



**featured album**

**Raine Maida**  
*The Hunters Lullaby*  
King Noise Records

SARAH SCOTT  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Our Lady Peace's relatively long absence from the spotlight makes lead singer Raine Maida's solo album sure to be welcomed by those hungry for a new snippet from the band. However, OLP fans will hear very little of their beloved band in *The Hunters Lullaby*, an eclectic montage of poetry put to music.

Raine Maida has taken off and found a voice of his own: *The Hunters Lullaby* could be described as a strange union of folk and hip hop. But what it really comes down

to is a nearly unparalleled acoustic performance of spoken word, matching beats to spinning emotions.

Yet, with the exception of the first single, "Yellow Brick Road," tracks on the album tend to be blatantly dreary and overtly melancholy. Though none of the songs are subject to the extensive teen angst of groups such as Simple Plan, Maida tends to put a negative spin on life in general here: "The Less I Know" questions religion, while "China Doll" displays Maida's up-and-down relationship

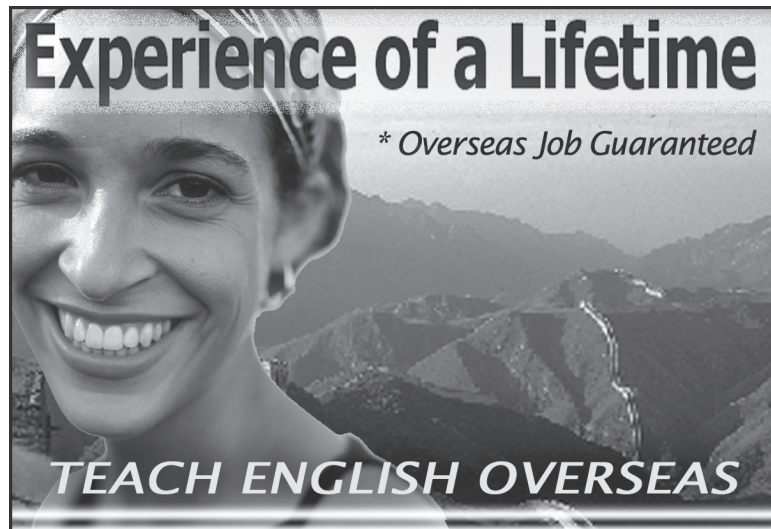
with politics.

Maida's wife, singer/songwriter Chantal Kreviazuk, provided additional vocals on a select few songs, but her additions are grinding and weak, especially on tracks such as "Careful What You Wish For."

Maida and an acoustic guitar would have spoken just fine for themselves, though he does manage to create a sound completely his own. Every song on the record is a dazzling display of Maida's musical prowess, from his telling lyrics to his unique and undiluted voice.

*The Hunters Lullaby* is completely Maida's, and any fan of his will have no reason to dislike an album that so completely captures him, even if it doesn't recall his band at all.

Check out the editor's playlist at [thegatewayonline.ca](http://thegatewayonline.ca) to hear select tracks from *The Hunters Lullaby*



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**albumreview**

**This is a Standoff**  
*Be Excited*  
Independent

SEAN STEELS  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

There's something to be said of instrumental virtuosity—bands like Motörhead and Iron Maiden meld lightning-quick percussion with scintillating fret work to fire up anthemic storms of rock. Good punk is about finding a balance between this fiery aggression and the melodic hooks that connect listeners to the album.

This Is A Standoff's debut album falls apart at this crucial connection:

*Be Excited* is all fire and no heart.

At least the band can play their instruments, and they do that well. What the group lacks in euphony, they make up for by making such technically proficient music. With members hailing from Forty Cent Fix and disbanded Canadian punk staples The Belvederes, it's no wonder they've harnessed every high-speed manoeuvre into a well-coordinated audio attack.

But that speed is a big part of the disc's downfall. Songs like "Fashion Faux Pas" and "Better Than All Of Us" take off like a rocket car down a freeway covered with stop signs. The punky, stop-and-go effect is effective in small doses, but by the time you've ground to a halt and then blasted off for the 32nd time, it becomes predictably nauseating.

The mix is fast and hard, like any good punk album, but every song runs together into a repetitive garble of frantic drumming and super-charged guitar riffs. "Drum Beater," the last song on the album, finally breaks this trend with a soaring guitar hook that tames the unbridled aggression. It brings a harmonious soul to the roaring rhythmic charge, but it's too little too late.

*Be Excited*? No. Mildly enthusiastic? Maybe.



**albumreview**

**Augie March**  
*Moo, You Bloody Choir*  
Ra Records

KELSEY TANASIUKE  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Picture yourself in a room with friends. The lights are dim, and you don't recall what time it is, but you're happy and calm. Your friends are lounging on leather couches, and you're all talking about the big questions in life.

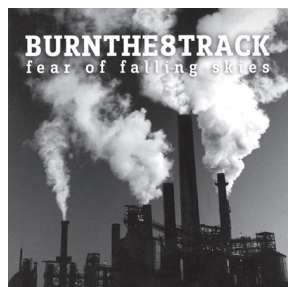
Should you ever find yourself in

this position, Augie March's *Moo, You Bloody Choir* is the album you want playing in the background. With its melodic and rich sound, there's no denying that the album is an exceptional listen, and while frontman Glenn Richard's vocals are nothing to sneeze that, they don't

overpower the masterfully played instrumentals.

This isn't to say that *Moo, You Bloody Choir* is the be-all-end-all of albums. In fact, it has difficult standing in the spotlight. It's a good listen, but the album also isn't the most captivating sound you'll ever hear. Background music is what it's best suited for.

The album's songs are all a little too similar, all melting into one very long song after you stop paying attention. So while you enjoy it as a pleasant background piece, should you choose to give Augie March's album a private, focused listen, you'll end up praying for a drastic tempo change.



**albumreview**

**Burn the 8 Track**  
*Fear of Falling Skies*  
Curve/Universal

SIMON YACKULIC  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

By the conclusion of the second song, *Burn the 8 Track* will have impressed their catchy, distorted melodies upon your ears, and you'll be nodding your head quickly along with the fast-paced beat.

*Fear of Falling Skies* is a collection of solid tracks that seem to improve, peak, and then regrettably fall with repeated listens: the perky guitar, buzzing with the glow of a warm overdrive, competes with and even leads the melodic development in most of *Burn the 8 Track*'s songs.

Lyrical, topics range from exquisitely woven poems regarding, in

horror, the wanton destruction of the earth in "Fear of Falling Skies" to the struggles of the third world explored in "Equilibrium," to typical ballads of lost love like "The Great Divide." Post-9/11 society is also explored in "Intelligence Lost."

The chemistry clearly exhibited throughout this release between Derek Kun's vocals and his brother Jason's guitar—which smoothly alternates from scorching solos to broken-chord melodies—creates the great presence that makes this album worth listening to. Everything about this band screams

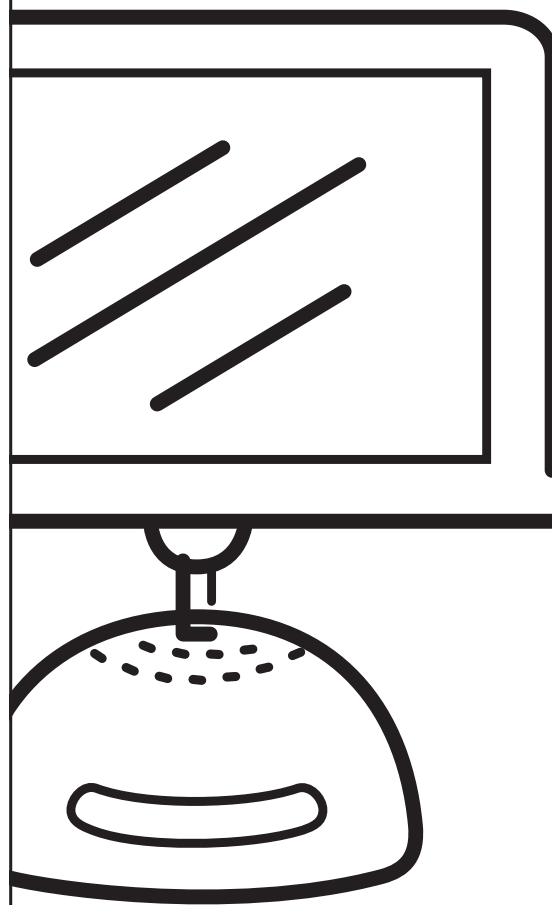
tight, like listening in on a brilliantly executed jam session.

But unfortunately, and especially with multiple listens, these tracks suffer from a level of monotony they all sound kind of like the same song, cut up into twelve separate tracks with slightly different lyrics.

I found that when I laid down my headphones and picked them up 15 minutes later, it was like I'd pressed pause and was simply starting from where I left off. Musical consistency isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially with well-executed tracks like those on *Fear of Falling Skies*; however, the repetition quickly lowers the amount of time that any non-diehard fan can listen to this album.

If you need to play something to pump up your adrenalin while wrestling, studying, or bowling and you're not going to be listening to your music that closely, *Fear of Falling Skies* is a good choice. On its own, however, the album quickly burns itself out.

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Have you heard of it?