

Canadian Indie Music Gets Its Star Moment Thanks to 'Heated Rivalry'

Absolute Treat, Peter Peter and Wolf Parade's popularity has exploded thanks to Crave's gay hockey hit



Photo: Heather Saitz

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Back in the fall of 2025, when Toronto pop combo Absolute Treat received word that their song "Bonnie" would be featured in an upcoming Crave Original series called *Heated Rivalry*, they didn't think much of it. It wasn't even their first sync in a queer sports show that year.



"My roommate, anticipated Cana
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Panacci's roomn
a worldwide ph
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"We are almost at a million streams on the song ['Bonnie'], and we just hit 300,000 monthly listeners," Panacci says. "We've gained many followers on TikTok and Instagram. I think we're just going to keep riding the wave and find out how it continues to affect us. I mean, maybe we'll make a couple of dollars off of Spotify, who knows?"





Absolute Treat



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Other Canadian indie acts from the soundtrack, including Wolf Parade and Dilly Dally, have enjoyed a similar rise. "10x Spotify listeners in one month through the power of gayness," Dilly Dally wrote in an Instagram Story in early January.

"The premise of a sexy, gay hockey show sounds fun. We had no idea that the song would trend the way it is," Wolf Parade's Spencer Krug told The Globe & Mail, referring to the show's prominent use of his song "I'll Believe in Anything" and its subsequent viral explosion.

"I thought it was atypical, quirky and edgy — and, to be honest, when I really like something and it has lots of personality, it doesn't really work commercially," admits Quebec City musician Peter Roy (a.k.a. Peter Peter), whom Tierny tapped to compose the score on the strength of his 2024 album *Éther*. "I was like, there will be esteem, good street cred. I thought it maybe would have been more niche. Nobody can plan on any phenomenon like that."

Peter Peter's debut as a TV composer has improbably become magnitudes more popular than any of his previous albums — in particular the smouldering synth ballad "It's You," which soundtracks one of the show's many steamy, sweetly romantic sex scenes.



Peter Peter - It's You | Heated Rivalry (Original Series Soundtrack)

Milan Records USA



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"I knew it was a romance show, so some of the cues are romantic. Like, even in the names, there's one called 'Young and Restless,' like *The Young and the Restless*. So, in some of the chord progressions, I needed to hide some kind of soap [opera] DNA," he reveals.

Yet, despite Roy incorporating elements of soap opera sweetness into his music, his score helps elevate *Heated Rivalry* from pulpy romance to prestige TV. Where other romance shows might rely on the melodrama of sweeping strings, *Heated Rivalry* is underlaid by minimal synth arpeggiators, moody ambience and the occasional burst of tense, pulsing techno. It's a perfect fit for a show that is far better-acted, funnier and more emotionally complex than your average streaming romance fodder.

"Nobody has ever seen two male hockey players kiss on ice before," Panacci marvels, her voice rising with excitement. "That scene felt so bizarre to watch. My first boyfriend was a hockey player. The hockey community is so toxic in so many ways, and I think it's just beautiful. Just the shock factor that this has brought — it's just fantastic."

Panacci notes that her Absolute Treat bandmate Julia Wittmann wasn't available to join our interview, "but she wanted to mention how many times she cried while watching. That was her input. I'm like, 'You want to say anything?' She's like, 'Just tell him how much I cried.'"



Scott and Kip Kiss | Heated Rivalry | Crave Original



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For Roy, the success of *Heated Rivalry* and the explosion of its soundtrack offer proof of Canada's bounty of great artists, and it's bringing about "a second wave of Montreal appreciation around the world" in a way not seen since the 2000s.

"We don't need music from elsewhere. We love music from outside Canada, obviously, but we have lots of good artists," he argues.

"It wasn't strategic — I can tell you, Jacob just picked the music he loved."

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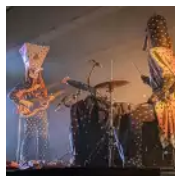
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