

Mohawk Lodge fuelling their *Wildfire*

musicpreview

The Mohawk Lodge

With *Octoberman*
Sunday, 7 October at 8pm
Blackspot Cafe

TONY KESS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Ryder Havdale has a lot of responsibility on his shoulders these days: a new Mohawk Lodge record entitled *Wildfires*, the kickoff of a cross-country tour just a week away, and the management of White Whale Records. Surprisingly though, his band and record label weren't always his first priorities.

"The Mohawk Lodge actually got started while I was playing in another band called Kids These Days, and I was the weakest singer of the bunch. At one point, they actually asked me not to sing," Havdale recalls. "I started The Mohawk Lodge as a chance to write and sing my own songs, and ended up recording them in my friend's cabin; the first record was a bit more of a solo effort."

While The Mohawk Lodge's first album, *Rare Birds*, was indeed a stripped down, folky effort, on *Wildfires*, Havdale opts for a fleshed-out, harder sound. And while he's still doing a lot of writing for the group, in no way should *Wildfires* be misconstrued as a solo endeavor; the record features guest appearances from a plethora of hipster-rockers—notably Dan Boeckner of Wolf Parade—and was produced by Darryl Neudorf, known for his work with Neko Case and the New Pornographers.

"Initially, Mohawk Lodge was my folky side-project, but now I'd say we are probably harder-rocking than



Kids These Days ever was," Havdale remarks.

"We began recording the new album in Toronto, just Darryl and I, and by the time it was over, we'd relocated out West and had all these different people dropping in to record; you'd never know who was coming in to play. At one point, we had ten people all crowded around the same microphone. So much of it was spontaneous; I don't think we'll ever be able to make that record again."

With a growing amount of support and coverage, the upcoming cross-country trek is a seminal moment in The Mohawk Lodge's growth as a band. One of the challenges Havdale and his band-mates face now is rethinking the guest-heavy, layered sound of the recorded album, and bringing it to a live show.

"During recording, we definitely found a core band, but the album has

14 people on it, and [now] there are only five of us, so I think it will be interesting to see how we improvise those missing elements," Havdale says, remaining optimistic about the challenge. "One of the great things about touring is that by the end of it, you are so well-rehearsed that you're basically a different band."

Even with so much on the go, The Mohawk Lodge have no plans to take a rest now; hot off of touring this November, they'll be heading back to the studio and beginning work on a follow-up to *Wildfires*.

"It's going to be a bit more of a live, off-the-floor effort. This will be the first time the band has worked on a record after playing so many live shows," Havdale explains. "We have some songs written already that we're probably going to work into our live set, so those will find their way onto the EP."

24/One offers amateurs the limelight

filmpreview

24/One: 24 Hour Filmmaking Challenge

Edmonton International Film Festival
Entries will be shown Saturday,
6 October at 1pm
Empire Theatres

MATT HUBERT
Arts & Entertainment Staff

"It's like Norman Jewison said in Oscar acceptance speech: 'Forget the special effects; just tell a story,'" Joshua Semchuk, 24/One's organizer, says.

For the last two years, the 24/One filmmaking challenge has afforded amateur directors, screenwriters, and actors from the Edmonton area the opportunity to try their respective hands at storytelling on the Edmonton International Film Festival's increasingly world-class stage.

Inspired by a similar contest at a long-running New York festival and Edmonton-based Film And Video Arts society's own 48-hour challenge, entrants have only one day to craft a seven minute piece based around a unifying theme. True to the challenge's rigorous form, the details to be included are provided at 11:59am Saturday morning.

"It teaches you to be organized and be prepared and forces you to make decisions in such a short time period," Semchuk explains. "The rule of thumb for bigger productions is that for every day of shooting, you

have three days of post[-production]. Here, you have three hours of post [-production] for every hour of shooting. You have to budget [time] for things like daylight, so you can imagine what you can do with a lot of time and a big budget."

"If a writer and director can demonstrate an understanding of a good storytelling arc—that is, a beginning, a middle, and an end—and communicate a director's vision from paper to screen, that's truly a piece of work."

JOSHUA SEMCHUK
24/ONE ORGANIZER

Naturally, a commitment that demands wire-tight deadlines and the penchant for forgoing sleep and good sense attracts a lot of postsecondary filmmaker hopefuls; last year, in fact, a creative team at the U of A won the coveted first place prize with their feature, *The Imagineer*. Still, the field remains diverse.

"We have people from all walks of life," Semchuk notes. "Some are younger, some are non-university, and they're of all ages, from all over. We have two entries from Calgary this year as well."

Of the 41 teams who enrolled this past Saturday, 37 submitted their finished product on Sunday afternoon. And while the pieces that Semchuk and his collection of industry pros who are serving as judges have been poring over for the last week may not appear as polished as those of the veteran filmmakers presenting at the EIFF, they are by no means less ambitious.

Rather than mimic the gloss and seemingly endless resources of studio productions, the films of the 24/One choose to be faithful to the relationship of screenwriter and director. Whatever teams can demonstrate this best, according to Semchuk, fulfill the criteria for being one of ten official selections.

"The Coen brothers are a perfect example of this—one writes, one directs, but neither is truly limited to only one. If a writer and director can demonstrate an understanding of a good storytelling arc—that is, a beginning, a middle, and an end—and communicate a director's vision from paper to screen, that's truly a piece of work. A fine piece of work."

If the shape of Edmonton's growing music scene of late has been any indication of the kinds of talents that lie in the margins of the City of Champions, one can't help but feel that Edmonton's filmmaking scene will not be far behind. With the amount of attention the 24/One is drawing by word of mouth, it appears the EIFF's success and burgeoning popularity is as much indebted to its new blood as its old guard.

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University of Alberta Information Sessions

Thursday, October 4
12:00-13:30, 14:00-15:30
Tory 1-119

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