

P.R.O redefines the power trio

Guitar heroes use their powers for the forces of good

Published February 25, 2010 by [M.D. Stewart](#) in [Music Previews](#)



Pavlo, Rik Emmett and Oscar Lopez — the world's quietest power trio.

DETAILS

Pavlo, Rik Emmett & Oscar Lopez

[Jack Singer Concert Hall](#)

Sunday, February 28 - Sunday, February 28

More in: [World / Reggae / Latin](#)

Think power trio and what comes to mind? A wall of Marshall stacks, a drum kit the size of a small Central American country and cheesy arena-rock posturing. The three Canadian guitarists sitting around a cocktail table in the opulent lobby of the historic Palliser Hotel are a very different kind of power trio. Mediterranean nylon string stylist Pavlo, former Triumph front-man Rik Emmett and local Latin guitar hero Oscar Lopez draw their wattage not from the Enmax grid but from their hearts, minds and decades of collective experience.

When P.R.O. (the catchy acronym for Pavlo, Rik and Oscar) tours, there's no need for a convoy of semi-trucks laden with heavy metal hardware. "We'll show up in these 50 cities with our guitars on our backs and we're going to entertain for two hours," Pavlo says emphatically. "They say, 'You have two hours allotted for your sound check. Is that going to be enough?' and I say, 'We'll arrive at 5, sound check at 5:05 and, at 5:15, we'll be having a glass of wine.'"

Just over two years ago, P.R.O. existed only as an idea. Inspired by Paco De Lucia, Al Dimeola and John McLaughlin's collaborations, Pavlo contacted Lopez through his MySpace page. "I had known of Oscar and actually was a fan of Oscar's for years, but for some reason, we had never crossed paths," he says. Despite being unfamiliar with Pavlo's work, the idea struck a chord with Lopez.

"He wrote that email at the right time, the right place and the right frame of mind that I was in at the time," says Lopez. "I said, 'I love the concept, I love the adventure and I need that in my life — let's go for it.'"

Their mutual agent suggested Emmett to complete the threesome. Though no stranger to arena rock, Emmett had never stopped evolving and expanding his musical vocabulary. He was a little more hesitant.

"Pavlo's original dream was based on that whole McLaughlin, Dimeola, Paco De Lucia thing, which was three extremely, highly virtuosic players," Emmett explains. "I was a little bit concerned. When we talked I had said, 'I hope that this is going to be maybe more Canadian than that; there's going to be a little more of a focus on the pot that melts as opposed to all of this ego-strutting, and also way more of a focus on songwriting. Let's make sure the melody is the most important thing.'"

The three first jammed together at Pavlo's mother's house in Toronto, bonding over music, abundant Greek food and red wine. "It was pretty immediate. We knew that there was something pretty good," says Emmett.

The chemical and alchemical magic captured on the resulting album, *Trifecta*, is a powerful, passionate, soul-stirring musical smorgasbord that spans genres, cultures and continental divides. It's short on ego-strutting and high on mountains of melody.

For the big, arena-free *Trifecta* tour, the two Torontonians have joined Lopez in Calgary for rehearsals. "That's what we're doing right now," says Lopez. "We're working very hard. It's not like an easy piece of cake here."

"That's another Canadian thing about it," Emmett interjects.

The idea and the hard work have paid off handsomely, and Pavlo is clearly pleased with the end product.

"Every song on this record has been written by us, by our lifetimes of experience," he says. "We've sat down, we've worked our asses off to put the best music on the table that we can at this point in our lives. We're not doing it to buy Rolls-Royces".

The passion and the power of the music cannot be denied. "What we do best, especially what these guys do best, it's not commodity stuff; it's spiritual stuff," says Emmett. "I'm 56 years old. I don't want to be fucking around."