

# Playwright-in-residence at home with being 'in-house dramateur'

SARAH MALIK  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

We tend to stereotype the creative process as a sacred affair, where the creator works in isolation from those to whom his written revelations will come, and whose probably a snappy, Scrooge-like character. But Kevin Kerr, the new playwright-in residence for the Department of Drama, is a man who seems content to sit and chat while being framed by the cacophony of children's raucous playing—there is a playground outside his HUB Mall office—and who appears at home in the brightly lit room.

"I love the fact that I've got a place to work," Kerr says, expressing satisfaction with his environment and with the sense of family in the Drama department. Originally from Vancouver, where he was part of the Electric Company Theatre, he paints Edmonton as having a great reputation for its theatre community and art scene.

Kerr himself is no stranger to recognition, having won the Governor General's Award for his play *Unity* (1918). The university awarded him a two-year contract by the university for his playwright-in-residence term—only the second in the history of the pioneering Lee Program. During his residency, Kerr will split his time between his own writing and doing projects within or related to the Department of Drama.

"I am an 'in-house dramateur,' and will be giving feedback to playwriting students and people in the community who are interested in theatre," Kerr says. "There is a definite community liaison component to this job."

Most importantly, Kerr has been commissioned by the University to write a play for the twelve students who are now entering their first year of the BFA program.

"It's exciting for me to tailor-make a play for a large cast, and it's a great opportunity for acting students to watch a project develop from essentially nothing to a full play, and see the steps along the way," he explains.

Superstitious about discussing his ideas for the play, which will be performed in 2010, so early in the



ERINNE FENWICK

**THAT'S ALL HE WROTE** Kevin Kerr doesn't fear the dreaded "writer's block."

game, Kerr is tight-lipped on what it will be about.

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**KEVIN KERR**  
PLAYWRIGHT-IN-RESIDENCE

He admits, however, to an interest in the outsider archetype, the concept of an individual on the fringe, and his past plays have explored the impact of science and technology on society, often in a historical context. Kerr says

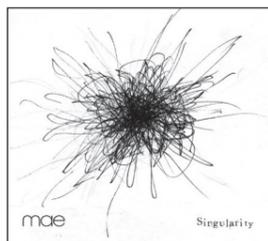
he will begin developing the play after getting to know his ready-made student acting company.

"I want to feed off of the students' energy ... Theatre is a collaborative art form, which makes it risky because it relies on the synergy of people coming together, but also creates a wonderful safety net because you're not alone in the process," He explains.

Kerr also seems somewhat nonchalant about writer's block—the scourge of so many writers—considering that the infamous mental freeze has compelled untold numbers of authors to spend years on a single work.

"You're going to jinx me," he laughs about blanking during the writing process, before adopting a more serious tone.

"There are no guarantees really. There is always a feeling that everything is high-stakes. We have to embrace 'the mortal dread;' [we] have to own it and live with it."



## albumreview

**Mae**  
*Singularity*  
Capitol Records

**SOPHIA BURAK**  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

On *Singularity*, Mae's third full-length release, the Virginia band seems to be trying a little too hard. A few of the tracks show earnestness, but the band needs to learn that every single lyric and chord doesn't have to be steeped in meaning and metaphor. Words are fun, and making music should be as well.

*Singularity's* attempts at deep, soulful songs grow tiresome quickly, and most tracks feel like they run together along the same musical path. Maybe that was Mae's intention—to release a coherent, level album—but a bit

of contrast between tracks would've brought out their different flavours and provided a more well-rounded listen than *Singularity's* one-track mind does.

The lyrics, aside from being weighted down with overwrought emotion, are sung like the singer learned his craft from William Shatner. The vocals stem from a terribly dry monotone: any differences in tone are subtle, and any individuality in the songs or inflections present are impossible to pick up. It's too bad it isn't Shatner on vocals, in fact; that would have

at least given this album a boost of star power, and given Mae an excuse for such expressionless delivery.

This album is cluttered and bogged down by way too many metaphors. Clearly, Mae was feeling too artsy for their own good. Who wants to listen to music that sounds the same from track to track: over-thought, over-produced, and just dull?

"Emo" is supposed to be emotional music: at once deep and thoughtful, and genuinely moving. *Singularity* achieves none of these things, as every single track fails to catch and hold the listener's attention. Ultimately, *Singularity* has all the personality of toast without jam, and the overwrought emotional push causes the album to come off as silly at best. In fact, *Singularity* flips Shatner's *Star Trek* credo: The album will neither live long in your iTunes playlists, nor will it help Mae prosper.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

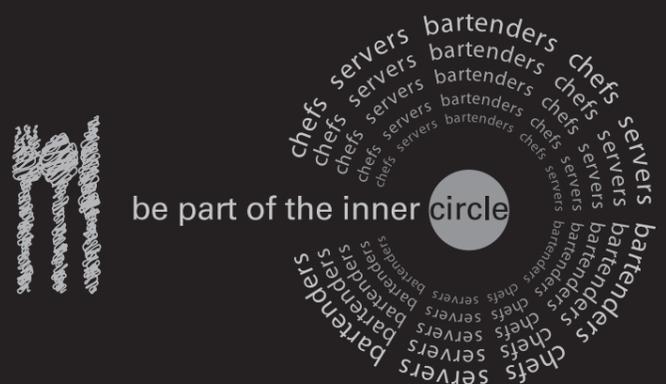


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