

INDIE MUSIC

It's a gas

Canary Mine continues to break new ground while releasing a CD that maintains its humour

Sometimes when a band puts out a debut album that is so unexpectedly off-the-wall, it's hard to imagine that they would have the ambition to try to top it. I'm sorry to say that that was my impression the first time I heard Canary Mine last year when I got my copy of their first record, Bitter, Better, Happy, Horny.

Now, I'm happy to say that they have proven me wrong with the just-released followup, Maybe Yo' Mama. And the good news is that the quartet, which includes Waterloo expat James Lanbro, is making real progress in mixing every conceivable genre — from country to jazz to hip-hop — into an intoxicating musical stew.

Guitarist/vocalist Lanbro says there wasn't much hesitation in making a new record just as the first one was beginning to get Canary Mine's name out across the country, since the band is constantly working on new material.

"I'm a lyric writer first," Lanbro explains. "I write almost a song a day in words. I try to write music every couple of weeks. It's a



JASON SCHNEIDER

whole other ballgame, the process of actually presenting chords and lyrics to the band and make it come alive. The hardest part for me is teaching myself the chords and memorizing the lyrics. The writing is easy. If it isn't easy, I figure it's not going to be a good song. We're all very serious about our music, and will continue to crank out tunes."

Much of the band's motivation also comes from its ambitious touring schedule, and the overriding focus on its live show. "The songs tend to evolve on tour," Lanbro says. "When you are playing them daily, you



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Canary Mine emphasizes its live show which fans can see at the Circus Room on Saturday.

really get to know those magic moments and emphasize them. It's matching a harmony with a slight twist, or swinging a rhythm and banging on an off-time shot. The songs have to learn those moments for themselves before they get recorded."

He adds, "Touring has you naturally favouring travelling music. On the Road Again by Willie Nelson hits closer to home when we're touring. We also listen to a lot of indie music; bands that we play with. But we probably do tend to sing more about traveling situations now. Things like girlfriends in different area codes, and having transmission trouble in Whistler."

One thing that hasn't changed is the band's irreverent sense of humour, which (depending on your point of view) manifests

itself on Maybe Yo' Mama through some hilarious raps like The Boat Song and the title track.

While Lanbro says that hip-hop is one aspect of their sound, he's happy when fans can appreciate their take on it. "We are definitely more confident in our eclectic-ness. It's part of our style now to have many styles. It's not unusual for hip-hop fans to rush the stage and start getting jiggy. Last month in Guelph, some guy with a G-Unit hat bought our CD and told us we are his favourite 'white band,' whatever that means."

Canary Mine launches Maybe Yo' Mama this Saturday at the Circus Room in Kitchener. The following night they'll perform live-to-air on CKMS, 100.3 FM. For more information go to www.canarymine.com.

Collett proves he doesn't always have to be Social

BY JASON SCHNEIDER

The past two years have been a hell of a ride for Broken Social Scene, and Jason Collett is the first to admit it. No one could have predicted the success of the Toronto collective's You Forgot It In People, which has become one of the cornerstones of a new era of Canadian rock. But true to the band's democratic principles, Collett has remained a member while still having the freedom of his own solo career, something he has pursued since the late '90s.

While his involvement with BSS is certainly getting the word out more quickly about Collett's new album, Idols Of Exile, it certainly deserves attention as both a rich travelogue — most of the songs were written on tour — and as a snapshot of the diverse musical friendships he has made along the way.

"The last few years has been a series of plateaus for me, and it's given me the feeling like I'm arriving," Collett says. "I've learned so much just through playing guitar in Social Scene, and it's really inspired me as a writer. I've just been a singer/songwriter for so long that it's been great to travel some different territory. It happened at the right time because, like most people, I've really become



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Jason Collett releases a solo CD, away from Broken Social Scene, tonight at the Starlight.

tired with singer/songwriters. There's too many of them out there, and not many have much to say."

Collett's main inspiration for Idols Of Exile stemmed from his interest in urban development. As a child of Toronto's suburbs,

he became enamoured with the excitement of downtown life early on, but spending time in most of the world's major cities with BSS has given him a new perspective of home.

"I was really hoping I could get all of my recollections of the suburbs out on this record, both the good and the bad," he says. "I don't think I have. I think I'm actually getting deeper into it now, and partly that's because I have a fascination with urban design through reading people like Mark Davis and Jane Jacobs. It's been a real luxury to be able to step off a tour bus in every city in Europe and observe public space and how it affects culture in important ways. Compared to a lot of those places, Toronto isn't really this huge metropolis that most other people in Canada think it is. It's really a town, and I like it that way."

And while many people are eagerly awaiting the imminent release of the new Broken Social Scene album, Collett is equally excited about his own current live show, which teams him with the band Pasomino, who he discovered in Barrie and immediately drafted.

"I've probably never been more excited about my own music than I am right now

CONCERT	
Who:	Jason Collett, opening for The Stills
Where:	Starlight Club, Waterloo
Day:	Wednesday
Time:	9 p.m.
Cost:	\$13 in advance
Phone:	885-4970

playing with these guys," Collett says. "They've been together for a long time, and they've got that real rootsy, Band-like quality about them that a lot of southern Ontario musicians seem to have and I connected with right away. Playing with them has really been the longest time that I've had my own band with a defined sound, so I'm starting to write a new batch of songs to record with them soon before things get too busy with Social Scene."

And what can fans expect from Broken Social Scene this time out? "Well, I know that there are a lot of people with their knives out waiting for this record, and it definitely has some different sounding stuff on it. But most people who have heard it come back after a week and say, 'OK, I get it.'"