

Plaskett rocks up a storm despite feeling under the weather

Ah, the first of semester pub. The time of year when first year students are ushered into their new surroundings by, in most cases, getting completely shitfaced and hooking up with the first person they see. I don't want to generalize, because there are certainly a number of students and/or onlookers simply there to enjoy the act chosen to kick the year off; in this case, The Joel Plaskett Emergency.

First off, I have to give kudos to whoever chose NOT to get the Trews this year. It was nice to see a little variety for once. In my opinion, Joel Plaskett was the perfect guy to start this year off right. He may not be everyone's cup of tea, but he has enough credibility, chops, and general rock swagger to keep more than enough people moving and singing along.

Opening act Pascale Picard warmed up the folks who decided to arrive there early enough to even see her. Unfortunately, most acts opening at a campus pub for someone of Joel Plaskett's stature don't exactly draw a big crowd, so if you happened to be there for her, that's excellent, but if not you can check her out at pascalepicard.com

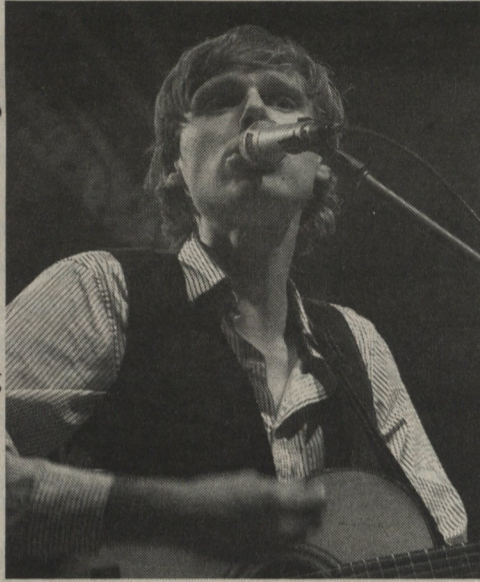
or on her Myspace. 'Gate 22' is a nice little track you can listen to on both sites.

Getting back to the main event though, Joel Plaskett and the Emergency took the stage at around 11:30, to an ever increasing and excited crowd. Something to note was that fellow Canadian musician Peter Elkas was playing guitar this night

with the band, and I would suggest you look into some of his work as well. Joel tore through one of the better sets I've seen him play, despite apparently feeling a little under the weather. I've had the pleasure of seeing him a number of times,

solo, with the Emergency, and even with Symphony Nova Scotia, but this night was honestly one of the most energetic shows I've seen him play. Under the weather? Who would have thought? Joel would often step back from the micro-

phone to have the audience fill in the blanks, and they never seemed to miss a beat. Another one of the great things about Joel Plaskett's live show is how he adjusts his songs to apply to the place he is playing. During the encore, after taking a turn on the drums for "Fashionable People" no less, he put a twist on what I considered to



be one of the highlights of the night, "Extraordinary." Strutting up to the front of the stage with microphone in hand, he sung to the audience that "strange things happen on a Thursday night, boys meet girls and they all get tight." He must've noticed

the overwhelming number of kids in the audience who couldn't keep their hands off each other...to say the least.

All in all, it was also one of the best nights I had seeing a band at the Wave in general. With the

exception of one genius who decided to light up a cigarette, and the aforementioned walking hormones, it seemed as if the night went off without a hitch. I hesitate to compare a rock show to a religious experience, but Joel appeared to convert a few people in the audience. Mallory Jane McKinney was at the show. "I'm certainly more of a fan now." Adding "It was one of the better Wave excursions I've had." Patrick McQuaid was also pleasantly surprised with how good of a time he had, saying that he never knew how great Joel Plaskett was until he saw him live. It's pretty safe to say that there had to have been more in attendance that felt the same way.

Joel Plaskett has several more shows in the Maritimes before he makes his way to the States in support of 'Ashtray Rock,' popping back up for a quick appearance north of the border in Halifax for the Pop Explosion. Check his site for specific dates, and pick up the new album, or any of his albums for that matter, because they're unlikely to disappoint.

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VANCOUVER'S BEND SINISTER WORTH YOUR WHILE

Skeletor's Picks - Brodie Birt

Artist - Bend Sinister

(myspace.com/bendsinistervancouver)

Album - Bend Sinister

Label - Distort Inc.

(Teamdistort.com)

After sifting through a pile of promotional albums late one muggy, August night, I was surprisingly let down by poor creativity and an absence of individuality in the audio tracks before me.

It wasn't until September hit me with a cold hard wind of rock and roll, which went by the name Bend Sinister, that I let go an overwhelming sigh of relief - and it wasn't because of the Imodium. The album is self titled and contains 5 tracks of well written music, blending many styles such as jazz, reggae, pop rock, and hard rock to create a very unique genre.

From their original stomping grounds in Vancouver, Bend Sinister is composed of singer/songwriter/guitarist/key-boardist Daniel Moxon, lead guitarist Naben Ruthnum, bassist Dave Buck, and singer/guitarist Jon Bunyan, all of whom grew up

together.

The band went through several drummers but eventually managed to settle on an experienced drummer named Jason Dana for this album. Not only has the glamorous Cadre showed interest in the Vancouver based quintet: the album has also received positive reviews from both Eye Weekly and View Weekly.

Beginning with a very catchy, heavy riff, the track 'Your Truly' immediately draws your attention to how tight this band actually is. This riff then transforms into a reggae rock mountain of verses covered with Moxon's Maroon 5-like vocals. Using the heavy riff as a backbone, this song becomes the T-Rex of dinosaurs in this album.

Introduced by a bouncing bass line, the next track 'TV War' takes on the characteristics of a Muse song. The chorus doesn't come into the picture until later on in the song but it's well worth the wait. The catchy vocal melody of this chorus takes over like He-Man crushing all other radio-oriented, fluffily composed choruses to dust. The chorus repeats, building to a huge crescendo until the final chord is struck, ending the most

commercially friendly song on the album.

A soft piano and vocal track begin the voyage of the rock journey that is 'Time Breaks Down.' A sudden drum and guitar storm starts, which almost makes the song worth listening to, but quickly leaving the listener back where the song began. Another storm brews and you find yourself at one last chorus before the song concludes. This track is not as strong as the others and is an unwelcome distraction, although its placement in the middle of the album seems to suggest the band may have tried to sandwich it between their better work.

A lead guitar accompanied by some string bending greet you at the door of 'High Horses.' Inside you'll find the verses are slow tempo. Then as you get to know your surroundings the drums take over the song for a rocking good time, courtesy of late addition Jason Dana.

The instruments and vocals seem incomparable to the expert percussion in this song. If you are a drummer looking for some creative inspiration, dig this track up for a listen.

In 'Julianna,' eerie synth chords

crowd the opening, followed by piano and drums barging in to count the tempo in unison. The verses begin with very little guitar backing the vocals and end with some lead guitar riffs behind the vocals. Catchy "la la la's" preface the song's mystical fadeout, and an idle coda of piano and soft vocals sweeps in to conclude the album.

Bend Sinister is a good representative album for the music scene in Vancouver and an excellent introduction for those not well versed in the western indie scene. Refined chops and engineering allows Bend Sinister get down to what really matters: the music.

The first two tracks alone make the entire album worthwhile, with remaining three songs showcasing the diversity of the band. Overall this album rates a 7.7 out of 10 on the Skeletor scale.

The album compliments listeners familiar with Muse, Radiohead, Maroon 5, Fugatu, or even Tool without becoming tired or derivative. Bend Sinister was a welcome relief from the numerous other formulaic or just plain weird submissions for review, and this reviewer recommends it.

Until next time, keep fit and have fun.

Come support one of your own!

Alicia Gallant, a 23 year old Education student at UPEI, was recently diagnosed with an advanced case of cancer, and will be undergoing intensive treatment in the coming months.

We are having a benefit concert and silent auction this Sunday at The Wave. Performers include: The Celtic Ladies, Perfect Combination, Katie McGarry

Donations will be accepted at the door.