

Tele visionaries combine rock, electronica for big, beefy sound

musicpreview

Tele

With *The Imports and The Ways*
Thursday, 3 April at 8pm
Starlite Room

SIMON YACKULIC
Arts & Entertainment Writer

With songs ranging in style from the rough and raw fist-pounding distortion of "Notice" to tunes such as "Monster" that have openings reminiscent of a classical sonnet, pinning down a good descriptor for Tele's musical stylings seems a little troubling. Even the band tends not to talk about it much.

"If we're doing a big song, we really make it quite big, and if we're doing a more sparse song, then we try to play that up."

ZACK ANTEL
TELE KEYBOARDIST

"We sometimes describe it, in a general way, as extreme," explains keyboardist Zack Antel, speaking from Grande Prairie, where he, vocalist/guitarist Matt Worobec, bassist Brendan Berg, and drummer Derek Allard had just pulled in during their Canada-wide tour. "If we're doing a big song, we really make it quite big, and if we're doing a more sparse song, then we try to play that up."

As Antel acknowledges, both their classic rock lineup and keyboard-driven pop-rock tracks evoke comparisons to other bands. To him,

"any of the British bands or electronic [musicians]" are considered to be major influences on the band as a whole, and each individual band member has their own personal taste in tunes that affects the musical output: Worobec listens to singer-songwriter pieces to boost his creative edge, while Antel notes his own preference for symphonic material. The net result is the unique sound coming from this Winnipeg-based four piece.

Creative sound engineering also plays a part in the strong sound that Tele creates. To create a keyboard sound that many a casual listener would swear is a distorted guitar, the inventive musicians ran keyboards through guitar amps with guitar effects and distortion, creating a sound described by Antel as "beefy yet also cut." While this has been done before by other bands, it fits in perfectly with Tele's existing sound and creates stronger riffs than a normal keyboard could achieve.

"I love that dirty, fat synth sound, like the band Holy Fuck or Justice—that really thick sound," Antel explains.

Tele is currently independent of any label, despite having received the praise of *Chart* magazine, where they were touted as "one of Canada's top breakout bands of 2007." While recognizing the advantages a label could bring the band in terms of promotion and advertising, Antel finds the current arrangement is working really well for the band. Being accountable to only themselves, they remain "in complete control of [their] own destiny" and able to distribute their music extensively over the Internet. The band also looks forward to their return to the stage in Edmonton, where they've found success before.

"We had a blast [the last time we were in Edmonton]," Antel mentions. "The crowd was really energetic and really into it. We're just hoping to repeat that and just put on a really high energy, high emotion rock show."

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Spacey deals ace, stays on 21

The veteran actor's presence helps boost up an imperfect script

filmreview

21

Directed by Robert Luketic
Starring Jim Sturgess, Kevin Spacey, and Kate Bosworth

CAROLINE GAULT
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Considering director Robert Luketic's new film *21* is based on a true story about six genius MIT students taking Vegas for millions, it's managed to pay off well: it spent last weekend topping the box office and, despite a few misplaced bets, deserves its substantial payoff.

Ben Campbell (Jim Sturgess), a socially awkward 21-year-old student on the verge of graduating, is in dire need of some excitement—and \$300 000 tuition for Harvard Medical School.

Luketic does an excellent job at capturing the intensity of the crazy Vegas nightlife and the palm-sweating, high-stakes risk of gambling and beating a system that the casino doesn't want you to beat.

Regularly, he relies on two nerdy best friends, one of whom (Josh Gad) is an overweight guy with curly hair and glasses and provides comic relief through his eating habits and obsessive comments concerning the "it" girl, Jill Taylor (Kate Bosworth). Gad's "best friend" role is a weak attempt at re-creating Seth from *Superbad*, yet there are funny moments worth the effort.

Due to his limited social circle, Ben jumps at the

opportunity to live large in Vegas and make some fast cash in card counting. This isn't without persuasion from the sexy, hard-to-get Jill, who's nice to look at, but lacks depth, save for a few empty references to her absentee gambling father.

Kevin Spacey plays Mickey Rosa, a crooked professor at MIT and the leader of the "team" that uses math and memory to beat blackjack. The film wouldn't reach the level it does without Spacey, who's successful in gaining the trust of both the players and the audience because of his experience. His manipulative character is intimidating, but the only flaws are in his past: it's never fully explained why he quit card counting in the first place.

Thankfully, it's not necessary to understand math or "the count" to enjoy the film. Luketic does an excellent job at capturing the intensity of the crazy Vegas nightlife and the palm-sweating, high-stakes risk of gambling and beating a system that the casino doesn't want you to beat. This fast-paced film will inspire you to dig up the funds for a trip to party in Vegas.

21 grasps the common theme of finding one's identity, as Ben becomes two different people depending on his geographical location. During the week, he's a hard working, middle-class college kid, but in Vegas, he's a high-rolling gambler dressed in the finest suits and wanted by all the ladies.

Sturgess pulls off the cocky side well, evoking the aura of Liam Gallagher from Oasis. He also achieves the softer, under-confident side of his character, allowing the audience secondary embarrassment on several occasions.

At this point, it's hard not to inquire why Hollywood cast a Caucasian actor to play the protagonist, when the real-life Ben, Jeff Ma, is actually Asian-American. This choice holds over to the roles of Mickey Rosa and Steve Fisher (another teammate) as well. But politics aside, there's no denying that *21* makes you want to hop the next plane to Vegas because there, "you can become anyone you want."

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