

Canadian sensations in this great city



Submitted

The Weakerthans are no stranger to UNB. Forming in 1997 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, they're hitting the Student Union Building on Mar. 23 with Constantines.

ALISON CLACK
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The Brunswickan recently spoke to Weakerthans guitarist Stephen Carroll about their upcoming tour, music nominations, and their hometown, Winnipeg, MB.

The Brunswickan: How did you guys first get together?

Stephen Carroll: John Samson, the singer, and Jason Tait, the drummer, put the together band in 1997. John had a bunch of songs that he'd been working on and he wanted to make an album. He got together with Jason who recommended a bass player and they created the album which became Fallow. I joined the band a year later – the day the album was released, basically. I've known John since we were teenagers. I went to high school with him.

B: Did you have any interest in playing in a band in high school?

SC: Oh yeah! We had a high school band called Dead Hercules.

B: How was playing in that band?

SC: It was really fun. We played lots of shows. We got to play shows in bars before we were of-age and all that kind of stuff. It was good rock and roll heritage.

B: What kinds of music have affected your band's style/sound?

SC: I guess we're directed in a lot of ways by everyone's interest. There's a consensus that is agreed upon as to how exactly we should apply our all of our musical interests. So, John loves poetry and music driven by songwriters. I love hard rock and I also grew up with folk music and punk rock. Then Jason comes with hard rock, reggae, and punk rock. Greg our bass player listens to everything. When we get together it's sort of a mishmash of that – whatever we can get to.

B: You guys reference Winnipeg quite a bit in your songs, how do you feel about the city?

SC: We love it a lot. It's our home; it's the place that shaped us and continues to define us.

B: Has the city had an impact on your music?

SC: For sure. The city has a set of mentors and

peers that have gone and blazed trails ahead of us. You kind of look at them and how they did it and you find your own way.

B: How did it feel to be nominated for the Polaris music prize this past summer?

SC: It was really great. I was happy to see that some French bands were nominated for the prize. It seems like for the first time that it was a national music prize – not just a prize for English Canada.

B: Do award nominations mean much for your band?

SC: Personally it doesn't change anything but it makes us more confident. The recognition is what's most useful.

B: Your band has toured with Constantines before, what was that like?

SC: They're one of my favourite rock bands ever. I love watching them play – they're really inspirational. I really love their music and their writing. They always raise the bar for us – it's something we try to meet. They always challenge us; we always try to challenge them. We feel we have a good connection with them.

B: What do you like about touring with them?

SC: The challenge every night. Trying to meet the standards that they perform with. They come from very different approach entirely and it helps us to see that. The fact that they do things so differently is compelling and I think it helps us when we play – it helps form ideas for our other works.

B: Is there anything you're looking forward to on this tour?

SC: I'm looking forward to the whole experience of seeing the country in such a snapshot of time. Seeing the country in two months – going from coast to coast and all the way up to Whitehorse is going to be a once-in-a-lifetime kind of journey. We've done a similar tour before that was from Cape Breton to Vancouver Island but now we're doing St. John's to Vancouver Island to Whitehorse – imagine doing a vacation like that.

We're really looking forward to coming to New Brunswick. New Brunswick reminds me a lot of Manitoba.

B: How so?

SC: Because it's so quiet, isolated, and it does its own thing.



Submitted

Guelph-born Constantines, who debuted on indie label Arts & Crafts in 2008, have soared to popularity in the Canadian music scene since forming in 1999.

Constantines vocalist/guitarist, Steve Lambke, discusses his band's music and touring with the Weakerthans.

The Brunswickan: You have a very interesting and somewhat eclectic sound; who would you say your influences are?

Steve Lambke: I would say we have lots of influences. Rock and roll in all its various forms – independent rock music, country rock music. I think at this point we've put out a bunch of records and it's hard to pinpoint influences because everyone's been bringing their own thing to the table. Being in a band for a long time affects the records as much as anything else.

B: What does each member of the band bring in terms of style and musical influences?

SL: The guys in the band are really talented and everyone brings different things to the band. Bands work on chemistry so it's hard to piece out different things that each guy does because it's all about what can happen together.

B: You've done some pretty extensive touring over the years. What's it like to tour across Canada?

SL: I generally really, really like it. It's really fun. The drives are really long sometimes but it's really beautiful. Canada is a big and beautiful country. Just growing up in Canada and then getting to see the whole country by playing music is pretty amazing.

B: Does touring affect the band's sound at all?

SL: For sure. You get to meet different musicians and see what they're doing. Of course you get inspired by that. There's regional differences.

B: Any interesting touring stories? Maybe any ones from the Maritimes?

SL: I do not know whether I have any interesting stories but we love playing in the Maritimes. We've played there quite a lot but this is going to be the first time there with our new record.

B: You've toured with the Weakerthans before, what's it like to tour with them?

SL: It's great. They are super nice guys and obviously an amazing band. We've toured with them in the States too. I'm really looking forward to this tour because it's like getting back together with old friends. It's like going on a big journey. Touring is always way more fun when you're playing with bands and hanging out with people that you really like. That's definitely what those guys are like for me – they're just people that I love and I love their band. It's just really inspiring to play every night and get to go watch them.

B: How do you think this tour will compare to your first together?

SL: I think it's going to have a lot of similarities but each day comes with its own differences in life – and I'm sure this is going to be the same. I know the music is going to be really good but I do not know what's going to happen – anything could happen!

this week in brunswickanarts

Artist social networking at the Garrison District

Feelsgood.ca, a social network targeted at the fusion of artists and musicians alike, is hosting a "Help Darfur" show at the Garrison District ale house on Mar. 16. Several members of Feelsgood.ca have donated artwork to help promote the knowledge of the current situation in Darfur. For more information, visit www.feelsgood.ca.

48 Hours of Film

This month marks the first ever 48 Hour Film Festival in Fredericton. The goal is for a team of 10 individuals to write, shoot and edit a film of 10 minutes or less within 48 hours. Teams are responsible for submitting an inspiration package, \$25 and their application form by Monday March 16, 2009. All submitted films will be publicly screened on Tuesday, Mar. 24. For more information, visit <http://www.meetup.com/48-hour-film/>.

Music on the Hill presents Julien LeBlanc and Marc Djokic

If you're looking for a relaxing atmosphere filled with beautiful instrumental music, you need not search any further than right on here on campus at Memorial Hall. On Mar. 17, Violinist Marc Djokic and pianist Julien LeBlanc will perform an evening of chamber music at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$23 for adults, \$21 for seniors, and \$7 for students. For more information, email moth@unb.ca or call 457-2233.



Screenshot

FeelsGood.ca, a social networking site for artists and musicians in the area, turns one this spring.