

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

The Grassroot Deviation

With *Mad Volcano*
Friday, 4 April at 8pm
The Pawn Shop (10551 Whyte Avenue)

A staple of the Edmonton folk scene, The Grassroot Deviation meld laid-back, bluegrass-tinged rock with the free-flow riffing of jam bands and funk rhythm. The band has played over 100 shows across Canada with such artists as Keller Williams and Wide Mouth Mason. They released their second album, *The Circuit*, in October 2007 and, despite how simple the mistake is, shouldn't be confused with The Grassroot Deviants, who have a perverse obsession with wheat threshing.

U of A Mixed Chorus Spring Concert

With the *U of A Faculty of Education Handbell Ringers*
Saturday, 5 April at 8pm
Winspear Centre

To welcome the joyous time of spring that merrily bursts forth every year like so much confetti, the U of A Mixed Chorus—mixed because it features both ladies and gentlemen—will sing its heart out for the amusement of the audience at the 64th annual spring concert.

Surely the natural sounds of the season, such as sparrows, streams, and prancing through sprawling sun-flooded meadows, will be evoked. Much frolicking and gaiety will be enjoyed by all as the chorus unveils “*Quaecumque Vera*,” the official composition of the 100th anniversary of the University, aided by the whimsical ringers of handbells provided courtesy of the Faculty of Education.

Dr Jane Goodall

A Reason For Hope
Thursday, 10 April at 7pm
Jubilee Auditorium

Renowned throughout the scientific community as one of the foremost experts on primate behaviour, Dr Jane Goodall is a living legend in the field of primatology. Working for decades in the jungles of Africa observing intricate primate social structures and family relations to determine how they interact, this Dame of the British Empire continues to be a committed animal activist, touring an average of 300 days a year to speak about the environmental dangers currently affecting chimpanzee habitat.

As well, Goodall was also instrumental in the groundbreaking discovery that chimps routinely use crude tools ranging from sticks and stone hammers to can openers, typewriters, and a mortar and pestle.

MacHomer

Starring Rick Miller
15–19 April at 8pm, 20 April at 2pm
TransAlta Arts Barn (10330 84 avenue)

Playwright, actor, and musician Rick Miller's internationally recognized one-man act brings together two disparate elements for one of the most creative and hilarious theatre shows you'll find today: Shakespearean tragedies and the jaundiced residents of Springfield.

Providing over 50 voices from *The Simpsons* for this revision of *Macbeth*, Miller is in his twelfth year of touring worldwide with the production. Finally, audiences will witness the shocking conclusion to the classic *Simpsons* episode “Who Stabbed Mr. Burns In Order to Ascend to the Throne only to Become Drunk With Power and Bring About Their Own Violent and Merciless Downfall To Teach Everyone A Valuable Lesson About Morality and the Nature of Man.”

JOHN KMECH
Two years of laffs



The Ruins of a good vacation

Actors Shawn Ashmore and Jena Malone explain why their new movie isn't like other horror flicks—and how the line between onscreen acting and genuine fear began to blur during filming

filmpreview

The Ruins

Opens Friday
Directed by Carter Smith
Written by Scott B Smith
Starring Jonathan Tucker, Shawn Ashmore, Laura Ramsey, and Jena Malone

SIMON YACKULIC
Arts & Entertainment Writer

While he describes “[the] violence and the gore” as the two most effective thrills of *The Ruins*, Shawn Ashmore is quick to point out how he feels the newest addition to his resumé differs from rental shelves full of other blood-and-guts horror flicks.

“A lot of the film takes place in broad daylight, which is kind of an interesting idea and concept for a horror film,” Ashmore says. “It’s amazing because, you know, you can’t hide from anything. All of these things that are happening are [...] under the blaring sun, which almost makes it creepier because you can’t turn away; you can’t hide.”

As opposed to a typical slasher flick or a hero-versus-killer-themed release, *The Ruins* is described by the actors as a film more closely resembling *The Lord of the Flies* or the psychological thriller *Deliverance*. The movie follows the downward spiral of a group of friends who become victims of an evil force in a remote Aztec temple while on vacation in Mexico. And while reluctant to give away anything too concrete about plot twists or the film’s storyline, a few of Ashmore’s fellow actors openly discussed the type of conflict

they felt the characters encountered, as well as their other on-screen encounters.

“There’s a lot of CG; there’s a lot of sex in the film,” Jena Malone, who plays Amy, notes. “Maybe it’s a little bit more of a fantasy tale, but what’s going to surprise audiences is how realistic it truly is and how subtle it is and how humanistic it is. The bad guy, the evil in the film, is human nature.”

“We weren’t eating a lot. We were trying to deprive ourselves of one singular thing to understand the deprivation that the characters were going through. To be perfectly honest, I think I had a breakdown almost on every level—spiritually, emotionally, and creatively.”

JENA MALONE
THE RUINS ACTRESS

On a more personal level, Malone found herself relating to the degree of sadistic attachment that each actor felt to the set and story during filming. According to her, the lines blurred between acting and real life while on location.

“We weren’t eating a lot. We were trying to deprive ourselves of one singular thing to understand the deprivation that the characters were going through. To be perfectly honest, I

think I had a breakdown almost on every level—spiritually, emotionally, and creatively. I crossed that line between asking is this real fear or is this character fear? Is this real pain, or is this character pain? I think I still have bruises and scratches, actually, from the shooting of the film.

“It definitely took a toll on me, and I feel like I actually went through a strange depression or something,” she continues. “I got back in July, and I think it was September until I started actually feeling like myself again.”

That sacrifice paid off in creating what the actors hope will be seen as a blockbuster performance. If it does perform well in critics’ eyes, a lot of credit will go to Scott Smith, who wrote both the screenplay and the original book that the movie is based off of.

Ashmore credits him with the larger than usual scope and depth present in the film, providing the characters with an easily relatable back-story of a vacation in Mexico and for assisting in successfully conveying the group’s degeneration from a band of friends into distressed foes in such a way that typical movie viewers can easily relate.

“These characters go through [this] sort of breakdown or transition from the very beginning in the film, where it’s just these young kids having fun on vacation, to this place of complete fear and survival mode,” he said.

As a bloody and psychological horror film, *The Ruins* has the potential both to provoke thoughts and induce screams. But while those familiar with the book realize that there’s a physical entity that the protagonists struggle against in Mexico, Jena Malone notes that the theme is just as much about the “battle that you fight within as a human.”