

Destroyer founder puts his shovel away

Frontman Dan Bejar avoids 'bullshit' in his music in favour of sounding good

Destroyer

with Ohbijou and Hylozoists
Friday, 29 June @ 8pm
Starlite Room

RENATO PAGNANI
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Given this country's penchant for politeness, it's difficult to imagine a Canadian musician who throughout his career has been labelled a "journalist's nightmare." But Vancouver's Dan Bejar, part-time member of the New Pornographers and founding member of Destroyer, is puzzled—though mostly amused—about his surreptitious status among the press.

"All I did was say 'no' to doing a couple New Pornographers interviews way the hell back, and all of a sudden I was 'difficult' or 'mysterious,'" Bejar explains. "Then I said 'no' to a couple ill-timed and pointless features [in Canadian publications], and things escalated from there. But the interviews I did always involved me being super-cordial—civil to a fault.

"Fact of the matter is, not that many people had any interest in

talking about Destroyer until two or three years ago, even though the first Destroyer record came out in 1996, the second in '98, the third in 2000, and so on," he continued. "Not that I minded making room for yet another feature on Len or Bran Van 3000, and I still don't mind."

"There is no gibberish in a Destroyer song, as I try hard to stick to words that exist in the English language."

DAN BEJAR

That lack of interest has surely changed, however, as Bejar, along with Destroyer's ever-shuffling supporting cast, has enjoyed heaps of critical acclaim for 2006's *Destroyer's Rubies*. Destroyer's sixth full-length release, *Rubies*—described by Bejar as a cross between '80s Van Morrison and a Catholic Bob Dylan—merges glam rock and an indie sound with Bejar's often obtuse but always visceral lyrics.

His songwriting is often described as dense, self-referential, and theatrical, and Bejar admits that his lyrics might sometimes seem "textual" and cryptic. However, he says that how the sounds interact with each other—their phonologic properties—is indistinguishable to him from any potential "meaning" in his lyrics.

"I don't differentiate between the two things, to the point where I barely understand the question when people break down words into 'sounds' and 'meanings,' which is probably just a sign of how far gone I am in this mess.

"There is no gibberish in Destroyer songs, as I try hard to stick to words that exist in the English language. No Jaberwocky, no *Finnegan's Wake* bullshit that I'm aware of. Sound good equals meaning good, to me. Sound bad equals meaning bad," he adds.

Luckily for Bejar, his lyrical content is engaging enough to keep his dedicated fans analyzing them like the James Joyce novel Bejar denies drawing inspiration from—at least for his diction choices. This seems to keep his audience happy—just what any nice, upstanding Canadian boy wants to do.



The Ghost is Dancing

The Darkest Spark
Sonic Unyon

KRYSTINA SULATYCKI
Arts & Entertainment Staff

While their sound isn't particularly sophisticated, you can respect The

Ghost is Dancing for their success at combining a variety of different instruments in their songs. They manage to give each track a unique tone while staying true to the band's sound.

Notable successes include the trumpet in "Organ" and the intro to "The Dark and the Bright." The use of the chorus of vocals (or the impression of one) is a unique effect that adds to the mood of the track.

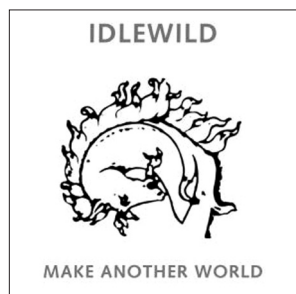
The album is full of interesting transitions from one mood to another and exciting riffs on a variety of instruments. Some are abrupt, some smooth or mellow, but all contribute to a sense of fullness to the music.

But all is not perfect in the Land of the Dancing Ghost. Every now and again, you run into those bumps they

haven't quite ironed out. For example, despite their wide variety of instruments, there are times when even the unique sounds can't compete with the lack of originality in the bass line—see "Wait Another Day."

Their use of string instruments is slightly less successful than the use of other untraditional sounds. "Greatlakescape" showcases the highs and lows of this instrument as the intro, and the beginning of the song have a great string line which eventually disintegrates into small bits of filler before being lost entirely.

While I had my doubts about a nine-member band with nine different instruments, I have to admit that if this is the darkest spark, the future looks pretty bright.



Idlewild

Make Another World
Sanctuary

COLIN KEIGHER
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Can't wait for the Killers' next album?

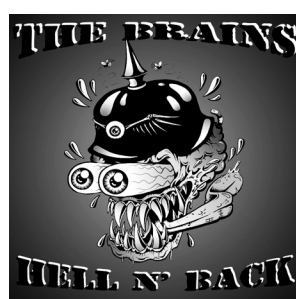
If you like the sound of the Las Vegas group, you may wish to check out Scottish alternative rock band Idlewild and their sixth album, *Make Another World*. The album certainly feels like a mellowed down Killers album, with a bit of an REM flavour added to it.

The album entered into the UK album chart at number 24, with one of its singles, "No Emotion" placing number 36 on the UK Top-40 charts. Its release also kicked off the band's current tour in the United Kingdom and Japan, and a live concert DVD for this album is expected to be released this coming November.

One of the best songs on the album has to be "No Emotion," as it definitely stands out and is quite fresh

due to its lyrics and guitar use. Other notable songs include "If it Takes You Home" and "Make Another World"—the latter track again showcasing the band's similarity to the Killers. The only real lull on the album is the song "Finish it Remains," which feels way too pop-ish and out of place on this album. Regardless of the comparisons to other groups, the sound that the band produces is refreshing.

In this download-happy age, most people will take a single or two and leave the rest of an album untouched. However, almost all of the songs on *Make Another World* are worth buying a physical copy. This is certainly an album that you can throw in your car's stereo and drive to.



The Brains

Hell n' Back
Stumble Records

MARIA KOTOVYCH
Arts & Entertainment Staff

If you wrote a song with the lyrics

"then I took a cab / zombies ain't too fast / the driver had a juicy head / in about 5 minutes I'll be fed," would you think to set it to a swing beat? The Brains do. These lyrics come from the rockabilly track "More Brains" on *Hell n' Back*, the Brains' newest CD.

The self-described "psychobilly zombies from Montreal" have compiled an energetic, catchy and fun CD whose songs are all about death, blood, brains and bones. However, their treatment of these morbid topics is more comical than morose. The macabre subject matter is set to upbeat instrumentals that incorporate swing and rockabilly beats with punk elements.

If Big Bad Voodoo Daddy played

with the Offspring, the result might sound kinda like the Brains. Some songs, like "Blood," almost seem to channel Jerry Lee Lewis. Even some of the lyrics from "Zombie Riot"—"one for the money / two for the night / we're gonna tear it up / zombie riot"—pay homage to rock & roll lyrics of the past.

The quality of the vocals and harmonies shine through—even while the Brains are singing about drinking blood or eating, well, brains. These are talented musicians who have fun with their music. There are even some spoken-word introductions to songs, which offer good advice on what to do if you ever encounter a zombie—you know, just in case.

THE GATEWAY

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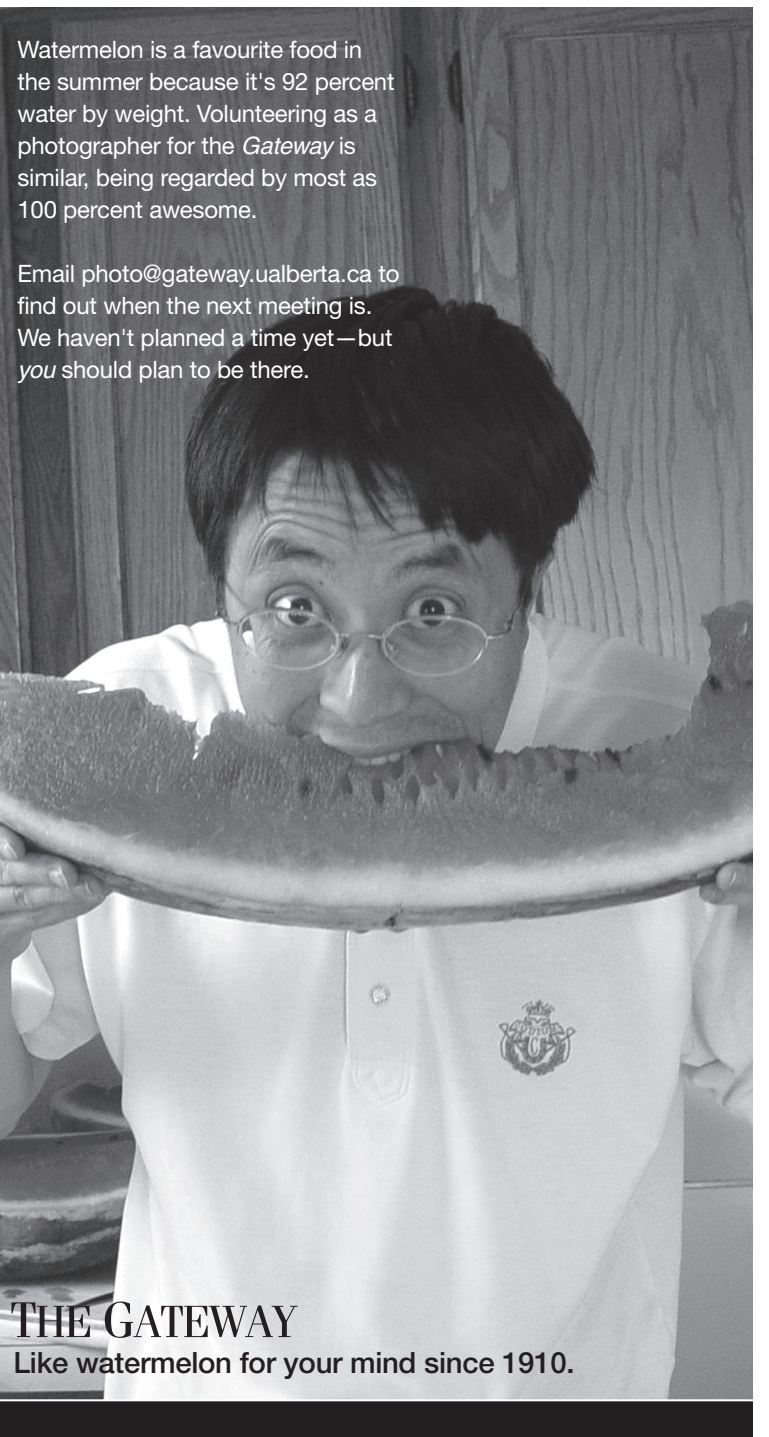
- delivering the *Gateway* to designated locations on and around campus as soon as possible after delivery from the printer,
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THE GATEWAY

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