

Stabilo made of self-deprecating ink



Stabilo

Happiness and Disaster
EMI Canada
www.stabilomusic.com

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If the moniker Stabilo sounds familiar to you, it's because the BC band of the same name snagged it from the name of a highlighter brand. Ironically, it was the same highlighter they used to jot down possible band names. But what poses more of a paradox, though, is their newest album, *Happiness and Disaster*, which aims to captivate listeners through catchy hooks and lyrics.

Many have probably experienced the inescapable angst after hearing their first single, "Flawed Design," or the bittersweet sentiment of their most recent release, "Kidding Ourselves." However, the group often hits a more serious note, tackling songs with topics more on the disaster side, such as "If It Was Up To Me" and "Coffee Spills." On the lighter side, the band juxtaposes the truth-telling lyricism with lively guitar, bass and percussion arrangements that make it difficult to drive their melodies out of your head.

With an upcoming tour and plans to take on the world, Stabilo celebrates the ups and downs of life with *Happiness and Disaster*, all the while hoping they won't remind you of school supplies.

Stabilo

With Tomi Swick and The Suits XL
Monday, 2 October at 8pm
The Powerplant

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For some, a flashback to the year 2000 will revive fond memories of a more innocent Britney, a less scantily clad Christina and, perhaps, the end of the boy-band boom we knew all too well. For others, the year 2000 marks the year when Stabilo's infectious hit, "Everybody," infiltrated radio stations across Canada.

Six years later, the Canadian foursome still takes pride in their poignant phrases and gut-wrenching choruses. However, Stabilo vocalist and guitarist Christopher John believes that those years were a learning experience for them all.

"'Everybody' was one of the first songs Jesse [fellow vocalist and guitarist] ever wrote, which was probably, like, ten years ago," John says. "I can't even remember what our songwriting approach was back then; but this time around, I think a lot more thought goes into songwriting."

"We've been doing it for about ten years and we're just trying to get the lyrics and melodies just right—rewriting and working on it until it's perfect. Not that it's ever perfect, but just until we can handle listening to our stuff without cringing."

This is far too modest of an answer, especially since their recent album, *Happiness and Disaster*, forces listeners to do anything but cringe. However, with intensely honest lyrics and haunting melodies, the songs do have a tendency to gravitate towards the gloomier side.

"I think, musically, the songs aren't



necessarily so dark," John explains. "I think lyrically, we tend to explore our melancholy natures. I guess we're usually in darker spaces when we write songs—at least I am for sure. When I get inspired [to write a song], I'm generally not feeling too hot."

"I've tried to write happy songs, but I guess they just get thrown into the garbage because they sound kind of cheesy. Maybe somebody else should sing them."

Although the album does serve as the perfect rainy day companion, John also notes that the album is entitled *Happiness and Disaster* for a reason. He illustrates its duality and stresses

that there's always a brighter side.

"Yeah, the songs are dark, but we do try to infuse them with a sense of hope or happiness so it's not all bleak," John says. "There are two sides to a coin and two sides to life, and everybody experiences both sides to some extent, I hope."

However, delving into the hearts and minds of many listeners via meaningful lyrics isn't Stabilo's sole talent. With varied textures, the group also focuses on creating a rich sound that has a flair for incorporating a medley of styles.

"I don't know how we generate the melodies; they just kind of come out

of your head," John says. "We all listen to a variety of music, so I think that's definitely where the different musical influences you're hearing come from. I like to think that we're able to meld different genres, styles and eras of music to form a cohesive, somewhat unique, musical expression."

Fully equipped with poetic lines, drifting melodies and relentless ambition, Stabilo is prepared to bring their music to a larger stage.

"Our plan right now is to keep writing songs, keep putting albums out and keep on touring," John says. "Hopefully we'll branch out and get to play for the rest of the world."

Gibson, Cruise don't spring from the same loony bin



ELIZABETH
VAIL

It may be no coincidence that two actors, formerly dubbed the ringleaders of the Hollywood circus, have found themselves demoted to the travelling freak show. Mel Gibson has now become Mel the Boozin', Jew-Abusin', Schismatic Catholic Extraordinaire. Meanwhile, Tom

Cruise presently performs as Skippy Brainwash McJumps-A-Lot.

Granted, while their personal nose-dives seem to coincide, the media's attempt to lump them together into the same category is grossly unfair. Now, I'm hardly a Tom Cruise fan. He's a squinty-eyed little elf whose best films (*Minority Report*, *Collateral*) usually involve him getting shot or maimed, or having his eyeballs gouged out. But really, this creepy little dude hasn't really done anything illegal.

True, both actors' erratic behaviour has been attributed to their religions (that would be Scientology and Schismatic Catholicism). Tom Cruise,

formerly renowned for being tight-lipped about his personal life, proceeded to lose all of his shizz in a twelve-month period that coincided with his increased involvement in Scientology. He leapt on couches, ranted about Ritalin and hurt poor Brooke Shields' feelings. And yeah, Suri is probably an alien, if not in baby form, then just waiting for the right moment to leap out of that adorable little tyke's chest with a full head of hair. But what Tom Cruise has done in the past isn't wrong. Annoying, yes. Freaky, yes. Offensive, maybe. But wrong? No. Manhandling Oprah isn't a crime, and a lot of celebrities have managed to get away with a

lot worse while still remaining mystifyingly endearing.

Mel Gibson was caught driving under the influence, and to top off that delightful stunt, during his arrest, he launched into a racist diatribe against the Jews, a stance that his father, an admitted Holocaust denier, is infamous for. In his mug shot, he has the dazed, tentative smile of a man who has no idea where he is but figures nothing bad can come of it.

So why are people putting Gibson and Cruise into the same boat? Gibson's preferred state of transportation takes thousands of innocent lives every year, but at worst, Cruise owes Oprah \$200

for a new loveseat from Leon's.

Which brings me to my ultimate hypothesis: if anyone will be able to recover from the media firestorm, Tom Cruise will do it first. Despite the apparently fanatical demands of his religion, his sudden enmity towards plush furniture and the creepy control he keeps over his dead-eyed fiancée, his contributions to film will be the same as they've ever been. Give it a year, maybe two, and once everyone is accustomed to the new Tom, his movies will start making money again. People will stop caring that the little man flipping switches and turning wheels in Cruise's brain has been outsourced to Jupiter.

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