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featured album

Jason Collett
Here's to Being Here
Arts & Crafts

RYAN HEISE
Deputy News Editor

We're pretty lucky to have such an amazing pool of young talent in Canada's music industry; between the likes of Joel Plaskett, The Weakerthans' John K Samson, and Hayden, one of our greatest exports is our singer/songwriter/storytellers.

But someone that should definitely be added to that list is Jason Collett. A some time member of Broken Social Scene, Collett's fifth solo

release, *Here's to Being Here*, is a testament to his talent, versatility, and songwriting ability.

From the folk-rock-inspired opening track "Roll On Oblivion" to the percussion driven, near-spoken-word song "Charlyn, Angel of Kensington," Collett covers an unorthodox amount of musical styles through *Here's to Being Here*. But each song is crafted so well that, even with the often-abrupt changes of style, nothing seems out of place.

But what ties *Here's to Being Here* together is Collett's ability write complex songs that still pull listeners in. Listening to Collett's borderline raspy voice tell a story about driving through central Canada attempting to redeem himself for some unspeakable wrong he's done over a simple banjo roll is incredibly engaging. You can't just put this record on and continue with your day—you're forced to stop and listen as every lyric carries so much weight in a story of uncertain hopefulness.

In only five releases, Jason Collett has achieved a higher level of songwriting and performing than many artists will across their whole careers. And if the quality *Here's to Being Here* is any indication, he's only going to get better.

Listen to tracks from *Here's to Being Here* on the Editor's Playlist at www.thegatewayonline.ca



Much like with the Mona Lisa, we may never know what Bowie's smiling at here. But it's probably a rock journalist. You could be that rock journalist, by coming to a **Gateway A&E meeting, most Thursdays at 5**, and taking an assignment.

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albumreview

The Trews
No Time For Later
Bumstead

KATHLEEN BELL
Arts & Entertainment Staff

The Trews are pirates—experts at sailing the rolling seas of rock's history. Name an authority on the genre—the Rolling Stones, CCR, Tom Petty—and you'll find that the musical riches contributed by them and others have been plundered by this gang of marauding Maritimers. On their latest voyage into the studio, they brought those shiny treasures with them, brazenly integrating rock's past with its present on *No Time For Later*.

Of course, any band with such a

bounty of influences risks producing a record that's simultaneously derivative and confused. Luckily, The Trews have their own trademark: thick hooks and irresistible melodies. The album storms in with forceful yet undeniably danceable grooves, which then give way to sweet lamentations on lost love that, while gentler, have just as much swagger. As a result, *No Time For Later* feels both fresh and tight.

Although the weight of each song rests on catchy riffs, little surprises pop up

on nearly every track. A Hammond B3 organ lurks in the background of "Feel the Rain"; strapping bagpipes rush in on the heels of a stampeding drum intro on "Can't Stop Laughing"; a looping fade carries out "Ocean's End," mimicking the "carry on" sentiment of the chorus; and, perhaps the most unusual yet pleasing quirk of the whole album, a good-time-saloon piano opens "Paranoid Freak." Seemingly ripped from a western, this throwback to when you could tell the good guys from the bad guys by the colour of their hats proves to be the perfect counterpoint to the song's theme of "21st century fear of everything."

Songs like "Paranoid Freak" and "Gun Control" are ripe with frustration, making The Trews' third studio album their most political yet. However, exactly what statement they're trying to make by putting assless chaps on the cover remains elusive.



albumreview

Hot Chip
Made in the Dark
EMI

SARAH STEAD
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Made in the Dark is British electronic-pop group Hot Chip's third studio album, and after all of the critical acclaim their sophomore release *The Warning* received in 2006, you'd think they would have a difficult time producing another album as successful and listener-friendly—but they have. Their surprising combination of drum machines, electric guitars, synthesizer, and knee-weakening British-accented

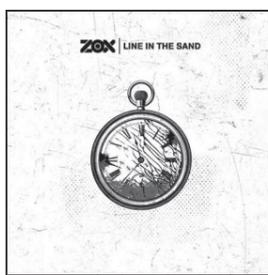
vocals offer a variety of sounds that far surpasses the average dance club track.

Although the first track, "Out at the Pictures," has a 70-second intro that's both cacophonous and unnecessary, the rest of the song's as solid as Chuck Norris' abs. "Shake a Fist" offers percussive jungle beats and a guest voice appearance by Todd Rundgren. Even the track entitled "Don't Dance" ironically begs for the opposite action.

Several tracks use synthesized organ, but it comes off far from church-like and much more sinful.

The seduction of Hot Chip is two-fold: they appeal to your emotions with the more romantic, slower ballad tracks and beckon to your primal side with the hip-grinding, pelvis-thrusting club-bangers.

"Wrestlers" reminds you that love is a battlefield with clever lyrics like, "It's me versus you in love / We'll tag team, double up, hit you in the sweet spot / The gloves are off." *Made in the Dark* oscillates comfortably between slow jams and more upbeat dance grooves, between loving lyrics and lustful moves. Hot Chip promises to bring the dance floor to a sweaty boil, while also allowing enough breaks with the slower tracks to catch your breath—and maybe someone's eye.



albumreview

Zox
Line In The Sand
Side One Dummy Records

DAVID JOHNSTON
Arts & Entertainment Staff

I'm prejudiced to like Zox because of one simple fact: violins are my kryptonite. I'll rabidly listen to any genre of music as long as it has those strings attached. But there's more to like with Zox than proper spiccato technique: the four-man Rhode Island group appeals to a wide audience of violinophiles and violin-phobes alike.

Zox can be described in a bunch of different genres: rock, folk, a little reggae, a touch of punk. They're diverse,

if nothing else, and their third album, *Line In The Sand*, represents this with a bevy of styles and songs to choose from. The aforementioned violin from Spencer Swain is noticeable in practically every number and never fails to impress. The jaw-dropping string acrobatics on "7th Avenue Prophet" transform a song that would ordinarily be average due to the unintelligible lyrics. I'll still listen to it due to my aforementioned fiddle fetish, but others might not find it as lasting.

Their music works best when the word "electric" is placed before everything: electric guitar, electric violin, electric percussion—and pretty electric vocals, to be honest. The group effortlessly manages to use their own voices as instruments too, which is good because the lyrics fall squarely into the "not quite as clever as they'd like you to think" category.

Each of the eleven tracks on the album is very listenable and enjoyable, which is a feat unto itself. Zox shines most, however, in songs like "Goodnight" and "The Wait (part II)," when they slow down, strip away the eclectic electrics, and just make music that sounds nice. They'd probably do a lot better for themselves were they to just settle themselves into a quieter niche like this one, but perhaps they're happy appealing to the violinophile market. God knows we're passionate enough.