

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sam Roberts is Not a Sell Out.

Andy Bulman
Reporter

Not to be a name dropper but Sam Roberts and his band partied at my house. He took pictures of my messy room, drank tequila and talked music while his drunk guitar tech hit on my roommate. His drummer doesn't know the words to the song 'Where Have All The Good People Gone' but does have every Jon Bon Jovi tune in existence memorized. I was expecting pretentious rock stars, instead they were more like the drunk goofy band kids we all knew in high school.

"Yeah, sometimes after a show I just want to go out and let off some steam, and my fans, of course I want to meet people who want to meet me. My fans, people who come to my shows, it's like making new friends. That being said it is weird for me to hear the sentence 'Oh my God you're Sam Roberts!' I mean that's a weird sentence," says Roberts.

Born and raised in Montreal Sam Roberts has been playing instruments and making music since he took up the violin at the age of four. Upon the completion of high school he worked many day jobs while trying to make it as a musician. After a number of false starts he finally experienced commercial success with the release of his freshman album 'We Were Born In A Flame'. This CD samples an almost schizophrenic range of musical styles, ranging from The Who-like power pop (Don't Walk Away Eileen) to soft acoustic lullaby-type tunes (This Wreck of Life).

"Well you have to have confidence to try to make new music, rock and roll is about progression, doing the same thing all the time is boring, if it has to have a historical background think of the Beatles, they did everything a band could do, they were the godfathers of melody and song writing. Bands like that are inspiring."

Sam Roberts and his band have opened for many big names like The Rolling Stones and Oasis but the biggest moment for himself and his band was opening for the Canadian rock group The Tragically Hip.

Roberts explains, "Gord Downy is a great guy, he's done a lot for us. It was huge for me to meet him, he was so accessible too. Like, we opened for the Rolling Stones and we never really got to talk to them, same with Oasis. Fame is like crack, you



know? So many bands get caught up in this game, if they have a void in their life they try to fill it with fame. It is pathetic. Outside of Canada we carpool to our own shows and gigs and we don't care. The music is the more important thing."

In recent months Sam has returned from a trip to Japan, lost a major US contract, encouraged his bandmates to grow matching beards and finished work on a new album entitled 'Chemical City', which will be released on April 6th.

"Chemical City is more psychedelic than 'We Were Born in a Flame', it's a record to get stoned to, I'm really excited about this one, we're putting it out in those new paper cases, like Arcade Fire's last album. I love it. We played some of our new songs when we were in Japan performing at the World Fair. Our audience was mostly eighty year olds who didn't speak English, but we had them rocking. My Canadian label was really great about this album, you know I had total creative control. I recently lost a contract to Universal in the States, they wanted me to be huge. They had people come and try to coach me - the name John Mayer was thrown around a lot. But I don't want to be a fucking John Mayer, you know? I wanted creative control, I couldn't be happier about getting out of that contract. Now I am free to make the music I want. No more rock politics."



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