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Music

September 13, 2006

Music: this fall we recommend...

Our guide to the season's best arts and entertainment

FROM THE EDITORS

PLEASURES OF THE SIMPLE KNIFE

The great strength of *Knives Don't Have Your Back*, the new solo CD from Metric's lead singer **Emily Haines**, is the stripped-down simplicity of the arrangements. The album includes horns, strings and Haines on piano, but the focus is her haunting voice and thoughtful lyrics. It's not as edgy, but the album (out Sept. 12) is as powerful as anything she's done with Metric -- arguably Canada's best indie rock band. And yet, she only decided to show this more vulnerable side after she was urged by friends and musically inspired following the 2003 death of her father, Paul, a famed Montreal poet and jazz artist.

Although Haines wrote some of the music with her dad in mind, she was careful with song selection -- afraid of being "heavy-handed in any particular theme." What's left are 11 beautiful -- some heartbreaking -- "snapshots." Although heavily influenced by pain, Haines says *Knives* is more about longing than complaints. "Sadness and death are kind of misunderstood in their potential for positivity," she says. "All my songs are slow and sad. I just usually take them to the band and they turn them into a celebration by speeding them up and making them louder. Recently I realized that it's also fine to leave those moments as they are. You don't have to correct them. But no moping is allowed. There has to be energy no matter the mood."

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BEN GOES SUPER-SOLO

With a wide range of influences -- including his dad's record collection from the '60s and the birth of his first son earlier this year, indie rocker **Ben Kweller's** self-titled fourth album (out Sept. 19) proves what his fans have known about the 25-year-old Texan all along: he has a great pop sensibility. And Kweller took the project to an even more personal limit by singing all the vocals and playing every instrument on the album.

SO WHAT IF YOU CAN'T DANCE TO IT?

On *So This is Goodbye*, the **Junior Boys** have taken a more relaxed, melancholy approach to the music, compared to their critically acclaimed 2004 debut, the dance floor favourite *Last Exit*. Although the duo (Jeremy Greenspan and Matt Didemus from Hamilton, Ont.) do offer electro-pop on their newly released disc that harkens back to the 1980s -- they even include a terrific cover of Frank Sinatra's *When No One Cares* -- it's done with a very modern, stylish flair.

CAMERON'S BOY TOY IS ALL GROWN UP

Justin Timberlake is making it incredibly easy for us to forget that he was ever in a boy band. With help from legendary hip hop producer Timbaland, *FutureSex/LoveSounds* -- the follow-up to Timberlake's 2004 mega-selling solo debut *Justified* -- will become the hottest fall release when it lands in stores on Sept. 12. And with Michael Jackson washed up, this disc could cement Cameron Diaz's boyfriend as the new King of Pop.

DON'T MESS WITH THE QUEEN B

He vehemently denies them, but the rumours that **Beyoncé's** father/manager is trying to delay the Sept. 5 release of *B'Day* because she wouldn't let him oversee its production are only adding to the buzz around the star's second solo CD. Plus, there's pressure from a musical rival, former Destiny's Child bandmate LeToya, who's topped the charts lately. But Beyoncé is flooding the market with two singles at once -- *Deja Vu* and *Ring The Alarm* -- ensuring her throne.

KILLERS TAKE CUES FROM THE BOSS

They proved their pop-rock prowess in 2004 with *Hot Fuss*. Every single seemed to become a catchy anthem. Now, using Bruce Springsteen as their inspiration, **The Killers** are getting a bit heavier in their sound with *Sam's Town*, which will be in stores on Oct. 5.

A JAZZ GENIUS TO CALL OUR OWN

Maybe once a decade is there a Canadian jazz musician as ready for wider recognition as Toronto pianist **David Braid** is now. At 31, he's a bright player, a tuneful and surprising composer, and he's so busy you won't have trouble finding him. After an Asian tour in September, he'll release *Live from the Senator, Vol. II*, at Toronto's Sopra lounge on Oct. 10-11; then he'll undertake a nation-wide tour with saxophonist Mike Murley, Oct. 27-Nov. 10.

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