She's the Bos: Dianne Bos, lead singer for Perfect World (flanked by Andrew Zealley, left, and Brian Skol) , says their video *Have A Good Look* used chickens as a protest against materialism.

Bos and boys count chickens to hatch Mother Nature video

By Craig MacInnis Toronto Star

"Being in a room with 12,000 chickens was very strange," notes Dianne Bos, lead singer for Toronto's Perfect World.

In an age when rock videos are often synonymous with stylized glamor and hedonistic excesses, Perfect World (at The Holiday tonight and Saturday) is determined to restore some journalistic dignity to the medium.

"There's such a *format* to rock videos," she complains. "The preoccupation with bodies and cars and material things, it's unfortunate. Video can be such a fantastic area for expressing ideas."

That would explain the chickens (*and* the dairy cows and fish) that dominate the group's debut video, *Have A Good Look*.

"We went all over southern Ontario to do it," says the 29-year-old singer/songwriter. The idea, she explains, was to chronicle man's manipulation of his natural resources — from fish and dairy farms to tree nurseries.

But the manipulation didn't end there. "We ended up looking like the chickens and the cows," she adds. "I think it showed how we're manipulated as well."

The independent project, shot over a six-month period last year, garnered top honors in the 1985 Heinz Ketchup Canadian Music Video awards, selected from more than 80 independent entries at the recent Video Culture Festival.

The prize is a $25,000 video to be produced later this year by Rob Quartly's Champagne Productions (Platinum Blonde, Corey Hart). And with that kind of money, Bos hopes the group can further develop its environmental theme.

"The song we're probably going to do (for the video) is 'Vacation In Black,' which is about visiting all the species in the world that are becoming extinct, the idea of a funereal holiday."

But let's stop things right here. This ecological overbite is not really what Perfect World is all about, Bos admits somewhat guiltily.

"I'm not a Brigitte Bardot save-the-whales type. It's more of an appreciation (of nature). If the rest of them were here, I probably wouldn't be talking about it this much."

The "rest of them" are keyboardist Andrew Zealley and drummer Brian Skol (the trio will be augmented by Spoons' keyboardist Rob Preuss and guitarist Cam MacInnes for their Holiday shows).

Having been formed little more than a year ago, and with a new self-titled EP on The Garys' Tower Town Tunes label, Perfect World is still to some extent a band in search of its place.

"We've been waiting for somebody to coin a phrase for our music," Bos allows.

The threesome's association actually began several years ago when they were together in the now-defunct electro-pop band, TBA.

"Everybody was expecting great things, but it didn't happen," she says. "The music was innovative, but by the time we started pushing it, it had become passe."

When they formed Perfect World, it was with a more settled strategy.

"We wanted to approach it with almost a game plan. We weren't going to play until we had a good body of work together."

The body of work is there now, 16 original songs, and glowing reviews of the group's just-released EP are starting to roll in.

So far, so good. In fact, the music — a textured blend of electro-pop melodies and lean rhythms — is rather hard to pin down. Its elusiveness has a lot to do with Bos' flexible voice. It ranges from the urgent inflections of The Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde to the cool directness of Everything But The Girl's Tracey Thorne.

In other words, there's a versatility to the music that should enable the band to sidestep the pitfalls of one-dimensional trendiness.

"So far," says Bos, "we haven't had to compromise and we seem to be coming up with a type of music that a lot of people appreciate. We'll just have to see where it goes from here."