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Man of *The Hour*

George Stroumboulopoulos talks to *The Cord* about ditching MuchMusic, being a Habs fan and Britney Spears' chewing gum

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For five years he was the face of MuchMusic to music fans across Canada. As the host of *The New Music* and *The Punk Show* he entertained and informed.

But as a wise man once said, "You better start swimming or you'll sink like a stone," and George Stroumboulopoulos isn't the type to sink anytime soon.

After his tenure at Much was over, Stroumboulopoulos was lured down the street to the CBC where he's been tackling issues other than what our favourite pop-tarts are up to. His show, *The Hour*, is a fast paced news/talk program that covers the issues of the day, done in his typically manic style.

While Stroumboulopoulos isn't the type of host you'd expect from the CBC, he says it's working great. "You'd be surprised. I know a lot

of people think that me working here I'd be out of place, but there are so many people that are very much like each other, you just never hear about it, but we're definitely here."

While he says he enjoyed his years at Much, the chance to take a broader and, at times, more serious scope was too good for Stroumboulopoulos pass up.

"I really enjoyed my time at MuchMusic and got to make some really really neat entertainment music television. But as time went on, entertainment TV as a whole, not just MuchMusic... changed.

While I still did music on *The New Music* and *The Punk Show* I spent a lot of time not doing music, but more doing celebrity entertainment stuff, which is fine but it wasn't for me at a certain point. I kind of got bored talking about Britney Spears' gum for sale on eBay... I don't care."

On why he moved to the CBC, Stroumboulopoulos says the open format of *The Hour* appealed to him.

"I'll go wherever the right show is" he explained. At *The Hour*, Stroumboulopoulos and his producers can discuss pretty much whatever they want.

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-George Stroumboulopoulos, on his decision to leave MuchMusic

"I just wanted to make a show with people that I like, talking about what's going on in the world, and do it in a way that people from all over the place can watch it. Sometimes we can be

serious and heavy and sometimes we can be light and ridiculous."

In this respect they've done the job, as earlier this year *The Hour* was named by *TV Guide* readers as the best Canadian TV program.

"I just love going on the air and working with really good people and get to talk about really neat

topics," he explains. As for the person George would most like to have sit across from him, he has no hesitation in making his choice. "Bob Dylan. I want Dylan on and I want Nelson Mandela.

You talk about two guys that have delivered, they have delivered."

Since George started his career as a sports-radio talk show host it was inevitable that our conversation would hit upon the return of

the NHL.

"It's gonna be a good game and a lot more teams are going to be competitive." But as a good Habs fan, he won't take the bait on picking a winner in the battle of Ontario. "Fuck that shit dude, are you crazy? That would kill me, both those teams make me sick," he says with a laugh. "I'd chose the Oilers if I can't pick the Canadiens. But as a true Habs fan I would choose death before I would choose one of them."

Speaking of lockouts, during the ongoing CBC "labour disruption" Stroumboulopoulos has kept himself busy.

He can now be found hosting his own weekly radio talk show on CFRB 1010, Sunday nights from 9 to 11pm, but he has every intention of returning to *The Hour* as soon as the lockout ends.