



Desiderata desire music, Ikea

Desiderata

With Red Hot Dagers, Atrophy Manuscript, Hills Like White Elephants, Eisenhauer and Eamon McGrath
Friday, 2 February at 8pm
Riverdale Hall

ASIA SZKUDLAREK
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Desiderata has exquisite taste in home décor, if the Ikea showroom we sat in was any indication. Accented with splashes of black and white, the space was large but cozy, its walls adorned with sepia photographs of tree-lined French canals. In the centre stood two brown leather ottomans—I sat on one these, cross-legged, facing Jerome, Blair and Laine, who had all settled on a white wrap-around couch that had been partly decked out in faux-fur throw blankets.

The band—an experimental rock trio with a ska/rage vibe—has a brief but rich history. While their hometown of Fort McMurray isn't exactly small-town Alberta, it does little to inspire images of a thriving music scene and band success stories. Yet delving deeper into Desiderata's collection of adventures uncovers exactly that.

The band was born in the summer of 2003 at a show headlining bands like Fractal Pattern, Choke and Change Methodical.

"Blair and I didn't meet Laine until mid-high school," begins percussionist Jerome Tovillo. "We were all in a jazz all-star thing at Keyano College. I asked Laine if he wanted to jam and he was a little hesitant about it. Later, Blair and I saw him at a show and we clicked really well."

Tovillo is interrupted by a loud customer service call. A toddler wanders into the room, followed by its mother. "Look at this lamp," she says, turning to her husband. They're obviously unaware of the interview going on beside them. It's a late Sunday afternoon at Ikea, and the air smells of Swedish meatballs and Dame Torte.

Desiderata got their moniker from a poem of the same title. Translated as "that which is to be desired," Blair Drover, guitarist and vocalist, describes the choice of moniker as coincidental.

"We had numerous names that were really horrible cliché punk names," Drover says. "We saw the poem on Jerome's wall and it stuck."

With a few Alberta shows under their belt, Desiderata travelled to Vancouver last May in order to record their first full-length album, *We Are Not Convinced There Has Been Any Improvement*.

Studio time proved to be expensive.

"We picked up thousands of dollars in bottles from different places in Fort Mac," said Laine Cherkewick, Desiderata's bassist. "We recorded with Jesse Gander at Hive Studios. All of our idols recorded there. It was a beautiful place."

"We were intimidated by him at first," Drover says about working with Gander, whose lengthy list of production credentials includes bands like Hot Hot Heat, The Red Light Sting and his own band, Ghost House. "He turned out to be the nicest guy I've ever met in the business."

Edmonton is quickly becoming ground zero for thrusting new sounds into the spotlight. One might imagine the scene as cutthroat, with bands aggressively scrambling over each other to climb to the top. While this might have been true a few years ago, Cherkewick maintains that everyone has been supportive and open-armed.

"I guess bands were really spiteful before, but now, they're all collaborating and jamming," he says.

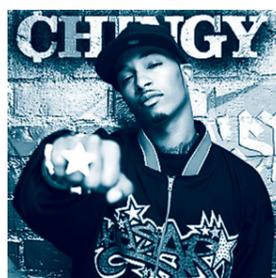
"We never set out to make money or to turn this into a career," Drover reflects. "As much as we love music, we also realized that we have to have day jobs too. But we've started to get past that garage band mentality."

"Music is an art, definitely, first and foremost. But as a commodity—if you can make a living off what you're doing, doing what you love then go for it."

some have hailed Leonard Cohen as the most important musical poet of our generation. None, however, can match the lyrical masterwork that is Chingy's new album, *Hoodstar*.

Take this passage from "Dem Jeans," for example: "How da how da hell did you get all of that in dem jeans? / Cuz your waist so little and your ass it like wo." Or the simple, cosmopolitan chorus of "Brand New Kicks," which runs: "I've got some brand new kicks / To match my new outfitz." Clearly, the ironic nature of Chingy's work calls to account the excess and sexism of our postmodern world.

The brilliance of Chingy, born Howard Bailey Jr, lies in his masterful reworking of the English language, in a way not seen since Joyce. With the epic refrain "Ass N Da Aurr," *Hoodstar* pushes to new heights the radiance of 2003 hits "Right Thurr" and "Holidae In." Not simply a rapper, Chingy pushes the boundaries of both art and good taste. To paraphrase Mr Bailey, it's time to put ur ass n da aurr, and wav it round like u jus don curr.



Chingy

Hoodstar
Capitol Records
www.chingy.com

MATT FREHNER
Editor-in-Chief

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