This ain't high school behaviour

SHEET MUSIC

Interview by Ashley Bursey

In the wake of his newest album, 'While You Were Sleeping', Classified chats about his anonymous years and Maritime hip-hop

Brunswickan: Tell me a bit about the new album. What was the reason behind releasing this particular record?

Classified: I basically wanted to let people hear some of my older material. My first five albums were never distributed in stores, so I had a lot of songs I wanted to get out there, as well as a few new ones. Also, when I go on the road, a lot of fans ask for the older material and it was never available, so just wanted to get that out there!

B: What was the biggest challenge working on it? What was the best part?

C: Not having to write many new songs, lol. This was definitely a different process [because] I didn't have to record every song... it was more about just organizing it and picking which songs I wanted to put on there. Having the DVD was cool; I got to put all my videos on it, etc.

B: Why did you decide to name the album While You Were Sleeping? Does it have anything to do with the movie?

C: Nothing at all... the title means, "While you we're sleeping, before you paid attention or heard of Classified, this is what I was doing... now that I woke you up a bit with 'Hitch Hiking Music', this is what you missed."

B: What's the response been like so far for the album?

C: Really good... like I said, it's a lot different than releasing a brand new album, 'cause people are excited to hear the new songs and what I've been up to. But with this, it's more about people getting excited to hear some of the older material that they might not have heard, and just to let people see the growth I've made over the years.

B: You do a lot of tracks with Maritime artists. What's it like working with so many people from this neck of the woods? What do you think of the Maritime hip-hop scene?

C: The Maritime hip hop scene is the best hip hop scene in Canada, in my opinion. So many people are working on things around here now, and taking the business side serious and trying to expand. Most of the artists I work with are just friends of mine, so working with them is so natural and fun. So every release I have, I try to get a few of the boys on it, just to help get their name out there as well.

B: Do you make it a point to try and collaborate with local artists?

C: Definitely. At least one song on everyone of my albums will be a posse cut with a few guys from the Maritimes, who are also friends of mine that I hang with every weekend.

B: You've also opened for some pretty big names – Busta Rhymes being one of them. What's that like? And do you have a favorite Busta song?

C: Playing with Busta was crazy! Crazy 'cause it was Busta Rhymes and I've been a huge fan of his for a while. Plus, his live show is the best I ever saw, just crazy hype, timing is perfect…a really good show! My favorite Busta song would probably be 'Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Can See'. I love that beat!

B: What's your favorite hip-hop song out there right now?

C: Lol... not too many good ones now-a-days. But I'd have to say 'The Glory' by Kanye. I'm a big fan of Kanye's music. Not his attitude, but his music.

B: Congrats on the recent ECMA! What was that like? And, gotta ask – are you psyched about this year's ECMA right here in Fredericton?

C: ECMAs are always a good time. It's like a big party in the Maritimes for three days – who wouldn't like it? I can't wait for this year, because we're ending our Canada-wide tour in Fredericton at the ECMAs, so this year will be even better!

B:...And lastly...what's next?

C: More shows, more recording, more producing, more music!

"A ghost just needs a home..."

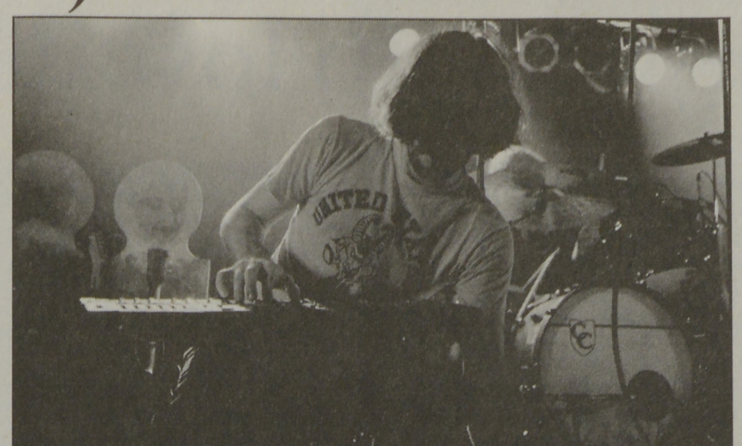
Winterlseep's Fredericton show gave New Brunswickers a chance to really hear the indie rockers at their best

by Doug Estey

Ambition, diversity, and honesty are three words that aren't often attributed simultaneously to the average band. Then again, indie rock quartet Wintersleep from Halifax, Nova Scotia isn't your average group of musicians. Beginning as a side project to now-defunct Kary, Wintersleep started out as a quiet, eerie acoustic concept that quickly developed into a full-time job for the four young Maritimers.

Last Wednesday, after releasing their third full-length studio album 'Welcome to the Night Sky', these Halifax natives hit UNB Fredericton at our very own Student Union Building cafeteria, headlining on campus for the very first time with special guests Basia Bulat.

Unfortunately, I arrived later into the show and missed Basia's set, but my disappointment was quickly offset by the sound of Wintersleep setting up their gear. What started as a side project has almost definitely exceeded the expectations of the four, who kicked off the show to a screaming crowd of several hundred young folk chanting their name, a symptom commonly found in something that everyone seems to be chasing these days: undisputed success.



Christian Hapgood / *The Brunswickan*

Wintersleep captivated the crowd at the UNB SUB on Nov 21

Success is witnessing a group like Wintersleep fronting a show for Sam Roberts in 2006 and subsequently returning this year under their own tour, signed to a division of major record label EMI, and producing a bone-chilling new album that entertains wonderfully live.

That's exactly what they pulled off on Wednesday, captivating the crowd with beautifully wound compositions such as 'Miasmal Smoke & The Yellow Bellied Freaks' and catchy sing-alongs, like crowd favourite 'Weighty Ghost'. Unleashing all but one of the new songs that comprise Welcome to the Night Sky, they moved on to entertain longtime fans with material from their first two albums that had been released with the (ironically branded) independent label Dependent Music. Notable tracks included 'Orca', which put them on the map back in 2003 with its soft tones and haunting lyrics, "I'll be a killer whale when I grow up…"

Wintersleep graced the stage for a solid hour and a half performance, which is more than double the amount of stage time they were allotted at Sam Roberts last year. It was time well-spent (and badly needed) listening to what these musical masterminds have been up to since their last release nearly three years ago.

How does a group from the East Coast make it this big? Let's face it, the Maritimes are a little behind in musical diversity compared to the rest of the country; new sounds aren't as readily accepted here as they are on the streets of Toronto or Montreal. In knowing this, Paul Murphy simply states that the first thing his band had to do was get out on tour across the country, and that's exactly what they did before hitting Europe and the United States.

Ever so slowly, they began gaining popularity among colleges and universities until they were voted Best Band of Halifax in 2005, and again in 2006, and 2007. Weighty Ghost, the first single from their latest and greatest, can be heard frequenting radio stations across the country. And with the entire first floor of the Student Union Building screaming for more at the end of their set, it's safe to say that Wintersleep is well-loved in Fredericton.

And so their cross-Canada tour continues. If you missed this show, check out the band's future dates at www.wintersleep.com.

Seth Green and 'awesome displays of physics'

THE FINAL SCORE



by Dan Hagerman

Mass Effect (Xbox 360)

If there was ever a game that could rival the might of the Star Trek and Star Wars franchises put together, it would be this game. Immediately upon starting it up, it tries to immerse you in the experience by presenting everything like a movie. And not a bad sci-fi B movie, either, but a true epic.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself here. What exactly IS Mass Effect? While I'm sure the science-y types out there would be more than happy to explain the concept to me, I'm referring to the RPG for the Xbox 360. Set hundreds of years in our future, the game is about your character: your choice, a man or a woman. From there, you can choose your character's background, their specialization, and even their appearance.

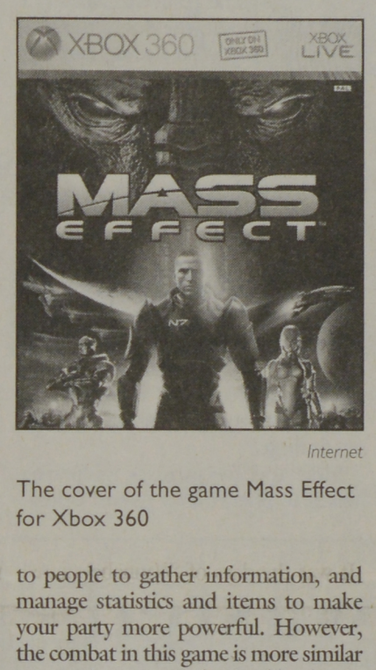
Then, the game thrusts you into a story filled with corruption, twists, and more blaster fights than you can shake a stick at.

Graphics:

Stunning. Positively stunning. While the game doesn't achieve photo-realism, it certainly makes its characters presentable and believable in their world. Also, all of the dialogue is lip-synched to near perfection. There were times where I had difficulty remembering I was watching a game and not a CG movie. All of the characters in the game are designed very well, especially all of the alien species. The game makes ample use of motion blur effects, though, which can be off-putting to some, but the game lets you have the option of turning it off.

Gameplay:

Sadly, if you don't like RPGs, this game is unlikely to change your mind. You will explore vast environments, talk to people to gather information, and manage statistics and items to make your party more powerful. However, the combat in this game is more similar to an action game in that it takes place in real time. It has a bit of a tactical side to it, as you can tell your teammates where to go for cover, as well as using special powers to incapacitate your foes with awesome displays of physics.



Internet

The cover of the game Mass Effect for Xbox 360

The game makes liberal use of conversations, and you can choose how your character will react to certain situations. You can also choose from different types of responses, ranging from a paragon of virtue to a renegade, in terms of your character's personality. Also, different skills give you more things to say.

The only things I don't really like about the game is that the load times are a little longer than I'd like, and the inventory management is anything but streamlined.

Sound:

This game has really good sound. The voice acting is a very large step above what I've come to expect from games. Not once was I annoyed with a voice actor, and, in context of the universe, the characters all seemed believable.

The music itself seems taken straight from the '80s in terms of the synth-style soundtrack. I immediately thought of movies like The Terminator and Blade Runner, which is far from a bad thing.

Also, all of the dialogue in the game is voiced, and given that the entire game, soundtrack, and dialogue fit onto a single DVD, you can colour me impressed.

The Final Score:

I don't even own a 360, but this game makes me want one so that I can keep playing it. If you're just watching, it's a great sci-fi movie, but if you're playing, it's a very engaging role playing game with multiple outcomes. And, Seth Green plays a character in the game. How can you say no?

9 out of 10 laser rifles

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L-R: Khaled Taha, Barrie Black (President & CEO NBIF), Herman Koops, Brad Pierce

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Congratulations to the members of the University of New Brunswick's Activator team Geenlight Geomatics on winning the Platinum Prize (total value $139,500) in BREAKTHRU – New Brunswick's Business Plan competition sponsored by the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation. Members of the team are:

Brad Pierce (2nd year, MBA)
Khaled Taha (3rd year, BBA)
Anthony Llukwe (2nd year, BSSWE)
Herman Koops (Client Entrepreneur)

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