

## SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

### Reading Writers Reading Launch

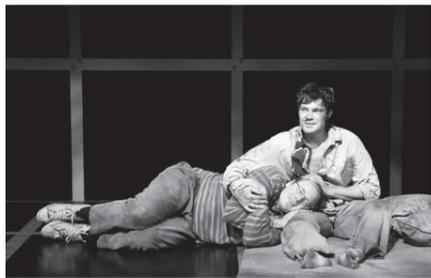
Thursday, 12 October from 7-9pm  
Audreys Books, 10702 Jasper Avenue

The University of Alberta Press invites you to the book launch of *Reading Writers Reading*, where 160 Canadian writers document how reading has affected them. The launch will consist of readings, conversations and refreshments. For all of you out there who are currently disgusted with reading textbooks, take the night off and go read about other people reading.

### The Pillowman

Starring John Ulyatt and Larry Yachimec  
Directed by Bob Baker  
Citadel Theater  
12-29 October at 8pm (Sundays at 2pm)  
\$30-\$40

Having premiered in 2003 in Britain and continuing onto Broadway last year, Martin McDonagh's black comedy *The Pillowman* has finally made its way onto Canadian stages. The play details the interrogation of a writer living in a totalitarian state whose short stories closely resemble a number of child-murders. Yes, child murder. Despite its comfortable, fairy-tale like title, the play is described as containing "strong language and extremely disturbing subject matter."



### Ten Second Epic

With *A Textbook Tragedy*, *Glory Nights* and *Difinity*  
Friday, 13 October at 7pm  
Edmonton Events Center (Formerly Red's)  
\$8-\$16 at Ticketmaster

Describing their sound as "The Edmonton Oilers 84/85 Stanley Cup Championship" on their MySpace, Edmonton's Ten Second Epic hits the stage this week to promote their new album, *Count Yourself In*. In keeping with the spirit of their sound, the band's name could be a fresh take on the phrase "15 minutes of fame."

### Mahogany Frog

With *Daydream Exchange*  
Saturday, 14 October at 8pm  
Victory Lounge  
\$8 at door

Mahogany is a durable, richly textured, dark red wood. A frog is a small amphibian found primarily in tropical regions of the world. Together, they are Mahogany Frog, a four piece group hailing from Winnipeg that combines various genres, including jazz and experimental electronica to produce a durable, richly textured and amphibious progressive rock sound.

### The Uncas

With *Stephen Frank & Noises* from the *Toolshed*, and *Slowcoaster*  
Saturday, 14 October at 9pm  
Sidetrack Café  
\$10 at the door

The Uncas hit their hometown this weekend, bringing their self-proclaimed style of whiskey rock to the Sidetrack. Sadly, though, it seems that there's no aspect of society that whiskey—and in a broader sense alcohol—won't affect anymore, particularly rock music, which some have considered the last bastion of clean, dry living in modern civilization.

JOHN KMECH  
Unfortunately, a Flames fan

# One helluva gang bang

The New Pornographers might have a lot of members, but their solo projects keep the lovin' alive

## The New Pornographers

With *Novillero* and *Immaculate Machine*  
Tuesday, October 17 at 8pm  
Edmonton Events Centre (formerly Red's)

AMANDA ASH  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Having a threesome definitely suggests good fortune, but for The New Pornographers, it's nothing compared to having an eightsome.

According to Carl Newman—singer, songwriter and guitarist for Vancouver-based alt-rockers The New Pornographers—the more members contributing to an instrumental orgy, the more interesting the group becomes. Of course, things are bound to get messy once in a while, with so many musical entities chaffing against one another, but from Newman's perspective, that's what makes the New Pornos' sound so distinct.

"Things aren't always crisp and clean, like [2005's *Twin Cinema*] alludes to," Newman says over the phone, his voice both pensive and animated. "We tried to make it that way on the record, but sometimes, it's quite messy and ugly; it's just in our nature. That push and pull makes us who we are—kind of like that guy who tries to keep his apartment clean, but finds it a struggle. [Crispness] just doesn't come naturally.

"We're definitely all on the same page, though," Newman continues. "I think it also helps that everyone has their own project, their own vent for their creativity. It just makes it very easy for us to click. Sometimes, when all people have is one band, there are a lot of conflicts because people want to have a ton of input."

The New Pornographers has been Newman's main project from the beginning, so those superficial group squabbles over who holds the reigns and who gets whipped have never quite become a daily occurrence, thanks to the unspoken veto power he holds over the group.

In addition to his work with The New Pornographers, Newman released a solo LP entitled *The Slow Wonder* a couple years back.

After surrounding himself with people who are great musicians—"I know I'm not one of them," he muses—branching off was only the next logical

step, and with 2004 being a lean year for The New Pornos, Newman says he might as well have made an album to fill in the blanks.

The New Pornographers has always remained Newman's number one priority, but for the rest of the band, their preferences can swing the other way.

**"When you already have one record that people really like, and you're in the process of making another, you look at that finished record and see what you're competing with. And sometimes, when your album's only a quarter done and still very rough, you compare it to your first album or previous albums and go, 'Oh God, how are we going to make a record as good as that?'"**

CARL NEWMAN

"What you consider to be a side project changes depending on your perspective," Newman explains. "Like, The New Pornographers is my main project, and I basically put out a solo album as a side project. Whereas for Neko, Neko Case is her main project and The New Pornographers is her side project—that's the same with Dan [Bejar] and his work as Destroyer. It's all perspective."

As a whole and on individual levels, the last two years have proved fruitful for The New Pornographers. Since its conception in 1997, the band has risen from its garage, DIY status to a Polaris Prize-nominated gang, and after the wide reception of their 2005 release, *Twin Cinema*, Newman

is taking the initiative to keep up with the forever-rising bar of musical esteem and venture

towards writing yet another New Pornos album.

"I always go slightly insane when I'm trying to do a record, because I'm always plagued with self-doubt," Newman says. "When you already have one record that people really like, and you're in the process of making another, you look at that finished record and see what you're competing with. And sometimes, when your album's only a quarter done and still very rough, you compare it to your first album or previous albums and go, 'Oh God, how are we going to make a record as good as that?' It's like, 'Who the hell is going to buy this?'"

"When you spend so long inside of something, you just lose all objectivity," Newman explains. "You wish that you could step outside yourself and listen to your music as if you were just another person hearing it for the first time. But you can't really do that; you try to, but after a while, your music just ends up sounding like a bunch of vowels and consonants and notes and chords, and you begin to lose the big picture. So that's where I am right now. The next record just sounds like a bunch of parts; I just have to put in the sweat and blood to turn it into a whole."

Newman might be uncertain as to how far he can lead The New Pornographers with their next album, but what he is confident about is the rest of the band's abilities to keep things entertaining. After all, an octet must be subject to innumerable humorous happenings, and you can only keep track of so many members at a time. As far as Newman can recall, *Home Alone* re-enactments are—and will always be—a normal part of the group's everyday affairs.

"When we were in Milwaukee, we had a bus call at six in the morning, and John for some reason went to the hotel room at three in the morning to have a shower and somehow fell asleep—possibly due to alcohol consumption," Newman relates.

"Basically, the next day we arrived in Minneapolis and were like, 'Uh, where's John?' Then we were like, 'Haha, that's funny.' And it wasn't like we got a phone call from him when we were en route. We didn't even figure out he was missing until we got there.

"He was mocked over that," Newman chuckles. "Gently, of course."

