

KING OF POP.COM

Jonathan Mullane, or Jonathan M for short, has a slight handicap: he sings pop music. The Halifax-based musician has an engaging smile, his vocals are gentle, and his lyrics are full of complex rhythms and wistful melancholy. As we saw at February's East Coast Music Awards (ECMA) ceremony in Saint John, many Atlantic Canadian musical artists are still producing traditional tunes. To counter that, the singer has developed a strong Internet presence in order to sell more pop records.

In the mid-1990s, Mullane put out a self-titled CD through a German label called Long Island Records; at that time, Europe was a hotbed for pop music. After the owner of the company died, so did Mullane's CD. But through his Web site, his European fans have found him, including a

Swedish journalist who reviewed the CD. "That's when I realized that the Web is becoming a crucial promotional tool," says Mullane.

In November of 2000, the singer attended an e-commerce-development seminar for the music industry sponsored by Canadian Heritage. "I made a decision there," he says. "I'm really going to go for this big-time and get a really good Web site." Through the Canadian Digital Cultural Content Initiative, he applied for and won a \$5,600 grant to build a site, which is how www.jonathanm.com was born.

In addition to selling his three CDs—including his latest, *Day After Day*—his site features local sponsors, including Vogue Optical, a sponsor of the ECMAs; Blue Sky Media Duplication; Wacky Wheatley's; Buckley's Music; Domus Realty, who sold him his house;

Dugger's Men's Wear; Northcliffe Indoor Tennis Club; and Head tennis rackets. The latter two reflect his day job as a tennis-teaching pro and provide a connection to his tennis fans.

Each sponsor pays \$250 for six months of exposure or \$400 for a year, with the guarantee that there won't be competing businesses. Listed on every CD is a contest number, which you can enter to win various prizes, such as a Sony CD Walkman. Mullane says that he received several hundred responses to his first prize offering: a titanium tennis racket.

The Jonathan M Web site also features a biography, photo gallery, updates, and a list of links; in March, it will have his new music video. He says the response so far has been great, and he's close to reaching his goal of 100 hits a day. — Carol Johnstone