

GZ media opens new pressing plant in Burlington, Canada

Lodenice, 15.5.2017

Burlington can now call itself the vinyl record capital of Canada.

GZ media and Precision Record Pressing held an opening celebration May 11, 2017 for more than 100 invited music industry guests, including representatives from all the major Canadian record labels.

The new plant boasts five new double record presses — freshly manufactured in the Czech Republic — that can turn out 3.6 million vinyl records per year.

"There's nobody else (in Canada) that can do our volume," Precision vice-president Gerry McGhee said in an interview. "Our Phase 2 expansion will bring production up to 6 million and that will make us the second largest in North America, next to Union (Record Pressing) in Nashville."

The company employs about 40 staff members and many of them were at work pressing recordings by pop-rockers Hedley and packaging others by singer-songwriter Feist. McGhee says there are plans to soon add a second shift and then a third (ideally, by year's end) that would boost the staff number to more than 100.

Vinyl is still a relatively niche market, accounting for only about five per cent of physical album sales, but market research has shown that it increased by almost 58 per cent last year alone.

Vinyl pressing technology, however, had largely disappeared following the switch to CDs in the 1980s and the few remaining presses had trouble keeping up with the resurgent demand for LPs.

The hope is to grab a large chunk of the growing North American market.

McGhee says the average order for a record is 500 to 2,000 for most titles, but the company will accept smaller runs as low as 100.

"We also want to support independent labels and independent bands," McGhee says. "Most plants will shy away from anything under 300. We welcome that business."

Photos:

1. Precision president Shawn Johnson
2. Pressing plant in Burlington
3. GZ media president Zdenek Pelc and Precision vice-president Gerry McGhee during Grand opening

