

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Interview

Opens Friday, 7 September
Princess Theatre
Starring Steve Buscemi

One interview that would be fun to conduct is with one of the guys that writes movie press releases. They're fantastic at making even the most mundane of ideas seem exciting. Not that *Interview* initially sounds boring, but when it's described as "a passionate verbal chess game spiked with wit, intrigue and sexual tension, capped with a riveting twist ending," you can't help but feel enthralled.

Steve Buscemi directs and stars in the film as a past-his-prime war reporter who falls for the pop diva / movie star that he interviews. Perhaps not quite a captivating, sexually charged game of logic, but anything with Steve Buscemi gets a free pass into the good books.

An Evening with Rick Mercer

Sunday, 9 September at 7pm
Winspear Centre (9720 102 Avenue)
Tickets \$55 or \$65

Everybody's favorite Canadian satirist and proponent of reducing your carbon emissions is in Edmonton this weekend at the Winspear Center. Performing on behalf of the Northern Alberta Amputee Program, Mercer takes a break from lampooning Canadian politicians as a camera follows him through a Toronto back alley to do some stand-up work in E-town. The event also features the Wajjo Drummers and a special book signing by Master Corporal Paul Franklin, whose new book, *The Long Way Home*, details his experiences of getting home after losing both of his legs as a soldier in Afghanistan.

Wendy McNeil

Tuesday, 11 September at 8pm
Victory Lounge
Tickets at Ticketmaster

Accordion has never sounded this sexy. Singing with a voice akin to Ani DiFranco's, Edmonton's Wendy McNeil rips it up on her squeezebox, creating, along with the rest of her band, a strangely enticing sound that's one part haunted carnival, one part bar mitzvah. It's as if Lilith Fair was being held at an Eastern European circus, and it's one of the coolest and most original acts I've heard in a while.

In The Gathering Light

Works by Michelle Lavoie
SNAP gallery
On Display Until 29 September
Free Admission

Though already on display for a month, there's still plenty of time for art fans just arriving back from summer to check out Michelle Lavoie's gallery running at SNAP. Produced using a combination of digital composition and collagraph, Lavoie has created some breathtaking abstract images. She was inspired to use digital imagery to discuss technology's impact on us, or as she puts it, "to talk about how technology acts a filter for our perceptions."

Searching For Balance

Works by Leszek Wyczolkowski
SNAP gallery
On Display 6 September to 13 October
Free admission

The second gallery opening at SNAP features the prints of Leszek Wyczolkowski, which draw from all things natural, from the earthy to the heavenly. Wyczolkowski will also be in attendance at the opening reception, so you can pop in and meet the man behind the art.

JOHN KMECH
SI champ, two years running



Hipsters: don't call Art Brut "indie"

The English rockers talk about *Top of the Pops*, their own messy beginning, and Wesley Snipes' early days

musicpreview

Art Brut

with the *Mark Birtles Project*
Thursday, 6 September at 8pm
Starlite Room

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Editor

These days, adding the prefix "indie" to the description of any band will probably turn away about the same number of people who will blindly come running. Rarely used to discriminate between independent artists and those on major labels, the term's original intent, is lost—it now broadly umbrellas over the heads of any bands currently buzzing around the blogosphere.

Art Brut fall into this category. The English band is signed to a division of major label EMI and play straight-shooter, guitar-powered rock & roll. Yet somehow, they still find themselves dubbed as an indie group.

Well, hipsters be damned. The first words out of guitarist Ian Catskilkin's mouth are about one of the most popular mainstream acts in history.

"I was just watching Michael Jackson's 'Bad' video on VH1," he begins, immediately after picking up the phone. "The guy in the opposite gang looks like Wesley Snipes!"

He's correct—and that plucky, conversational attitude is a constant throughout the interview. So is the theme of television: three of Art Brut's songs mention British music show *Top of the Pops*, usually in the

context of, well, them being on top of it. Unfortunately, *TOTP* shut down last year before Art Brut could come a-conquering.

"It was a shame, really," Catskilkin laments. "The *Top of the Pops* used to be the institution; it used to be relevant ... As a child I would take a tape cassette recorder and put it by the television to tape all of the new songs. That was your opening to the rest of the world, and music, really."

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IAN CATSKILKIN

In those early days, Catskilkin must have taped a lot of Sex Pistols because Art Brut's songs are dripping with snotty punk ethics. Fuelled by his own guitar licks and vocalist Eddy Argos' spoken-word delivery, the five-piece group, also including second guitarist Jasper Future, bassist Freddy Feedback, and drummer Mikey Breyer, write unapologetic rock tunes.

"[We didn't] have preconceived plans or ideas," Catskilkin says, of Art Brut's early days. "We were all into different stuff when we got together, and I think that's a good

thing. At first it was just a mess, and then we started to be able to write songs."

Those first songs were enough to cause quite a response in the band's homebase of England, with their self-released *Brutlegs* EP quickly generating a record deal.

Typical Art Brut subject matter includes forming a band, getting a brand new girlfriend—including the winning lyric "I've seen her naked! Twice!"—and having a really bad weekend. More musically powerful than pretentious, Catskilkin isn't the slightest bit self-conscious about leaning more towards the Brut part of the band name.

"It's just what we do," he states nonchalantly. "That's kind of where we're from, in regards to the music. [Breyer] is a rock drummer; I'm a rock guitarist, and that kind of makes [rock] the backbone of the style of music. We kinda just do as we do, and [the music] comes out as it comes out. I prefer rock in a broader sense of the term than indie stuff."

The "indie stuff" includes using more orchestra-like instruments in the place of the more traditional guitar-drum-bass-vocals combo. But with this emphasis on rock, it's doubtful that you'll see Art Brut making room for a hurdy-gurdy player anytime soon. At the very least, it would cost too much.

"At the end of the day, it would be like paying another instrument to be there," Catskilkin laughs. "We've considered it; we tried stuff while we were making our last album, like, 'Oh, maybe we should try this on piano.' We have some horn section in there, but you can't over-do what we do, because it would sound stupid. It just works as it is."