

The ups and downs of being Good

by Josh O'Kane

It's been a year since Matthew Good got out of the hospital for overdosing on Ativan, an event that strongly shaped how his newest album, *Hospital Music*, came together. He hasn't spoken to a university paper in a while, but took the time to give the Brunswickan a call and talk about his life, music, and worldviews.

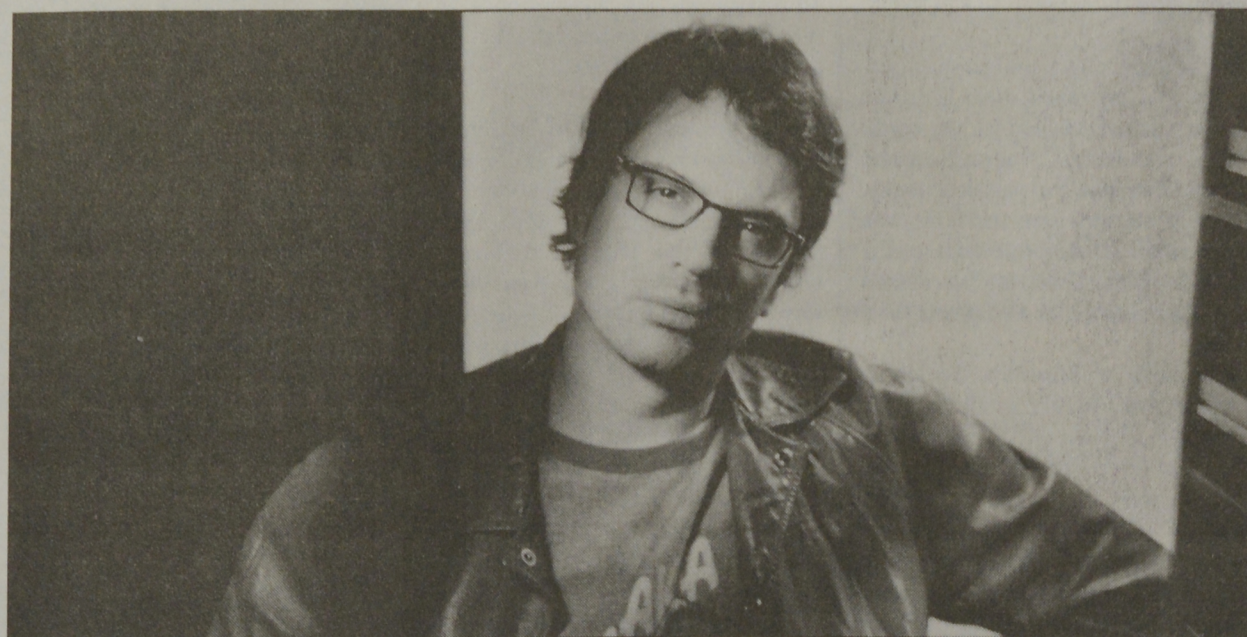
Brunswickan: I heard you don't usually speak with college papers.

Matthew Good: Well, to be honest, I've always really liked doing it. But — I can't remember when and how it was — I had an interview with one, and it was just really horrible-ass journalism. They just completely... there were quotes out of context. It was almost an attack piece, like they were just waiting to write an attack piece. After that, I kinda just stopped. Not that mainstream media doesn't do that anyway, right? In that situation, one thing you do worry about is people who are in journalism that are trying to whip up a name for themselves, and controversy always tends to lend itself to that. But now, I've decided to do it.

B: Since the Matthew Good Band, your solo efforts have varied stylistically. *Hospital Music* is a more acoustic, almost folk setup, as opposed to White Light Rock & Roll Review and Avalanche. What influences your style in putting together an album? And is it true this album is a result of being hospitalized over bipolar disorder?

MG: Yeah, pretty much. This record really was a record that was written because of what had happened over a year ago... to do with my divorce, which was a trigger for what ended up being my diagnosis and me having to use Ativan to counteract an antidepressant I had been on for years — which, after my divorce, the milligrams went up. But one of the side effects of the antidepressant was, where I suffer from bipolarity, it actually causes greater mania. And of course, my general practitioner at the time didn't know that I was bipolar. Back in 2003, I was undergoing massive stress — Avalanche hadn't come out, the band had dissolved in 2001, I was in a relationship in which I paid for everything. It was an extremely stressful time for me and I had a lot of pressure from my record label at the time.

I eventually took the advice of someone and saw a regular therapist, and that person basically just said, 'Your doctor should put you on this and this.' He put me on an antidepressant, and he also said if you have a panic attack or anything, and at that point in time I was basically



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passing out from them, he said to me, take an Ativan if you feel something coming on. But I never touched them. I put them under the sink, and never really bothered with them. Then after my wife left me, I started turning to them more and more, even though it was a massively tumultuous time...

My marriage ended like you're in grade nine and you're sitting in the cafeteria and your girlfriend comes up to you and says, 'Oh, we're not going out anymore'. And of course, there's almost a ten-year difference between me and my ex-wife in age (I'm older than her). Being that you're a married person, you think, 'Well, obviously counseling and blah blah blah'. You don't throw a marriage away. That ended up being the case and it caused me greater anxiety and greater mania and as the year unfolded, my dosage of antidepressants were increased, which of course caused greater mania, and then my dependence on Ativan increased exponentially along with it. At certain points I would be taking like seven milligrams of it a day.

I did an acoustic tour in 2006 and I was fuckin' stoned for a month. I was on stage, and God knows what I was doing. So basically, I had written maybe half the record before then, and then that happened, the night that I was at my parents'. I had dinner with my mum and dad, went upstairs, and I was watching a film on my laptop in their spare bedroom and had a manic episode. I took Ativan, had some beers and basically went into a state of euphoria where I just didn't know what I was fucking doing.

When I woke up in the hospital, they told me I had taken in excess of 45 of them, and whew... I was lucky to be alive. And so I committed myself and that's when I found out, we found the checklist [for bipolar disorder], and you know, 'check, check, check'. So obviously the medication that I was on was immediately changed to a different regimen, or at least it was a bridge to

a different regimen, which of course completely changed everything.

After I got out of the hospital, I wrote the second half of the album and recorded it. It was one of those things where... you know, as an artist, you write what you know, always. In a lot of cases, some people have ambiguities that they apply to that. In this particular case, the subject matter was far too personal, and I decided, I don't think I consciously decided — I just did — unconsciously wrote it being very blatant. When you look at a situation like that, you have to deal with it. You're not going to go about it half-assed, there's kinda no point.

B: Within In a Coma, there were re-workings of Matthew Good Band songs. Are those going to be featured in this acoustic tour?

MG: Oh yeah, I'll do some of those songs. Not all of them, but some of them for sure. Obviously with a back catalogue like mine you can't really roll in and play a show without doing *Appearances* or *Strange Days* or something. You'd get lynched...

It's a new record so a lot of material will be from it. I'll mix it up. I like throwing obscure B-sides and shit in there too. It's impossible to play a show like that and not play *The Fine Art of Falling Apart*.

B: *Hospital Music* is the last album on your current contract. What do you plan on exploring after *Hospital Music*?

MG: I don't really know. As far as the world of music, the music business, I'm not sure what I'm going to do yet. I don't think that anyone thought this record would debut the way it did. We're in very much an enviable position where we can sit back and wait and see what happens. I can't really say.

B: Are you still living with your parents?

MG: Oh, Christ no. I didn't really live with them at all — it's just that my

stuff was in storage. I got a place of my own in Vancouver. I'm a little too old for that.

B: How long have you considered yourself an activist?

MG: I don't really know that I am one. I consider it due diligence, man. You live in this kind of society. You live in a participatory society. It's just due diligence... that's what you do. If you're not gonna do that, then how can you justify anything that occurs that you disagree with? If you display any due diligence beforehand, the only way you can do that is by being informed.

I wouldn't particularly say I'm an activist; do I think that certain things should or shouldn't have happened? Within that simple analysis, there are the details that make up the details of what is right or wrong, which is usually vastly complex. I find that it's a responsibility of absolutely everyone to understand those complexities far more than they do, because they don't. A lot of people simply overlook them because the simplest explanation requires the least amount of time and effort.

B: Did you get a sample, or is that an actual recording in *Girl Wedged under the Hood of the Firebird* on *Hospital Music*?

MG: That's two guys talking on Hastings Street. I live a block off it — I know it all too well. That's two guys really talking. I sent the assistant engineer out with an old fashioned tape recorder to go tape recording people — to just go out and talk with them. That's the beginning of *Champions of Nothing* — that's a guy in a back alley, just saying, 'Weird here is normal... weird here is the extreme somewhere else'.

B: Any closing comments?

MG: You have a lovely school that's made of brick. I've been there many times and played in your cafeteria, I believe. So it'll be a nice change not to play in your cafeteria. And I'll be back.

Dude, where's m'lady?

The Dudes will be playing with Two Hours Traffic at the Capital on October 11

SHEET MUSIC

by The Dudes

Dear Tour Diary,

Let's do this thing. We got a new van when we played in Edmonton a couple of days ago. It's almost new and definitely blue. We haven't named her yet, but she seems like a Steve to me. Halfway to Regina we found a Calgary ant stowed away in the doghouse. We put him out the window. I wonder if he'll find a new colony or live his days out as a bachelor. Would another colony even have him? Jon makes like he's human resources and says, "Résumé's tight. You ever protect a queen? OK, you're in."

REGINA

The promoter was super nice and got us 'effed up before the show. We played like, really bad. Sorry Regina. There were handsome mustachioed men partying hard at the front of the stage. I sang to them and it made me feel weird. The Two Hours Traffic boys seem really swell. I bet this tour kicks ass. The house tech should be named Uncle Sweat Pants, but I think it was Gary. He says to our Phil, "Can I see you back here for a few secs?" but it sounds like a few sex. Jon asks me back to the hotel for a few sexes and I laugh and laugh. Our hotel had fake wood paneling. Sweet.

We ate at the hotel restaurant in the morning. It was only 11:30, but they said we'd missed breakfast. If we wanted though, we could still get The Special. Bacon/mushroom omelet with soup, fries and cheese toast. I say cool, but could they hold the bacon? Our waitress says no. Really? OK, could I have just regular toast instead of cheese toast? She

says no way. Crazy, right?

We try to find travel scrabble to beat the monotony of touring Canada, but we could only find travel Ouija board. It's great. You can talk to whoever you want, just as long as they're dead. And there's no costly roaming fee. By the by, who the 'eff is Emily Carr?

SASKATOON

Saskatoon is a prairie miracle. We sold out Amigo's last night. We played really 'effing well. New friends brought Jagermeister to the stage. Then they would bring more. Old friends gave us high fives and told stories. One girl took a real liking to Scott. She watched us load out and said she'd drive to see the Edmonton show today. Trying to sound non-committal, Scott says, "See you there, m'lady." M'lady? Ridiculous. Who says junk like that? I think that's going to be the van's new name. The boys partied with Two Hours and I fell asleep with a pilsner in my hand watching ladies soccer. I could hardly be lamer.

I was least hung over, so I drove m'lady to Edmonton. She's a beauty.

EDMONTON

Last night's show was totally sweet Pete. People wanted autographs. Hilarious. The local rock kids are 'effing champs. We love it up here. The Two Hours boys had their parked van totaled by a drunk driver. He tried to flee the scene OJ style, but his Bronco wouldn't start. Life is too good for shittbirds like that. We drank consolation beers with them until sun up. They're kick ass guys. They like baseball and jokes, just like us! They want to start a website of restaurant reviews. It's called Hungry Hipsos and no one ever gets a bad review... "It was great. We ordered. They brought us food. It was cooked! We got full. They had chairs. We sat in the chairs. Super."

Now we hit the coast!

It's a heck of a long way to Vancouver. I'm going to take up the back seat for a few sex and write 600 words for The Brunswickan. See you soon Maritimes. Can't 'effing wait! Onward m'lady...



Internet

Four girls, a guy, and an 'obnoxious' SUV go national



Internet

by Ashley Bursley

A flat tire outside of Calgary almost spelled disaster for the Vancouver band Better Friends than Lovers.

"The wheel came flying off at 120," guitarist Mandy Hardwick says, en route to Montreal from Sudbury. She laughs when she adds, "we almost died, but everybody's okay. We couldn't get the van fixed for about 11 days so we had to rent something... Rent and drive all the

way to Halifax and back to where the van is and get it on the way home. We had to rent this obnoxiously giant SUV, so that's a little embarrassing."

The cross-country tour finishes up with the Halifax Pop Explosion, but Better Friends will be passing through Fredericton to play at reNeu Boutique on October 15.

"Our drummer is from the east coast, from just outside of Halifax, so it's a homecoming for her," says Hardwick. "I've never been east at all. I'm originally from L.A. so I've only been a little bit northeast of Winnipeg, it's all brand new. I'm having a great time."

The group — an oddly dynamic combination of four girls and one dude — has been making tunes for

about three years, and just released their first full-length CD, *Great Loves*, on Global Symphonic.

"It's great. I really love playing music no matter what, but I think it's really inspiring to see a lot of women playing music, because it is such a hard industry for women," she says. "I don't know how many times I've gotten, 'Wow, you can really play guitar for a girl!'"

"Seriously?" I ask her. "What do you say?"

"Well, either 'fuck you', or 'thanks', depending on the person," she says.

The group's indie-pop groove is laid-back, vaguely catchy, and whimsical; lyrically unremarkable, but quaintly charming.

"I guess we get a lot of emo, dirty dance-pop references, but we have a

really hard time coining our sound or comparing ourselves to other groups," says Hardwick. "It's always been quite difficult. I think we have a unique sound. I don't know why, it's the hardest question."

Influences range from Fleetwood Mac to the *Refused* compilation to the Stars — "we like to keep the energy up," Hardwick explains.

And what about the almost-Spice-Girls-stuck-on-tour dynamic of the group? Hardwick says the British super-group comparison is totally off-base.

"[Touring] is really intense. I'm not gonna lie," she says. "I don't know if gender really has a lot to do with it. I think no matter what gender we all are, we'd be doing as much processing and talking about

everything we possibly could for days and days on end. I don't know."

"I really love my bandmates and I think the situation is awesome. We're all such good friends, and it's nice to feel that way about people you work with. Not a lot of drama, with is pretty amazing. There's tension at points, but we all work through it."

Oh, yeah — and make sure you come out and dance. In Vancouver, Hardwick says, fans just won't dance — maybe it's a coolness thing.

"Come and dance and yeah, help us get home," she says. "You know, you drive all day and then you get to a show and people don't have a lot of energy, [so] you're working even harder just to get people excited. It's really not a hard life... I can't complain."

Red-dy to rumble, bar-style

by Christian Hapgood

Mid-terms are here and the work is starting to pile up for university students, especially for those who have full or part time jobs. The timing couldn't be any better for the release of the new Red Rush, a self-proclaimed natural health product. Red Rush is an energy chocolate bar (think more like Nestle and less like Power Bar) which is now competing with energy products such as Red Bull, Monster, Rockstar and Arush. Containing 160mg of caffeine, and 1000mg of Taurine, Red Rush is one of the most potent of the bunch and it packs a pretty hard punch.

With my experience with this particular brand and other highly caffeinated products, this bar is one of the most enjoyable. Not only does it taste good, but it gives you "a swift kick in the ass," to quote the slogan. After consump-

tion, it takes approximately 45 minutes for the caffeine to kick in, but when it does, hold on.

"It's incredible, I'm ripped," says Douglas Estey after eating a Red Rush for the first time. The caffeine in the bar is processed differently when eaten, as opposed to drunk at la Red Bull, which intensifies its effects on the body. In fact, a good idea might be to eat half now and save half for later — when consumed in its entirety, it can often produce a jittery, hyper-talkative persona (that uncomfortable 'coffee high').

But, according to Health Canada, side effects from energy drinks include electrolyte disturbances, nausea and vomiting, and heart irregularities. Energy products are being banned in countries like France, Denmark, Norway, and soon to follow suit, the U.S. The United States and Canada are starting to crack down on energy drinks that have potentially dangerous ingredients such as alcohol (think the new, uber-popular Rock Star vodka drink with a whopping 6.9% alcohol and a crap-load of caffeine). The mix of

a depressant (alcohol) with a stimulant (caffeine, guaranine, or taurine) brings on a state of vertigo or disequilibrium, which may result in a pretty bad end to a potentially good night.

That said, Red Rush seems like it might be a great asset to the energy scene, especially for someone who can't stomach the carbonation of the drinks. To be honest, caffeine is the only way I can make it through the day, and the thought of being able to eat my caffeine with chocolate — more than the normal caffeine dosage in your average Hershey bar — is more than satisfying. But, I've gotta offer a disclaimer: when using caffeine, it's a smart idea to take into consideration the amount being consumed. The effects of caffeine can be useful for university students when used in moderation. When studying for exams caffeine can be a student's best friend, but too much can make you jittery (I know we've all been there!) and if all else fails, there will always be the classic cup o' Joe to keep students going.

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