

# Danny Michel keeps *Feather, Fur and Fin* fun and fulfilling

## musicpreview

### Danny Michel

With *The Wheat Pool*  
Friday, 28 March at 7pm  
Myer Horowitz Theatre

ELLIOT GOODINE  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

"Getting to travel is the ultimate bonus of my music. I love it more than anything in the world," Ontario singer-songwriter Danny Michel says.

Judging from the massive list of concerts and touring photos up on Michel's website, it's clear he values life on the road. Having recently finished a run of shows as a guest on Stuart McLean's Vinyl Café tour, Michel is now on his own solo jaunt to promote his eighth album, *Feather, Fur and Fin*.

"[The album is] more all over the map and mixing genres than I've ever done before," Michel says of his new release. "I've gone back and listened to my old records [from] when I was younger and thought about how much I goofed around in the studio and was a little more artsy and wacky. Over the years, I felt like it kind of got away from that a bit, so I just got back in and just had fun."

Michel describes the rediscovery of his adventurousness as "like being let loose in the music room at school with all the instruments." Despite the fact that Michel is an accomplished producer and loves building elaborate, multi-track creations in the studio, he pays careful attention to his songwriting and makes songs that can stand alone as solo performances.

"I start from the campfire basis," he explains. "You write it on an acoustic guitar on the couch, and if it works there, you can take it anywhere

because you can always bring it back."

*Feather, Fur and Fin's* title track, which covers environmental issues, may seem like a rather trendy move, but Michel's ideas on the environment seem to differ from much of the popular movement.

"People talk about the environment, [but] they don't really care about the environment. They care about themselves. They want to save the world so they can live in it, right?" he laments, adding that nowadays, people are eager to talk about the environment, but only "so we can keep living in it and going to the mall."

Michel spent many years living on a farm outside Guelph and now lives in Waterloo. As much as he likes big, metropolitan centers like Toronto, he says he could never live in one.

"An old farm would be my favourite place to go, I think," Michel says. "I love dirt more than concrete."

Even though Michel is a lover of all things natural, he recognizes the important role that technology plays for him.

"If we weren't recording through computers, you wouldn't be able to record at home, and you'd have to go to these big studios. [Technology] gives me the ability to make my albums at home on my own terms, at my own speed, taking my time. I mean, if I was in there paying \$80 an hour to record, this record would have cost me \$30 000 to record because I've been doing it for months."

Keeping things under his own control is also how Michel prefers to tour. He'll be performing solo this time around, with just a guitar, an amp, and his distinctive effects pedals. Because while Michel enjoys working with bands, he knows that hiring a band, feeding them, buying hotel rooms, and getting a giant van can end up costing a fortune.

"When I go out on my own, I rent the smallest little car you can get. The next step down is a bike," Michel laughs. "But I don't think I can do that."



LAUREN STIEGLITZ

WORKMAN FOR THE WEEKEND Hawksley Workman used plenty of tiny instruments on Monday.

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“There's no money in poetry, but then there's no poetry in money, either.”

—Robert Graves, 1895–1985

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(with apologies to Mr. Graves)

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2nd prize: \$500  
3rd prize: \$250

In honour of the University's centenary, the University of Alberta Alumni Association invites students in their graduating year to submit poems inspired by the University's motto, and centenary theme, “*Quaecumque vera — whatsoever things are true.*”



Contest Deadline: Friday, April 11, 2008

For a complete list of rules visit [www.ualberta.ca/alumni/poetry](http://www.ualberta.ca/alumni/poetry) or call 492-7726