

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Venus

Starring Peter O'Toole
Directed by Roger Michell
Princess Theatre
Opens Friday 26 January

Both Oscar fever and Super Bowl fever are heating up, and besides the two popular events being so close to each other airing-wise, there are other startling similarities between these two American entertainment staples. Both events begin with an unnecessarily long pre-game show, both feature idols you've probably read about in *People* magazine, national newspapers and unflattering county sheriff reports next to mugshots, and lastly, both events are so unbearably tedious that it's nearly a crime against humanity to be forced to sit all the way through either one without slamming a bottle of Jack Daniels and developing a hatred for life.

But unlike the Super Bowl, where knowing what teams are playing is somewhat of a moot point, it's always good to have some Oscar knowledge. Get schooled by going to see *Venus*, which garnered film legend Peter O'Toole an Oscar nomination for Best Actor. A story of two aging, veteran actors who have their lives turned around after meeting a young teenage girl, the movie could be O'Toole's last hurrah at scoring the elusive Best Actor award. Can *Lawrence of Arabia* finally catch the little gold man? Can Peyton Manning finally lift the coveted Lombardi trophy? Tune in next month, same pop time, same pop culture.



The Secretaries

With Hot Panda and DJ Sheri Barclay
Saturday, 27 January at 8pm
Victory Lounge, 18+
\$8 at door

Ready for some hot Secretaries action? How about some Hot Panda action? Then head down to the Victory Lounge this weekend and enjoy these two energetic Edmonton bands. Witness Edmonton's most rocking receptionists that have creative, slightly disturbing nicknames such as Robot Ass Slap and Masked Floor Hump. Headed by Amy van Keeken, this band will have the crowd appreciating the intricacies of filing amidst heavy distortion. Along with them, we have Hot Panda, fellow patrons of the garage sound, who encourage their listeners to "make love to a whale." The members of the band travelled to Norway to work abroad and, inspired by all the pandas they saw in the Northern European country as well as the Scandinavian rock scene, came back to invigorate Edmonton with their unbearably fuzzy rock.

Stephen Fearing

With Ben Spencer
Wednesday 31 January at 9pm
Sidetrack Café
\$15 advance at Sidetrack and Tix on the Square,
\$18 at door

After 20 years on the Canadian folk-rock circuit, Vancouver singer-songwriter Stephen Fearing brings his rootsy musical sensibilities to the Sidetrack Café on his solo tour. The Blackie And The Rodeo Kings founder made his name as a solo musician years before starting the Rodeo Kings and has produced a steady stream of folk music since the mid-'80s. He's now touring in support his new album, *Yellowjacket*.

From cowgirls to angels

Matt Mays wanders from Canadian highways to the silver screen with *The Angels Make Contact*

Matt Mays

With Museum Pieces
Saturday, 27 January at 8pm
Starlite Room

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Matt Mays' new album, *When the Angels Make Contact*, may have taken fans and music critics by surprise. Best known for his hit single with El Torpedo, "Cocaine Cowgirl," Mays has temporarily set his classic rock 'n' roll sounds aside for something more dark and experimental.

Just recently, Mays and El Torpedo were on a US tour in support of their debut, self-titled album, which had already been on record shelves in Canada for a couple of years. It even managed to get them a last minute gig on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* in December.

"Yeah, like two days before the show," Mays says with a hint of disbelief. "Jay-Z backed out and the Conan show had to fill [his spot]. It was pretty funny."

If the American release of *Matt Mays & El Torpedo* and the tour that followed weren't enough to keep busy, *When The Angels Make Contact*, a solo effort Mays made alongside El Torpedo band member Tim Jim Baker, was being released in Canada at roughly the same time.

The new album, however, goes beyond a typical solo project, in that it's a soundtrack to a film that has yet to see the light of day.

"I didn't think *When The Angels Make Contact* was going to be a movie soundtrack when I started," Mays says. "I just thought it was going to be an album

with a bit of a theme. Then I did the movie and it inspired me to do more songs."

His love for movies and innate interest in seeing his writing transferred to the silver screen led him to shoot a film with the help of director Drew Lightfoot. So what's it about? Well, the soundtrack's cover art of a genie surrounded by a dark background contrasting the title gives a bit of an idea.

"The genie is a series of characters in the movie that warns JJ, the main character, about his future," Mays explains. "[JJ] gets warned by angels, but not necessarily good angels."

There are several notable cameos in the film, including hip-hop/rap artist Buck 65 as "a genie in a box," who also made a contribution to the album's title track. Along with Buck 65, Sam Roberts appears in the film as "a crazed surfer in a pickup truck full of surfers."

However, the film's cameos may be easier to miss than Mays' new 'do. Aside from his character having short hair in the movie, he insists there isn't more of an interesting reason behind it.

"I'm wearing different things and wearing my hair differently. It's a nice change. I don't like the same old, same old," Mays says.

"I figured it'd be kind of good to keep it for a while for the tour. I may grow my hair back. I don't know."

Mays is also unsure when and if the film will ever be released as post-production costs kept it from being completed. Meanwhile, listeners are left to guess a little about the music's direction.

"[The music] starts off a little mysterious but then it gets really dark and it ends nice. I wanted to follow that," sketches Mays in his attempt to relate the music to the film's storyline. "And it was kind of a dark period of my life when I was making it. It just kind of came out."

While Mays is hoping that he doesn't lose fans as a result of his crossover to the dark side, he also hopes that people who like the darker end of things might give his music a chance. After all, he's allowing fans to listen to the entire album on his website. But when it comes to music downloading, however, he has mixed opinions.

"[Music downloading] doesn't seem really fair, but there are all these upsides to it like more people get to hear of you," says Mays before turning cynical. "I get a little upset sometimes when I sacrifice relationships and bigger chunks of my life to be in the studio and I really don't see any compensation for it. I still can't pay the rent sometimes, but then again, in turn, sometimes it gets more people to the shows. I hope. I don't know, but I hope that's the case."

Mays' solo effort is worth looking into as he not only experiments with a change in atmosphere but also the addition of genres absent in his past albums, including hip-hop and electronica.

"I wanted to do as many different genres as I could," Mays explains. "A lot of people like different kinds of music. A lot of people like rock music and hip-hop music so I figured it'd be kind of cool for somebody to be able to hear a lot of their favourite kinds of music on one record."



JOHN KMECH

Not to be confused with the Jian Ghomeshi