



# Scythe cuts into urban, rural stereotypes

Dammitdance Theatre's latest production combines theatre, dance, and live music to highlight their story about 'a clash of cultures'

## theatrepreview

### Scythe

Runs 20-30 September

Catalyst Theatre

Written and Directed

by Amber Borostik

Starring Jesse Gervais, Amber

Borostik, and Jason Carnew

Tickets available at Tix on the Square

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

For some, the idea of Alberta being a rural province where canola grows and cows roam is one to embrace. For others, it's a stereotype to frown upon. Dammitdance Theatre's latest play, *Scythe*, explores these two mindsets and ultimately celebrates the tradition of farm life.

According to Amber Borostik, who wrote, directed, and performs in the piece, *Scythe* follows the story of Sean (Jesse Gervais), who decides to leave his life in Vancouver—including his job and fiancé—behind, to manage a farm he and his brother have inherited after their father's passing.

To Gervais, the conflict his character experiences in moving from an urban setting to a rural one is one of the driving forces of the play.

"Sean feels a strong connection to the land even though he lives in the city," he explains. "I think that's something that makes us human. Everyone has that connection. There are two lives, but you could still fall in love with both of them."

The connection may be a little difficult to find for those who never grew up with farming. Borostik, however, hasn't completely forgotten

those who quickly turn their heads away at the mention of anything rural-related.

"I've seen [that attitude] a hundred times," she exclaims. "That's been our journey because the prairie drama is a bit tired, a bit boring, and a bit of a cliché. That's why we try to take this old story about the farm that's been around in Alberta for a while and deconstruct it and do some crazy new things with it to shed new light."

These crazy new things include contemporary modern dance and music with eclectic influences. The play will have two acoustic musicians performing live using guitars, accordions, and harmonicas, as well as singing. One, Aaron Macri, is performing a live electronic soundscape, which is described by Borostik as "electro-ambient." Borostik points

out that the joining and clashing of urban, electro beats and folk accurately depicts *Scythe* itself, which is about "a clash of cultures."

Cultural differences are also reflected by the other characters in the play. Sean's brother Chris (Jason Carnew) wants to sell the farm and split the money. Chris' girlfriend Emily (Linda Turnbull) is also itching to get out of the small town she's in. Interestingly enough, these characters mirror the anti-rural sentiment towards the Prairies along with the sentiment some people have towards the cities they live in.

"This guy a couple of years ago—I think he was one of the guys from *Kids in the Hall*—came with us to a show called *Slightly Bigger Cities*," Borostik recalls. "The premise is, wherever you are, you always want to move to

a slightly bigger city—even if you're in Montreal, you want to go to New York."

"And if you're in New York, you want to move to Tokyo or London," Gervais adds, with just a hint of exasperation.

Such dissatisfaction can be seen in the farming industry. With the current oil boom, it has left behind the troubles BSE started. But now, farms have become so grand and costly that small farmers are opting out of a risky business that relies heavily on Mother Nature, and instead moving to the concrete jungle of an urban centre. While *Scythe* portrays farming in a positive light, the negative isn't completely dimmed.

"It's a love-hate relationship," says Gervais about farm life. "It's something that sets you free and holds you back at the same time."

# The Wet Secrets a messy affair

## musicpreview

### The Wet Secrets

with Bend Sinister and the Clips

20 September at 8pm

Starlite Room

ALEXANDER WITT  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Whispers of The Wet Secrets are getting louder. Two and a half years after creating the band seven days before its debut concert, Trevor Anderson and Lyle Bell are back together with a new keyboard player, and they're firing back up their band—one Anderson once thought of as just a "flash in the pan."

So, Bell, from Whitey Houston and the Juno-nominated Shout Out Out Out Out, and Anderson, who also plays in the Vertical Struts, are back making what Anderson calls "folky, campy jungle-circus rock from space."

Back in February 2005, Anderson and Bell really wanted to play together, but they didn't have much time. As a challenge to themselves, and as a way of placating their busy schedules, they decided to go from

first rehearsal to stage debut in a week.

"We thought it would be a one-week experiment and that would be it, but it was more fun than we anticipated, and people liked it," Anderson explains.

**"They're simple, catchy, hopefully pop songs that will make people dance. We had to write them catchy so we could remember them in the first days—because we only had a week."**

TREVOR ANDERSON  
THE WET SECRETS

That people liked the songs shouldn't be a surprise. The Wet Secrets runs a strong beat, with clear vocals and big band instruments. But their sound is a far cry from your high school band: timpani, trombone, tuba and trumpet blend in

with guitar, synthesizer and drums to create an imposing and exciting sound that is designed to stick in people's minds with very little exposure.

"They're simple, catchy, hopefully pop songs that will make people dance. We had to write them catchy so we could remember them in the first days—because we only had a week," Anderson says.

"We write the gang vocal choruses, where people can shout along and pump their fists—hopefully it's celebratory."

With song titles like "Hep A Birthday," "Get Your Own Fucking Moustache, Asshole," and the questionable but indeniably catchy "I Teabagged Myself," it's obvious that the guys from the Wet Secrets don't blush easily. But Anderson might laugh if you do.

"We certainly have a lewd sense of humour; that comes out of our songs, but it's an innocent kind of lewd. We want to be titillating but not raunchy," he notes. "[In concert] people are usually drunk and thrilled by that."

They don't think a few naughty lyrics will turn listeners off of their



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music. Instead, the band tries to write lyrics that will draw a laugh out of their audience.

"It was only when we went to put [our songs] on the radio that we realised that everything but two of them had the F-bomb in them. We sure don't think ahead," Anderson admits.

Despite this seemingly nonchalant attitude toward their work, they're finally getting their act together. Their next album—to be written, created, and recorded in more than

a week—is currently being mastered and is expected for release before the end of the year. Anderson hopes that the Wet Secrets will have a long-term future in the industry—Of course, they'll be hard not to notice as they parade around on stage in signature red marching uniforms.

"We have always had a fantasy of being a rock & roll marching band," Anderson jokes. "I would love to get us marching around rural Alberta, unannounced, pulling generators and amps in a red wagon."