

# THE BEL-VISTAS

Out of the streets and sounds of Scarborough, Ontario come The Bel Vistas. Mark Ripp (vocals and guitar), John Toffoli (drums), Bob Hamlyn (guitar and vocals) and Mike Baxter (bass guitar and vocals) play a pared down, sparse rock and roll which speaks volumes about suburban-urban life in the 1990's.

The current membership of the band was fixed three years ago, after going through various incarnations as Invent the Game and The Game, over the last five years. In that time, they have constantly worked the roadhouses and beer halls of Southern Ontario, playing an emotionally charged music, overlaid with lyrics which tell the real story of growing up and living on the periphery of big city America. It's a perspective gleaned from the endless stream of fast food outlets dotting the city streets, the row houses flowing out of each other, one after another, and hard working, honest and straightforward people who make up these neighbourhoods.

The Bel Vistas can seriously rock, but they also can pull out the acoustic guitars and inspire. The band cites many influences, mostly derived from American music. John Mellencamp, Steve Earle, Los Lobos and The Del Lords are among those inspirations. While comparisons are inevitable, the uniqueness of The Bel Vistas is clearly their own. From the prolific, searing guitar playing, to the big beat and captivation of bass and drums, to the impassioned vocals of the band's main songwriter, Mark Ripp, this is music with substance and a band with purpose.