

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Pauly Shore

11-13 October
Yuk Yuk's (Londonderry)

The star of such early '90s films as *Encino Man* and *Bio-Dome*, comedian Pauly Shore will make you nostalgic for the days of *Ace of Base* and *Jurassic Park*. After his short-lived TBS reality show *Minding the Store* ended in 2005, Shore ventured back out onto the standup circuit and is in Edmonton doing five shows this weekend. If you're lucky, you might even get to see Shore being assailed onstage by a husky, perturbed cowboy in a brilliantly crafted publicity scheme.

Lady Chatterly

Directed by Pascale Ferran
Starring Marina Hands and Jean-Louis Coullo'ch
Princess Theatre
Opens 12 October

The César award is France's version of the Oscar, except the little gold statue sports a tiny beret and is straddling a bidet while smoking a cigarette. Pascale Ferran's adaptation of DH Lawrence's alternative adaptation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, picked up five of these adorable trophies, including one for Best Picture.

The tale of the love affair between the wife of a British aristocrat and the strapping, clothing-intolerant gamekeeper of their estate, Ferran maintains the eroticism of the original book to give the film a certain *je ne sais quoi* of nudity. But what really impressed the César judging panel were the risks the director took in spicing up the action in this early-20th-century tale with the addition of a forlorn pizza boy who, upon dismounting his steed, discovers that he is delivering to the wrong hayloft at the right time.

Let's Dance

With *On The Brink* and *Rum Runner*
Saturday, 13 October at 8pm
Victory Lounge

Local punk rock act Let's Dance brings the Saturday night fever this Saturday night. The band hails from E-town, a city "overrun by brutal crust, gymshort hardcore, and freakout indie rock." Influenced by '70s punk and power-pop, the band makes music designed to make people hit the dance floor and is currently preparing the release of their recently recorded EP.

Holly Cole

With Michael Kaeshammer
Monday, 15 October at 7:30pm
Winspear Center

Halifax-born Holly Cole rolls through Edmonton this week, touring in support of her new self-titled record that was released in March. Cole combines her sultry jazz vocals with other disparate genres as varied as rock and show tunes. Accompanying her is accomplished Toronto boogie-woogie pianist Michael Kaeshammer.

Olivia Newton-John

Tuesday, 16 October at 8pm
Winspear Center

The actress best known as Kira from *Xanadu* (and, to a lesser extent, Sandy from *Grease*) is bringing her singing voice to the Winspear stage this week. Having just released her first ever Christmas album, *Christmas Wish*, last month, Newton-John tours in support of both the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

JOHN KMECH
Going dreadless?

Stagger Lee a tale of many perspectives

Stagger Lee

Written by Derek McCulloch
Art by Shepard Hendrix
232 pages. Image Comics. \$18

MIKE KENDRICK
Design & Production Editor

Some folks go looking for trouble; some find trouble comes looking for them. For author and former University of Alberta student Derek McCulloch, there's a way of taking what life hands out and turning it into a career.

"I was a terrible student," McCulloch admits. "I kind of decided I was dropping out in my first week there, but at the time, I was too embarrassed to let my family know that. So, I actually spent a year pretending to go to college."

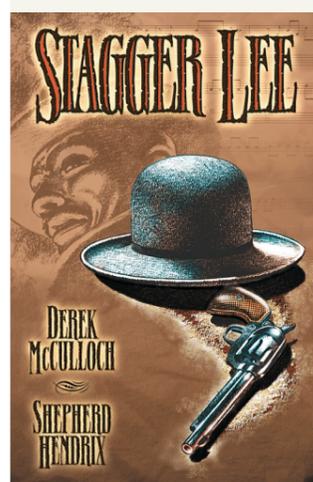
Having decided his own destiny early on, McCulloch is now in the midst of a continental tour alongside veteran comic artist Shepard Hendrix to promote their new book, *Stagger Lee*. Based on an endless playlist of folk and blues songs, it tells the true tale of a bar-room shooting in St Louis in 1895. The brawl quickly entered into the legends of frontier folklore, spawning dozens of musical renditions that have spanned nearly a century.

"I think the whole story is just a really great basic framework [...] that's what all great folklore is," McCulloch says, remarking on the musical history behind the legend of "Stagger Lee." "Everybody who recorded or wrote a version of *Stagger Lee* brings their own perspective and their own biases and their own interests to the story. You end up with something completely different every time."

While the songs have spanned generations, the story has found itself retold in countless genres.

"I started compiling a kind of a mix tape of different versions of 'Stagger Lee,'" McCulloch says. "I filled up about two hours' worth. I listened to them really, really frequently [...] the entire time I was writing, I was listening to these discs. Every word of the book is written with some version of 'Stagger Lee' playing in the background. It's very much a book infused in the musical tradition that it's trying to evoke."

This is McCulloch's first graphic novel, but he's had a long history within the comic-book universe. In the '80s, he joined a coalition of comic book enthusiasts, which would eventually come to be known as Strawberry Jam Comics. Through this group, a total of 14 issues of two titles were published in a time that McCulloch refers to as the "black-and-white boom."



bookreview

Stagger Lee

Now Available
By Derek McCulloch and Shepard Hendrix

MIKE KENDRICK
Design & Production Editor



"[The boom] followed the advent of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, when all of a sudden, a whole bunch of people at the same time realized that it was actually pretty cheap to publish a black and white comic book," he recalls. "And, as evidenced by *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, it didn't really have to be that good to do very well."

"It's very much a book infused in the musical tradition that it's trying to evoke."

DEREK MCCULLOCH
AUTHOR OF STAGGER LEE

"Following the boom, very quickly there was a bust," he continues. "Unfortunately, our publication schedule was very erratic, and we managed to put out a bunch of them before the boom happened, and a bunch of stuff after the bust happened. So we completely missed the window when there was money to be made."

Luckily for McCulloch, his next foray into the comics industry saw more prosperity, as evident by *Stagger Lee's* publication. In addition, his second graphic novel, entitled *Displaced Persons* is nearing its scheduled publication date of March 2008. The book,

which he describes as "a time travel story—but not really," takes place in three times and settings: a detective story in 1939, a narcotics film in 1969, and the greedy dot-com world of 1999.

"There are characters who move between the different periods," he explains. "What it's really about, and the significance of the title, is the effect of what mass movements of history have on families. It's a family saga that's mixed up in a conundrum of time, [and] each chapter is done in a different two-tone colour pallet with its own distinct tone pattern as well. When the characters move back and forth through time, they take their colour patterns and their tone patterns with them. You'll have a sequence in 1939 where every scene is one colour except this one character."

Meanwhile, McCulloch and Hendrix are continuing their promotional tour, having just passed through Edmonton. While the work is far from over, McCulloch looks forward to some well-deserved rest, reminiscent of his days at the U of A.

"I'd go to the library, and they had these big, overstuffed chairs there. They were at this dead-end spot where nobody ever went to," he recalls. "I used to sit down in those chairs and go to sleep for an hour and a half every morning to make up for having gotten up to go to the chem class that I never went to."

It's a simple premise that transcends the ages: two guys walk into a bar, but only one walks out. In *Stagger Lee*, Derek McCulloch and Shepard Hendrix take a legend that's been retold countless times in every genre of song and story imaginable, and give it their own distinct flavor with a dash of pen and ink.

It's a historically established fact that in 1895, Lee Shelton shot Billy Lyons in a St Louis saloon. But that's where the facts end: some say that the two were bitter rivals; others maintain that they were close chums. The fight could've been over politics, over the heart of a charming belle, or over something as simple as a well-made Stetson. It's these variables that have invariably spawned the legend of Stagger Lee as it's been passed between the generations, from folklorist to blues singer to historian.

In the book, McCulloch explores the differing opinions of just what happened on that fateful night in

the Gateway to the West. The fight in the bar is only the beginning of the tale, which goes on to predict Mr Lee's fate in the aftermath of his outburst. While the official record states that he was convicted for his crime and died while serving a life sentence in prison, some songs about Stagger tell a different tale entirely. He's become both a hero and a villain, painted by each artist with a different brush and a radically different outlook on the man's life—and more importantly, on his death.

Stagger Lee highlights several of the proposed ideas using an in-and-out storytelling method that pauses the action of the main plot line every few chapters to explore another avenue of Lee's saga. While McCulloch has woven his own version of the story, adding a handful of fictional characters into the mix, these additions add flavor and provide a more personal vision of the Stagger Lee chronicle.

Notably, the book shows that Lee Shelton survived long enough to even hear the dozens of songs that were already beginning to spread his legend across the West.

In addition to the artful storytelling, *Stagger Lee* boasts some impressive visuals. No stranger to comics artistry, Shepard Hendrix brings his talented penwork to the page to create a truly engaging visual story. Most notable of his talents is his veritable plethora of Stagger Lee caricatures: Lee is transformed from a run-of-the-mill cowboy to a hardy gangster to a sleek and svelte player as the action progresses, and the characterizations never feel forced.

With enough research put into the book to fill a textbook, the knowledge paints an enlightening picture of the man who was Lee Shelton. While *Stagger* may already have a hundred and one different voices to preach his story, McCulloch and Hendrix's contribution is a welcome addition to an already vast library.