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ROCK

BY LYNN SAXBERG

Ottawa singer should stand test of time

Victor James Nesrallah

Always Dreaming
(Free Flying Music 003)

The first full-length CD release by Victor James Nesrallah should mark a turning point for the independent Ottawa singer/songwriter and propel him into the big leagues.

It's a high-quality, professional-sounding disc that fits easily between folky rock/pop artists such as Chris de Burgh and Billy Joel and musically serious artists such as Bruce Cockburn and Bruce Hornsby.

Known locally as a singer/songwriter working in country, folk and blues styles, Nesrallah takes a well-aimed stab at the pop market with *Always Dreaming*.

An upbeat song called *Real Love* is catchy, appealing and totally accessible to pop-radio listeners. Other songs of note are the spiritual *Dreaming*, the rocky guitar-led *Sign Of The Times*, and the melodic, rolling *Turning the Page*.

Nesrallah's lyrics are simple and well written. The music comes from his work on piano and guitar, plus talented local musicians, including guitarist Terry Tufts, singer Lynn Miles and soprano saxophonist Peter Kiese-walter.