



## Big Sugar's GORDIE JOHNSON

*How stylin' is Gordie Johnson? Enough that world-renowned clothing manufacturer Hugo Boss has chosen to sponsor him. Johnson has traditionally sported flashy, cool suits; but now that the swing-lovin' herd has followed, the Big Sugar clotheshorse has shifted to more funky, casual attire.*

### What's the arrangement with you and Hugo Boss?

The deal is that they give me clothes in exchange for me wearing them. That's an easy bargain for me, because I love clothes — and I go through so many in a year on tour. If you dive into a drum kit more than once a week, stuff's gonna get ripped and torn. So it's a good thing Hugo's so generous with their threads.

### What does "Style" mean to you?

Your style has to tell a story about you. If something is so hip that it's only gonna be here for 15 minutes, then guess what? It ain't that hip! I can buy \$700 Tony Lama boots on [Toronto's] Queen Street, but I own a cow [a cattle farm in Alberta], therefore I own cowboy boots. That's the difference. If you wear sunglasses, it should be because it's too bright for your eyes.

### Who looks good on the Canadian music scene?

The guys in Sloan look good. They look the part. The way they present themselves is really effective, it tells their story in one glance. Juliette Powell at MuchMusic always has it goin' on. The Tea Party look good these days in slim, black... a slicked-down look.

There's a lot of great music out there. The Tragically Hip: Great music. But would you know one of those guys if you ran over him in your mini-van? I mean, c'mon, I wouldn't, and I've been in the same room with them. Our Lady Peace? Great band, huge following, but honest to God, I wouldn't know them, and I've seen their picture a million times. I wouldn't know the drummer in treble charger if he robbed me at gunpoint.

### Is it important that Big Sugar looks good as a group?

I've fired guys for not looking good: Ten-minute penalty for looking bad onstage! Yes, I've sent people home from the gig to go get changed and come back. Because someone paid a cover charge to come in tonight, not to look at someone who looks like they just washed their car.



Photos by Ryan Beaupré. Interview by Jim Kelly.  
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