

# Up Close with Juno Award Winner Trevor Guthrie

By J.A. Shapira

**T**revor Guthrie has undergone highs and lows that most recording artists will never experience. From peaking the billboards as the frontman for boyband SoulDecision, to falling hard and being bailed out numerous times by his parents, he is now in his 40s and has won the 2014 Juno Award for Dance Recording of the Year for his hit single "This is what it feels like".

Deep underground in the empty hallways below the Fairmont Hotel, VanCity-Buzz reporter Nicolle Hodges and I teamed to interview Guthrie and ask him the questions that mattered.

It was Sunday morning, the day of the Juno Awards broadcast. We had met Guthrie on the Friday at the welcome reception and scored the exclusive the night before at the Gibson after-party at Hermanos Restaurant. Guthrie rolled out of bed minutes before and came down complaining when he saw we were about to film it all. "Stop, I look horrible" he said. After some persuading we got down to the grit, cameras rolling.



A perfect gentleman, Guthrie was as open and candid as we could have hoped.

Other than \*NSync and Backstreet Boys, his time with SoulDecision earmarked the band as one of the top boy bands in the world. After spending some time with him, it became pretty obvious he felt pushed into the role and so I had to ask.

"Oh, 100 per cent", said Guthrie. "The problem was there was no band we could be compared with because we were playing instruments. Then when Maroon 5 came, it was like, yeah, you see. It can work! But, it was too late."

"Was it fun?," I asked.

"I loved it! I thought that was the time of my life, and it was, but with this last year with Armin, now this has been the best year of my life" Guthrie says.

Turning to a more sombre note, I ask Trevor about the song. It's obvious to anyone listening to the radio that Armin Van Buuren gets the bulk of the credit, but the fact is the song was written by Trevor before Armin ever came into the picture.

As the story goes, Guthrie found out from songwriter Jenson Vaughan that Armin was looking for a new song. Having been in talks with him in the past, Guthrie offered to write it, finding out around the same time that his best friend had been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer and only had 17 weeks to live.

"I was hearing stories from his wife and his kids, and I was like 'Wow, this is just so out of the blue'," says Guthrie. "I was really excited because I was working with Armin, but this was going on. I took the chords sent by Jenson and went to the piano and 'nobody here knocking at my door' was the

first line that came out," Guthrie tells me. "I just started thinking about my friend, and if I was his wife or his kids, what would be going through my mind," Guthrie says, evidently emotional.

Interestingly enough, Guthrie didn't want to send the song to Armin, feeling it was too depressing for a DJ to use. It was only after his friend sent it without telling him, that he found out Armin thought it was "brilliant." It was set to be his first single.

That's when it went viral. Until recently, not many people knew the history behind what many believed was a lighthearted, and cheerful song. Today, while Guthrie admits to sometimes feeling guilty when he hears it, the family of his late friend could not be prouder, playing the song at the funeral and sending him texts following his Juno win.

While this is only one single, Guthrie believes this is just the beginning of his newfound career. Thrust back into the spotlight he's relishing every minute of it, always remembering the harder times when he was forced into hard labour after falling from stardom as SoulDecision crashed and burned.

Of the 40 plus artists I interviewed at the 2014 Juno Awards, Trevor Guthrie will always be remembered as the most genuinely grateful musician I've ever met.

