

Sprouted from the Montreal scene

It may be the most hyped-up musical city in Canada, but to roots-rockers Plants and Animals, Montreal just happens to be the place they come from

musicpreview

Plants and Animals

Opening for Patrick Watson
Saturday, 1 December at 8pm
Myer Horowitz Theatre

SEAN STEELS
Arts & Entertainment Writer

There's been a lot of buzz around Montreal rockers Plants and Animals recently: it's been three years since they released their self-titled debut EP, and expectations are high for their follow-up and first full-length disc, *Parc Avenue*, due in February.

But fans expecting a platter of the same are in for a big change in the band's sound when they see the group open up for Patrick Watson.

"It's been a long transformation since then," Warren Spicer, vocalist and guitarist for the group, comments. "That first EP was the result of a Canada Council recording grant I got to do this acoustic record I had in my imagination. Drummer Matthew Woodley, bassist Nic Basque, and I had been occasionally playing music, so we started rehearsing and putting it together."

Since that original vision, the group has undergone a steady transformation and managed to overcome first impressions to build some solid excitement for their new and indefin-

able roots-rock sound.

"I think all three of us were changing and morphing into different people, individually and as a band, until slowly the idea that we actually wanted to sing songs became something that we wanted to pursue," Spicer says, picking his words delicately.

A quirky and energetic band at heart, they found that the soft, acoustic tracks worked well as a recording experiment but fell flat on stage.

"We're a Montreal band. It's where we learned to play together, make music, and grow as a band. It's very much a part of who we are."

WARREN SPICER
PLANTS AND ANIMALS

"Realistically, we're the same people, and it's the same line-up," Spicer says. "But that EP was very different from what we ended up deciding we wanted to do. There was this very natural transformation into what we are now. It just kind of happened."

Considering the current musical orgy going on in Montreal's streets, some people are attributing all the band's attention to location-based hype. The scene there

has been piquing curiosity across Canada for its artistic mystique and a yearly explosion of new bands. But according to Spicer, it's nothing special.

"It's intrigued people more than anything else; they hear so much about it and wonder what it's about," he explains. "Looking out from the inside, there's so much going on that you don't think too much about it. You're oblivious when you're a part of it, and don't realize what other people are seeing."

But oblivious or not, Plants and Animals attribute lots of their success to starting up in the red-hot cultural hub, and they concede that it's a big part of their identity.

"We're a Montreal band. It's where we learned to play together, make music, and grow as a band. It's very much a part of who we are," Spicer says.

Spicer also admits that their arty sound's reception has been hit and miss along the east coast, but it's undeniable that something has set these earthy tune-slingers apart from their peers.

Call it scenerist hype, a successful recording experiment, or even dumb luck—anyway you slice it, Plants and Animals have managed to stick on the public radar where other local groups have slid right off.

With a chance to prove their mettle on long prairie highways and a full-length release around the corner, we'll soon all get a chance to see what the fuss is about.



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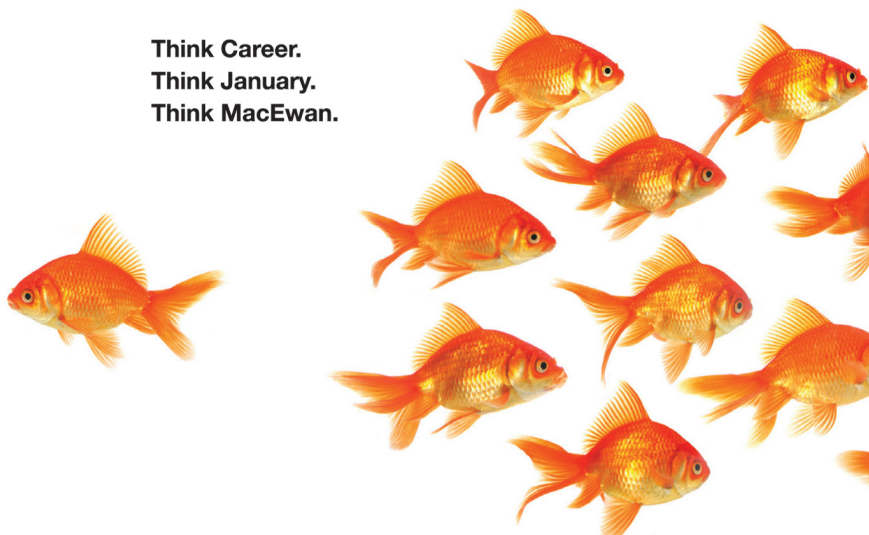
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