seem to also mind signing for the more professional autograph seekers who were clearly just out to make a buck or two on their signatures. (and yeah, the average looking pro collector does stick out among packs of screaming girls.)

HONOURABLE MENTION (BEST) - OASIS

The Worst Signers Of 2008

1. ROBERT PLANT & JIMMY PAGE (Led Zeppelin)

While they were not touring together, founding Led Zeppelin members Robert Plant and Jimmy Page arrived in Toronto within weeks of each other during 2008. Plant, on tour with Allison Kraus played a summer show, and Page came to the Toronto Film Festival weeks later to support a film (previous post about that experience here.) Page announced on arrival at TIFF regarding autograph requests "I'm kinda finished with that." and stuck to his word. Robert Plant was equally dismissive the few times approached by collectors over the course of the couple of days he was in Toronto. By mutual agreement among many, Page and Plant were the worst rock god signers to come though during the year. Autograph collectors went home with their Led Zeppelin memorabilia unsigned during 2008, except for a few pieces that a very lucky Brad managed to find a way to get signed.

2. BON JOVI

One of the highest grossing tours of the year, Bon Jovi's Lost Highway tour put the group in Toronto for close to a week when they played 4 (four!) sold-out arena shows. Sightings of main members Richie Sambora and Jon Bon Jovi were numerous at many of the fine dining establishments in the city. Reports of their willingness to sign varied. Sambora did it here and there. Sure, if your a good looking women who approaches Jon Bon Jovi you'll get your few minutes. But approaching Jon with Bon Jovi albums came with very unpredictable results. One autograph collector simply labeled Jon Bon Jovi, "an asshole. Jon will repeatedly belittle and be very mean with collectors he feels might be selling his signature."

3. THE EAGLES

The legendary Eagles managed to put their legal woes aside for another year and spent a few warm summer nights in Toronto during July playing two sold-out gigs at the ACC. Scattered reports suggest they lived up to their reputation for being impossible for autographs and generally not nice guys to meet (and we do mean you - Mr. Henley and Mr. Frey). Actually, the autograph hounds didn't have too much to say about this one. Most collectors are already well informed, through years of fruitless trying, on the difficulty of getting all the Eagles to sign the same item. Most collectors don't bother wasting too much time going after them. Heck, the one Eagle who could be counted on for a few autographs they kicked out of the band.

4. MADONNA

Madonna sailed through Toronto late in the year for a couple of sold-out dates on her enormously successful "Sticky & Sweet" concert tour. As for collectors getting autographs? Fans meeting Madge? Please... you could consider yourself lucky to even get an look at her outside her concert venue. Over the couple of days Madonna was in Toronto - fans, paparazzi, autograph hounds didn't even get a glimpse of the material girl. Enormous care and security precautions were used to keep Madonna far away from any prying eyes.

5. EDDIE VEDDER

Many of the autograph collectors agreed it was tough to add Vedder to the "bad" signers list. There had been so many positive stories about Eddie Vedder greeting fans and signing for the hounds during his many stops in Toronto touring with Pearl Jam over the years. But something about 2008 was different. Vedder made a two-night solo stop at Toronto's Massey Hall during August and gave the autograph collectors fits. He just wasn't into giving any autographs on this trip. Eddie's personal security did a good job keeping everybody far away. They even took Vedder out a rarely used back door at Massey Hall as opposed to the regular, much more fan-friendly, stage door most performers use.

HONOURABLE MENTION (WORST) - RUSH