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Guitar heroes a winning trifecta

By LISA WILTON, QMI AGENCY

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Pavlo, Rik Emmett and Oscar Lopez, who act as if they've been good pals for years, bring their cross-Canada tour to London's Aeolian Hall on Saturday

A South American musician, a Mediterranean-style guitarist and a former Canadian rock god walk into a bar . . .

It could be the beginning of a good joke. One that either Oscar Lopez, Pavlo Simtikidis or Rik Emmett would crack as the guitar heroes cross Canada.

The three musicians -- who are at Aeolian Hall on Saturday, touring to support their Juno-nominated debut album, *Trifecta* -- act as if they've been good pals for years.

Jokes, slams and good-natured ribbing abound.

"Look at this guy," says Lopez, pointing a finger at Emmett. "He's the rock 'n' roll guy and look at how he dresses. He's the most conservative one in the group."

Clad in a smart jacket, button-up shirt and dress pants, Emmett -- who found success in the late 1970s as frontman for power rock trio *Triumph* -- does look more like a political science professor than a rock star.

"We can all agree that Rik is the balance," says the Chilean-born Lopez, who has called Calgary home for 30 years.

"He's the guy who put the foundation down, which gives us and me the ability to fly with these beautiful melodies."

To be fair, Emmett is actually a music program faculty member at Toronto's Humber College, but says collaborating with Lopez and the Toronto-area's Simtikidis (known professionally as Pavlo) has been one of the more challenging and rewarding experiences of his career.

"When we first started, I hadn't met Oscar at all," he recalls.

"I didn't know how we would get along. But we're all guitar bums. We said, 'Let's just leave all our egos on the outside.' When you come into a collaborative effort you can't bring a lot of your ego or expectations in and you have to wait and see how it develops. And so far, the chemistry has been great."

It's been a two-year process to bring the Pavlo/Emmett/Lopez project to the stage. The original idea came from Pavlo, who was inspired by the jazz fusion collaborations between guitarists Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin and Paco de Lucia.

"It's always been a dream of mine to do something like that," says Pavlo.

"Oscar was interested in the idea and then Rik Emmett came up. It wasn't easy getting together because of our schedules.

"But when we did meet in one room and started playing our guitars, we knew instantly it was going to work. It was very natural to work together."

In addition to playing tracks from *Trifecta* at Aeolian Hall, the trio is also expected to do its own world-fusion take on a medley of Beatles classics . . . and maybe a *Triumph* song or two.

-- with files from James Reaney, *The London Free Press*

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IF YOU GO

What: Concert by Canadian guitarists Pavlo, Rik Emmett and Oscar Lopez.

When: Saturday, 8 p.m.


Where: Aeolian Hall, 795 Dundas St. (at Rectory)

Details: \$58.50 plus applicable charges. (A second date, set for Sunday, was cancelled. Tickets for that show may be refunded at point of purchase or exchanged for a Saturday ticket). Call 519-672-7950 or visit aeolianhall.ca

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