

Ron can't sleep. He saw a scary movie, and now he sees shadowy figures in the dark. The only way he can prevent nightmares is if he writes a review about the movie, because, you know, writing is a cathartic kind of healing.



## GATEWAY A&E

Fighting closet monsters one review at a time

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### THE FOURTH ANNUAL GATEWAY SCHOLARSHIP FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE FIELD OF EXCELLENCE

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### Ghostrain

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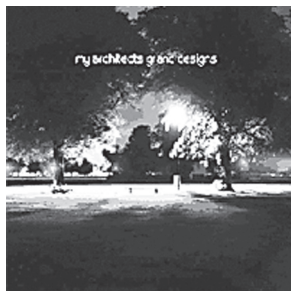
TONY KESS  
Arts & Entertainment Writer



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[www.livesofmany.com](http://www.livesofmany.com)

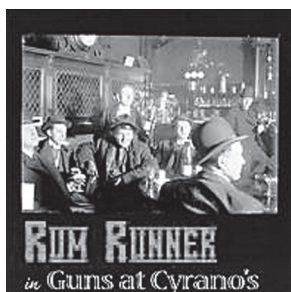
PATRICK ROSS  
Arts & Entertainment Writer



### My Architects

*Grand Designs*  
Fierce Panda Records  
[www.myarchitects.co.uk](http://www.myarchitects.co.uk)

RYAN KENNY  
Arts & Entertainment Writer



### Rum Runner

*In Guns At Cyrano's*  
Stumble Records  
[www.myspace.com/rumrunner](http://www.myspace.com/rumrunner)

JOEL TIEDEMANN  
Arts & Entertainment Writer



### Florence K

*Bossa Blue*  
Red Blues Productions/Musicor  
[www.florencek.com](http://www.florencek.com)

LISA OSTROWSKI  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Luke Gustafson is an artist who wears his influences on his sleeve—at least that's how it seems with the first few tracks of *Let The Record Show*, his first official album under the Ghostrain pseudonym. The Ontario native's debut is heavy with blues-folk revelry, and the wisps of artists such as Leonard Cohen, Tom Waits and Bob Dylan can be found lingering within every song.

Starting with the melancholy blues-strum of "Let the Record Show," Ghostrain immediately mimics antecedents playing up the typical "sad man with a guitar" archetype. As the album progresses, Gustafson maintains the single-minded blues-folk ruse for another few tracks before his creativity begins to wander.

While *Let The Record Show* could have remained a decent album within these parameters, it's Gustafson's experimental tendencies during the album's second half that really set it apart. Tracks like "The Modern Age" find Ghostrain toying with organs, synthesizers and funk influences to augment his somber atmospherics. This playful adventurousness provides multi-faceted depth to some otherwise straightforward, mopey music.

By letting his artistic leanings take the reigns, Gustafson has not only created an album that must be listened to entirely, he has also broken the cycle of mimicry so common among contemporaries.

Many years ago, awkward high-school kids started setting their frustrated, lovesick poetry against drums and guitars and calling it music. Emo rock was thus born.

Like it or lump it, *Until We Lay This To Rest* by Lives Of Many represents either everything that's right or everything that's wrong with this genre.

At its best, *Until We Lay This To Rest* isn't all that bad: it's compellingly melodic and manages to explore a narrow range of human emotions fairly deeply. Every now and again, it reaches out and grabs listeners' attentions, making them notice something small, yet intriguing: a single

lyric, a deep-thoated growl or a well-executed bit of guitar harmonics. More often than not, though, what the listener will notice is an overwhelming urge to hurl their CD player across the street, mostly due to the band's attempt to follow in the footsteps of other eccentric bands.

In the end, this album comes across as little more than cliched and emo-driven, made by a bunch of kids trying desperately to not sound like Good Charlotte. For those looking for something to obliterate brain cells with while waiting for the next Arcade Fire album, Lives Of Mary may hit the spot. For the rest of us, not so much.

Nice. Upon first glance, nice appears to be a positive word. However, one must wonder whether serious musicians would appreciate their music described with such an adjective. Words like innovative or ambitious would surely be preferred, but in the case of My Architects' debut album *Grand Designs*, their music screams nice—or rather, politely suggests it.

Acoustic guitar provide the rhythm, while clean electric guitar riffs offer an unobtrusive hand under the soothing, British-accented vocals of lead singer Aid Burrows. Songs flow by without incident, preventing listeners from getting distracted by other stimuli, and making them forget for a moment

that they ever put in a CD. The only really jarring moments are caused by abrupt endings. Instrumental song "Keystone" just starts to get going when it ends at the 1:35 mark. Then, the album itself ends, after only nine songs and thirty-two minutes. It's all a bit underwhelming.

*Grand Designs* is an appropriate title for the Warrington, England band. When planning it out, My Architects likely had grand designs for a groundbreaking new album that would turn the world on its head. Instead, the CD turns the world on its side, puts its head on a pillow and beckons it to curl up with a good book while relaxing music plays in the background.

After five years of constant hard work and unrest within the band, *In Guns At Cyrano's* represents a step towards success for Calgary-based Rum Runner. Although the outfit has gone through scores of guitarists and various other fill-in musicians, their latest album doesn't show any scars; in fact, they've seemed to gel and play like a well-oiled unit. *Guns at Cyrano's* is technically the group's third album, and judging by its cohesiveness, everyone's definitely settled comfortably into their musical identities, despite the problems they've encountered in the past.

It's no real secret that Rum Runner hails from southern Alberta, as they

grab ahold of old-school punk and infuse it with a shot of good ol' bluegrass. Some tracks are permeated with the classic sounds of punk rock, while others make you want to strap on your cowboy boots and join the nearest hoedown.

If The Dropkick Murphys had a love child with Edmonton's very own Captain Tractor, the result would inevitably be Rum Runner. So if you love punk rock and have a craving for some eclectic sounds, these are your boys. But don't take my word for it: Rum Runner is rolling into Edmonton's Sidetrack Café on 10 November, so get out there and check them out for yourself.

On her sophomore album, *Bossa Blue*, Florence K attempts to impress all with her mastery of five languages. Her distinctly atmospheric sound works well to romance the listener, though it seems she's sometimes attempting to do too much. The number of different styles she tries to incorporate, in addition to the number of tempo and mood changes between songs, ultimately leaves the listener feeling confused. One doesn't know whether to dance, feel heartbroken or eat copious amounts of nachos.

Though her website claims that her passion for music was "ignited in utero," the opening lyrics to "You

Won't Believe Me" prove otherwise. She coos, "You say I hurt you/ You say I did you wrong/ but I didn't mean to break your heart in two." Let's point out, first of all, that the thought of anything being ignited in utero horrifies me. Second, if she truly has had music pumping through her veins for that long, why are her lyrics so clichéd?

All things considered, this is not a terrible album; in fact, it's easily tolerable. If you want something fun to listen to, consider Florence K. If you're looking for tired song ideas in more languages than you really need, this is the album you've been waiting for.