

Singing it and winging it

Danny Michel

With Five O'Clock Charlie and Colleen Brown
Friday, 22 September at 8pm
The Powerplant

LACINA DESJARLAIS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Music is life for Danny Michel, so it came as no surprise when the charismatic singer said that he'd driven through a Saskatoon snowstorm in order to continue the Alberta leg of his cross-Canada tour.

However, finding his way out of a blizzard is the least of Michel's accomplishments. In the past year, the singer-songwriter received his first Juno nomination for Best New Artist, and in June released his new CD *Valhalla*, which has been making waves with fans across Canada.

"[*Valhalla's*] more focused and simple," Michel says. "I wanted to harness my music and not jump from style to style."

Indeed, Michel's new album does seem to vary from his previous works. He's chosen to concentrate on one distinct musical thread without skipping between genres, producing a sound that can best be described as an eclectic mix of folk music and pop rock. Most critics, though, have dubbed Michel's music indescribable, but that's only because a great deal of his lyrical inspiration has been drawn from his own life and the events of the world around him.

"My brothers and I grew up listening to everything, but we especially listened to a lot of punk rock, like the Clash," Michel says.

While The Clash may have helped drive Michel to become a singer, his love for producing seems to stem from unknown origins. Michel recently took



a break from his own endeavors to produce the new AA Soundsystem CD.

"I like finding cool little bands that need some help," he says of his work with the group. "I like singing and producing equally, and you've gotta love what you do in this business."

If this comment is any indication of his future intentions, it seems that we'll be seeing his name on the marqueses and in the production credits a lot more frequently.

Besides showing off a new musical style at his next stop, the Powerplant, Michel will also give fans the chance to experience Michel's new show format.

"I used to plan out the shows and

now I walk out and just sort of wing it," Michel says. "I feed off the crowd and let them shout out what they want to hear."

In the past, fans have hailed Michel's shows as being an interesting mix of his own music and covers of other artists, particularly David Bowie. At his last performance in Edmonton, the folk singer even pulled out his cellphone on stage and started jamming away with it, and according to Michel, things won't be any less crazy this time around.

"I like playing Edmonton because the crowd is fun and energetic, and that's always awesome," Michel says.

Girls just wanna wear pink

New *Sesame Street* character, Abby Cadabby, not some Hilton-esque ditz



KELSEY
TANASIUK

With her catchphrase being "That's so magic!" even though she's a bit magically incompetent for a fairy, some say this ditzy image isn't one they want for their children.

Sometimes girls actually want to wear pink, paint their nails and have a massive shoe collection. Does this make them any less intelligent?

Ten to four. Until recently, that was the ratio of boy-to-girl lead characters on the classic children's program, *Sesame Street*. But one fateful day—also known as 14 August, 2006—the masterminds behind everyone's childhood favourite decided to add a new young lady to the cast.

Enter Abby Cadabby: Princess of Pixie Dust, Empress of Pink and now Queen of Controversy. Abby is the daughter of Cinderella's fairy godmother, a cotton-candy coloured three-year-old dressed in mounds of crinoline. With glittery pink and purple hair, a face full of freckles and makeup tips stolen off Mimi from the *Drew Carey* show, it's obvious, right off the bat, that Ms Cadabby is the ultimate girly girl.

And thus, the vultures of criticism and the protectors of all things feminist swoop in.

Abby was immediately slammed for being a stereotype. Apparently, she's just a little too pink, sparkly and Paris Hilton for some people to stand.

Feminism is supposed to be about having the freedom as woman to choose your own path. However, parents have recently been trying so hard to keep society from pigeonholing their daughters that they've ended up trapping them. Sometimes girls actually want to wear pink, paint their nails and have a massive shoe collection. Does this make them any less intelligent? Any less independent and capable of running their own lives? Interviews with groups of preschoolers led to the creation of Abby Cadabby, and the little girls of this world asked for a pink fairy friend on their favourite show. Isn't it right to give it to them?

In addition to all this, *Sesame Street* has tried to create non-stereotypical female characters before, like the orange monster called Zoe, who carries around her pet rock and drives the Zoe-mobile. However, it wasn't until they stuck her in a tutu that little girls actually started to like the tomboyish pile of fur.

It's a girl's right to choose if they want to be a doctor, a football player or a pretty, pink princess. It's no one's right—media, society, parents or otherwise—to change that. I, for one, hope that Abby Cadabby keeps her place on *Sesame Street*. The tomboys can keep Zoe, because I'm sticking with the fairy.

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