



# Spreading their motherly love

## Mother Mother

With Yoko Casionos and Illfit Outfit  
Friday, 2 March at 8pm  
Velvet Underground

ALYSSA PANKIW  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Any mom would be hard-pressed to find something wrong with Ryan Guldemon. The lyricist and lead singer of the Vancouver-bred band Mother Mother, is polite, predictable and safe-sounding. All of his answers are by the book; his music, however, is not.

Guldemon's five piece, alt-rock band consists of four other classically trained and tame members: his sister Molly Guldemon (vocals), their friend Debra-Jean Creelman (vocals), as well as Jeremy Page (bass) and Kenton Loewen (drums). And while flawless three-part harmonies and intricate rhythms make up Mother Mother's second album *Touch Up*, a record that Canadians are ready to watch grow, revamping their first disc *Mother* has helped them elude constrictive musical definitions.

"I think it's fair to define us as post-modern pop, because our music still follows a pop format," Guldemon

explains. "There are short songs which are sort of hook driven and catchy, but I guess musically, it goes outside the box. It's not tame harmony. It pushes the envelope. I think pop music has devolved in a lot of ways.

"The pop music of the 1950s and '60s was a lot more sophisticated than mainstream pop today," Guldemon continues. "It's great that everyone's frustrated that everything seems to have been done. I think it inspires pop, rock and indie bands to be stylistically varied, to borrow from different genres and to make interesting fusions of music."

The musical amalgamation heard on *Touch Up* came from blending some original tracks from *Mother* with some brand new songs that carry the stamp of a rhythm section. With the help of each individual members' talents, voices sound more fleshed-out and poignant. Repetition runs rampant in their lyrics, and even their name showcases their signature reiteration.

"Maybe [our repetition] is just writer's block," Ryan admits. "Like, 'Aww, I like that—maybe I'll just repeat it over and over again.' The name thing, we were forced into that one. We were just

Mother, but there were other mothers, unfortunately. And instead of finding another word, maybe we're just lazy, but we just doubled it up. I actually like Mother Mother. I think it's kind of snappy."

At times, it seems as if their sharp sound might clash with their meek attitude towards fame and their laid-back mantra towards their progressive music, but Mother Mother's recent signing with Last Gang Records has motivated them to stay prolific.

And with this, Guldemon assures his productivity with words any mom would be proud of.

"Music is just a language, and the more you know how to speak it, theoretically, the more options you have," Guldemon says. "Some people like to believe that going to music school or learning about music in a meticulous way robs the music of creativity, spirit, soul or passion, but I think that if you have that spirit and soul and passion, then nothing is going to take it away. If you have that and learn a craft, then you're just going to have more tools to express yourself soulfully and passionately, and the style will go on in whatever direction it goes."

# Signs point to Zodiac's success

## Zodiac

Directed by David Fincher  
Starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Chloe Sevigny, Anthony Edwards, Robert Downey Jr and Mark Ruffalo  
Opens Friday, 2 March  
Empire Theatres

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Going into a film like *Zodiac*, it would be silly to expect your run-of-the-mill murder mystery. After all, it's based on one of the most intriguing serial killers in American history, The Zodiac Killer, who wreaked havoc in Northern California for ten months in the late 1960s. As one of the only unsolved cases of its kind, it has intrigued police for years. Though he only had five known victims, the Zodiac was best recognized for the cryptic messages he gave to newspapers written in coded ciphers and his obsession with Richard Connell's novel *The Most Dangerous Game*, where a Cossack nobleman hunts human beings for sport. With a resumé like that, a film about the Zodiac sounds pretty damn good.

But director David Fincher—who also directed *Se7en* and *Fight Club*—spends little time focusing on the actual killer. Instead, *Zodiac* is more about Robert Graysmith (Jake Gyllenhaal), a sober-since-birth cartoonist for the

San Francisco Chronicle, one of the four newspapers to receive the Zodiac's ciphers. The film follows Graysmith, co-worker and reporter Paul Avery (Robert Downey Jr) and Inspector David Toschi (Mark Ruffalo) as their obsessions with the Zodiac's case grows and forever changes their lives.

**Gyllenhaal's portrayal of a naïve, innocent small-timer is spot on, and as his character's obsession develops, you begin to root for him more and more.**

Although the trailers pegged *Zodiac* as a thriller, it's actually much more of a character study—a visceral and thorough look at what obsession can do to people. As intriguing as the killer is, he's portrayed as more of a set piece for the other characters to move around, and as the mystery begins to unravel, you never get the impression that the film is holding back details as a plot device.

Gyllenhaal's portrayal of a naïve, innocent small-timer is spot on, and as his character's obsession develops, you begin to root for him more and more. Ruffalo is also terrific, as his

character's fixation goes in the opposite direction, almost ending his career. The two actors have great chemistry together and their combined need to discover the Zodiac's identity comes across extremely well.

Robert Downey Jr is the only one who doesn't really seem to fit in the picture. Not only is his character underdeveloped—as the movie jumps ahead in the timeline, Avery becomes a drunk for no definite reason—but he's also slowly being typecast as the quirky jerk, which has gotten rather old. As his character progresses, he begins to be less and less relevant to the movie overall. For a film based on a true story, with characters based on real people, you would expect a little more detail into the actions of one of the key figures in the case's history.

Also, the film is a bit too long. A good quarter could be cut out without any real consequence, as well as few too many false endings that were pretty unnecessary. You should never fade to black for two full seconds unless the credits are about to role.

But despite those minor grievances, *Zodiac* is a great film that takes an intriguing perspective on one of the greatest criminal mysteries in American history. It's as speculative about the Zodiac as it's detailed about the suspects, providing great insight not only into the murderer, but also into the lives he affected.



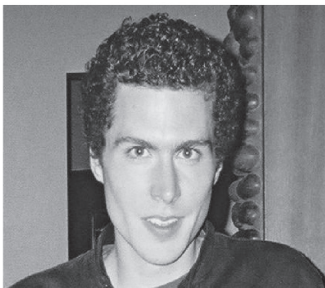
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