

# Michaele Jordana and The Poles

## Performance Art/Music



## Sample Critic Quotes Timeline 1977-1978

### New York Rocker: Nov 1977:

“THE POLES...they’re visionary, raw, powerful, defy gravity bringing a message of hope. Incredible Michaele Jordana, lead singer, riveting all eyes on stage. Such a tiger, such an exotic cutie. Whirling like a dervish, little girl tough, Cleopatra sexy, radar night eyes piercing....The last 10 minutes of the show must be seen to be believed. In an electronic duel, Jordana and Pringle blast apart the airwaves with synthesizer guns, spewing invisible rays of atom-smashing pulse... In concert at The Toronto Workshop Productions, Michaele Jordana instructed her fans: ‘If anyone asks you what I’m doing here, just tell them I’m painting electromagnetic fields of energy, 3D sound.’ What’s happening I think is that THE POLES just may have picked up the torch that Jim Morrison used to shine to lead the way to transformation from the reptile to the angel state.” – **George Dean Higton**

### Variety, Dec.28, 1977:

“Quintet has a choice lead singer in Michaele Jordana, the group’s sole femme. Her voice is solid, good enough to place THE POLES above the level of many other New Wave outfits. The Poles obviously are one of Canada’s better New Wave acts.” – **Fred Kirby**

### Entertainment Weekly, 1977:

“Michaele Jordana is fast becoming the premiere New Wave chanteuse: she was shining and cutting like a diamond coated tigress.” – **Lenny Stoute**

### Montreal Star, Feb. 11, 1978:

“Michaele Jordana is a chanteuse of star magnitude... she possesses an almost glib vocal facility... and a stage presence as compelling.” – **Matt Radz**

### Toronto Star - Street Talk, Nov. 26, 1979:

“So what can you do with a band that’s bent on success, not symbolic self-destruction? Well, listen, for one thing. I’m not sure if what THE POLES are doing musically is New Wave or if it’s punk, but it does come on strong and has the feel of genuine rock n roll. THE POLES are brutal chic.” – **Peter Goddard**

### EYE Magazine:

“Michaele Jordana - the woman of the eighties.” – **Cameron G. Carpenter**

**Cue Magazine Feb.28, 1978:**

“Don’t miss THE POLES from Canada.” – **Noe Goldwasser**

**Toronto Star:**

“New Wave has become hot...El Mocambo manager Mike Baird says, “It’s very simple. They sell tickets. Proof? Check El Mo’s accounts. Elvis Costello sold out; THE POLES sold out; David Johansen...DEVO...Tom Robinson...Blondie...sold out.” – **Krystyna Hunt**

**Toronto Sun, Jan.18.1978:**

“ Inspirational lyricist Michaela Jordana is entrancing.”- **Wilder Penfield**

**Liberation (Paris, France), 1978:**

La musique était devenue hypnotique (Kraftwerk) et s’était transformée en un rock n roll d’urgence.  
– **Olivier Cossard**

**Entertainment News:**

“Michaela.... a flexible steel stiletto...her skin is pale, her eyes huge and kohl-lined, looking for all the world like a re-incarnation of Theda Bara.” – **Davina Stone**

**Ottawa Citizen, Feb 18, 1978:** “Michaela Jordana of THE POLES radiates an excitement like a high tension wire. Musically aggressive, and with the rhythmic power of a chain-reaction, New Wave’s leading visionaries are refugees from the art world and the literary fringes”  
– **Mark Fawcett**

**Toronto Sun:** “Jordana has a fascinating sense of “other” that could lead her and Doug Pringle who complements her vocals with moon-dry keyboard lines to real stardom...the classiest act in Toronto New Wave Power Pop.” – **Wilder Penfield**

**Maclean’s Magazine, Nov.17:**

“Something defiant and declamatory about Jordana’s vocals inspires comparison to Patti Smith, but there is also a naïve toughness that at least remotely echoes Ronnie Spector. The heroine who becomes queen of the “*Cannibal Kids* “is after all named Lisa. Michaela Jordana, lead singer for THE POLES projects a kind of bold girlishness all her own. From the danceable opening of the title cut, through a heavy metal cover of Alice Cooper’s “*I’m Eighteen*”, a progressive rockabilly original called “*Hologram Man-Jim Jimmy*”, to the immortal “*CN Tower*” - a remix of THE POLES single. Jordana traces a dramatic passage from moony innocence to high voltage assertiveness, with outstanding cuts “*X-Ray Robot*”, familiar to her followers, and a new song- “*I’ll do What You Want (But I’ll Do It My Way)*”, a characteristic sentiment mixed with a beguilingly primitive beat.” – **David Livingstone**

**Maclean’s:**

“Michaela Jordana... a filament of animal glamour... says: ‘*I want to do my material my way. It’s the same in music as in art. No one’s going to see what I see unless I paint it, and no one’s going to hear what I hear unless I sing it.*’ Independence and integrity.” – **David Livingstone**

**The Toronto Star- Today Magazine: Michaela Jordana- Punk Rock New Wave Queen**

“At the Edge, A Toronto club known for breaking new talent...Michaela Jordana moans, ‘*We’ll build and empire for centuries / With war paint of ashes / There’ll be victory / We’ll build up. we’ll build up*’... The Poles combine... New Wave, basic rock n roll, with electronic sounds and cerebral lyrics that convey futuristic - and foreboding - dimensions. People are up pushing through the crowd to be close to Jordana, raising their fists and shouting out the chorus, ‘*XRay Robot Gonna Make You My Slave*’. It’s like a scary scene from the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust. In the middle of all the adulation Jordana turns to me. The future is scary she says. Vibrating with nervous energy, obsessed with her own vision, she’s a new wave version of the late French chanteuse Edith Piaf. Jordana has the same passionate intensity, the same commitment to her art, but it’s her obsession with technology that is the biggest item in her repertoire. ‘*Computers are taking over, she insists, raking me with her eyes like a new wave Aimee Semple McPherson. The earth and the animals are being destroyed, and we’re animals too. As an artist my job is to radiate pure emotion. I’m expressing the primitive feelings, the rage and desire, the blind instinct for survival. The kids understand that we’ve got to fight to survive.*’” – **Judy Steed**

**Kitchener-Waterloo Herald, Aug 10,1979:**

“Aggressive female singer alters all-male image of New Wave”. Michaela Jordana says: ‘There aren’t many females in New Wave right now, but there will be more, there will be more women in rock n roll, but it’s still right now a boy’s club. I’m breaking through and having fun. At the same time I can still be as much a girl as I want to be. It’s a perfect time, people are beginning to accept femininity in an aggressive role.’” **John Kiely**

**Toronto Star:** “It’s near midnight and you can feel the tension building in the El Mocambo before the band comes on. The dark eyed singer with the hollow cheeks and the gaunt look of a fashion model has been here before with her new wave band THE POLES. She has an album out...She’s used to producing under pressure. Still, this *is* the El Mocambo. It’s not just any club. Record company executives drop by, agents, critics, publicists and media types...listening. Business is done here, names are made famous. Michaela Jordana can feel this tension and tries to ignore it...but the moment Jordana is on stage she can feel the heat coming from the audience. Jordana’s act is future rock with all the trimmings - synthesizers, frantic drum work, and lyrics about teenage love and lust. Murray McLaughlan drops by and listens. There’s *something* in this sound any musician would recognize.” - **Peter Goddard**

**Bob Mackowitz Show, Q107, 1977 – The POLES Interview.**

**Bob:** “The POLES seem to be exploring what I can only call suburban angst... that’s the endless nights with nothing to do... the boredom of hanging out at the plaza, cruising. Doug Pringle, who’s known for his days in Syrinx and Michaela Jordana, the lyricist and lead singer of THE POLES, are here in the studio tonight. Doug, tell me about punks.”

**Doug:** “*The plaza shuts down at nine and the punks arrive; they set up their vans and their bikes and they build a fire and they put on their show, and that’s what punk is...that’s all it is ... putting on your own show. Your life is played out there in the flickering flames, and as the flames grow higher, the tales grow wilder and the singing gets more manic.*”

**Bob:** “What stuck me about watching The POLES perform is that, next to modern pop music, Punk appears to be - at least femininely speaking- the most liberated; the women seem to be on equal footing. Women like Michaela in the punk scene can be as loose, as crazy, and as aggressive as they want to, as their male counterparts, and there’s no social stigma attached. Everybody is actually equal. And The POLES is very much a vehicle for Michaela’s poetic vision. The way she occupies the stage makes Stevie Nicks look like a nun with her Rhiannon tease.

“Michaela is a painter. Her work appears in the recent issue of Art in America, the Scientific American of painting; and she brings her art to the music. It’s a word-painting very much like Patti Smith and the late Jim Morrison; and actually the comparison to Morrison is quite apt, because ritual is an important part of what THE POLES are doing.”

**Hamilton Spectator - Profile Nov. 21, 1980:**

“The eyes - those cat-like almond discs are the centre of Michaela Jordana’s universe. She uses them as a surgeon might use a scalpel, dissecting you with a masterful visual stroke. She uses them to try to disarm you, to make you a believer in her out-of-this-worldly visions. Her worlds contain none of the commonplace everyday occurrences the rest of us know. Jordana the 29 year old new wave rock princess with the purple hair, is above normality. Jordana says: ‘I’m going on my own inner strengths. I’m old enough to know what I’m doing and I’m young enough to do it.’” **Greg McMillan**

**Entertainment News 1978:**

A great deal of interest expressed about the band is due to their stunning front person, lyricist Michaela Jordana. It is she who makes THE POLES very much out of the ordinary - Michaela has this way of drawing all eyes to herself, male and female both. Her onstage presence suggests much - she is exciting in the way that something forbidden is a little dangerous to get involved with...If I have dwelt overly long on Michaela’s charisma, it is in an attempt to give an overall strength of the band’s visual and musical image. Both visually and musically THE POLES are hard, tough, sharp edged, and streetwise. The rhythm section

holds solid with Stevie Goode on bass, and Rex Chainbelt on drums, Ricky Swede on vicious guitar, and Doug Pringle on the electronic keyboards making up a volatile mixture. There is a definite feeling listening to The Poles, that you couldn't teach this lot anything about the street. But paradoxically I also felt that what I was watching was an extension of Art (you know, the one with the capital "A", that has been the preserve of the rich and the ones that are in the closed circle. The kind that comes in lavish expensive periodicals). Doug Pringle comes to THE POLES with a wealth of musical experience including being part of Syrinx. Michael's life prior to The Poles was total immersion in art - she has a painting in the collection of The National Gallery of Art in Ottawa. **Davina Stone**

**RPM 1978:**

One of the bright lights in Canada's new wave scene is a Toronto based 5 piece band called THE POLES. THE POLES are very much unique among new wave groups...in that they produce sophisticated music interwoven with carefully planned message lyrics over a high intensity rhythmic background. The group record out of Toronto's Soundstage Studios on the Nimbus 9 label, which has been reactivated for the first time since the dissolution of the Guess Who. Nimbus 9 has released THE POLES' debut single CN TOWER with 4 new sides in the can. Doug Pringle notes that, "The kind of music that we do is very listenable. CN TOWER is almost more AM than underground. In a way it's a hymn to communication. When you look at the CN Tower most people treat it as a monument to Canadian identity. In the song, we treat it as the highest radio transmitter in the world which is there for our personal use. "We could feel the airwaves drawing us, pumpin' our rock n roll!" [The Poles music] is a crystalline kind of clear sound. We're really after musical clarity" - **Peter Donato**

**The Spectator: Nov. 15**

*Headline:* "Saucy punk kitten has all the tools to become lioness". **Greg McMillan**

**Eye 22 Feb.1978:**

THE POLES are the only new wave band around who can honestly blend street awareness, lyrical sensibility, stage presence and kick-ass rock n roll. Together THE POLES and Michael Jordana should prove to be Toronto's biggest knock-out in a very long time". Jordana says: 'We're a total animal created out of electronics and human integrity. The audience is a gang and we are part of them and they a part of us.'" - **Cameron G. Carpenter**