

## Dummies Do Damage

by Chris Lohr

The air in the cafeteria Friday night was hot and heavy. There were people crammed up in line for beer, making futile searches for non-existent seating facilities, and crowding near the stage. When the Crash Test Dummies finally appeared at 10 p.m., I could almost forget about my stolen beer, and about having to face that tortuous line up again.

The "Dummies", native to Winnipeg, are a powerful band, exhibiting an ingenious mixture of musical instruments and vocals. The two brothers, Brad and Dan

Roberts, both played guitar while Brad captivated the audience with his daring voice. Benjamin Darrill moved tirelessly from the harmonica, to the mandolin, to the electric guitar. Ellen Reid maneuvered around the keyboard, accordion, and the celtic-sounding tin flute.

The band was great, but their style is extremely hard to describe. For the most part, the pace of the music was rapid - almost hyper, making one want to start up a quick Highland dance. In "Here on Earth", recollections of traditional Irish music was intermingled with folk as Ellen played the tin flute and

Ben an aggressive harp.

Brad's voice, a deep baritone, was immediate and prominent. The sound is unforgettable because it is so rare for a band today to have such a deep lead vocal. If you've ever heard "Superman's Song", then you know the depths that his voice can attain. When this song was played, the crowd immediately went from frenzied dancing to complete captivation.

"The Country Life" was an excellent tune where Ellen,

while playing the keyboards, delicately harmonized around Brad's voice. The band is definitely together to be able to combine the extremes in voices, and the diversity of instruments. In "Mad My Way", Ellen's true, strong vocals were made apparent, as here unusual melodies finally overtook the others, and danced around Ben's hopping hard.

The lyrics of the band add another strand of originality

to their style. They're thoughtful and philosophical, but in ironic and comical ways. The Dummies are excellent because their sound and style are new, but still meaningful.



photos by David Smith

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