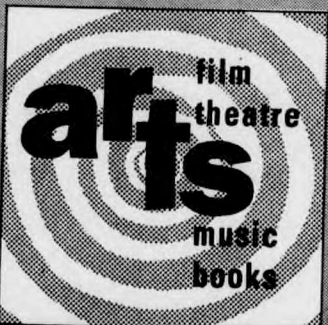


## Hits 'n' Bits

It may have been one of the sickest movies of 1991. But, according to many critics, it may have been one of the best. Festival Cinemas, Toronto's rep cinema chain, is soliciting filmgoer's opinions: do you want to see *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* in the theatre this fall? If you have strong feelings on the subject, write: Regarding *Henry*, Programming Department, Festival Cinemas, 2236 Queen Street E., Toronto, Ontario, M4E 1G2. — IN

The visceral quality of David Mamet's stage work will never be adequately transferred to the



screen, only inadequately approximated. In addition, James Foley's direction, which intercuts closeups on lines of dialogue instead of holding on two shots which would allow viewers to see the dramatic unfolding, is a major problem. *Henry* is a superb, Mamet's script is acid, and the acting — from veterans including Jack Lemmon, Al Pacino, Ed Harris and Alan Arkin — is excellent. How good is the acting? Alec Baldwin isn't as annoying as usual. Highly recommended. — IN

Leopold and Loeb were Jewish, homosexual, educated and from the upper class. Each of these qualities were used to condemn them at their trial for the murder of a boy named Bobby Franks. *Swoon*, Tom Kalin's stylish retelling of this famous crime of the 1920s, rejects such facile explanations, putting society's prejudices on trial. It would have been a better film if it had offered an alternative explanation to why the two, who seemed to have everything, committed the murder; nonetheless, *Swoon*, with its lovely black and white cinematography and postmodern techniques (the pair use a touch tone phone in an attempt to get a ransom for the already murdered boy) is a compelling look at a familiar story. — IN

Even if you haven't seen *The Last of the Mohicans*, you have to love Daniel Day Lewis' hair? The question is, Who plays the Lone Ranger? — EA

If anyone has seen Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth* or *Down By Law*, then you'll be a fan of Italian comic Roberto Benigni. Benigni was in town last week at the Canadian Premiere of his new film (which he also directs) *Johnny Stecchino*. He called Canada "a beautiful and erotic country" and said he was impressed at how many people spoke Italian in Toronto. Although Benigni's introduction to the film was inspired, the actual product entertains but ultimately disappoints. Cliché-ridden, it's best described as high-quality Three's Company humor. Only a strong ending and Benigni's insatiable charm save the film. — JM

# Crowd warms to Cadell's sounds, Sweater

by Christina Varga

Standing on a chair with nothing but her voice and a minimalist black outfit, Meryn Cadell brought her surreal and sometimes unbearable vision to the Underground last Wednesday, Sept. 24th. As she accurately predicted in an interview before the show, there was a group of "[presumably] first year students waiting all night to hear 'The Sweater' song," but there is much more to Meryn than her Top 40 hit.

The opening act, Savoy Jazz, prepared the audience for a more intimate evening of concentrated listening. Products of the York jazz program, the group consists of Maureen Bynoe on vocals and percussion, Randall Chung on guitar, Jeff Daniels on piano, Sean Hu-A-Kim on acoustic bass and Ann Louise Malone on vocals and percussion. Randall, the leader of the group, cites Caribbean influences as inspiration for the harmonies and rhythms found in his original compositions, such as "Hot Dog Man" and "Swing The Dog."

Although Meryn Cadell's preference is to play in theatre-like venues, (her comment on seeing the Underground was, "Oh my god, it's made of cement - it'll never work!") Accompanied by her band, Heather Bacquie on piano and cello, John Gzowski on guitar and Andy Stochansky on drums, Cadell greeted York students "finding families in darkened places" with her straight-talking, sometimes dry, sometimes poignant brand of personal/fictional music.

In an attempt to situate her within a particular genre in pop music, Meryn has been described as everything from a performance artist, a feminist voice, a comedian, a top 40 musician and a novelty act. The range of her music and performance reflects this movement between genres. Listening to



Meryn Cadell's top 10 hit "The Sweater", wit and strong visual performance were among the evening highlights. York grads Savoy Jazz opened with a strong set.

photo by Christina Varga

Meryn Cadell with Savoy Jazz  
*The Underground*  
Wednesday September 24

her album, *Angel Food for Thought*, you will come across pieces ranging from the incredibly popular and satirically nostalgic "The Sweater" to a starkly terrifying a cappella piece, accompanied only by the sound of echoing high heels, about women walking alone at night entitled, "Martina."

"Take the chance that only chancy chicks would take and cakewalk home with icy brakes of spiky heels and

clicks they make and walk through your cold neighborhood but don't get raped, knock on wood."

Her performances offer us the same degree of diversity. Last Wednesday Meryn performed, among other things, a duet with herself (via a tape recorder) recounting a fictional conversation to Born Again Christendom in "I Been Redeemed." ("So intangible, so surreal... lettin' Christ into my heart... I didn't even know the man.") We were also treated to a glimpse of the emotional fervor surrounding the Pope's visit: "So he persecutes ho-

mosexuals, does not believe in abortion, visits with Kurt Waldheim and tells us not to take the pill... there's still a certain *je ne sais quoi*."

Although she is worried about being seen as a "gimmicky" performance artist, in fact her snapshot visions of the surreal-ordinary lives of regular people are brought to life more by the descriptive economy of her words and satirical/lyrical sing-song voice than any visual accompaniment. In fact, it is the multi-faceted and sideways nature of her work that speaks most for what she is saying.

Meryn does not see herself as having a political agenda, as such, nor does she want to be hard line about the observations she is making. It is up to the listener to make a connection with what she is saying, either from their personal experience or from their sense of what is going on around them, politically and culturally.

Performing not to be identified solely as a feminist performer, Meryn has a great deal of appeal for any woman who has worked a crummy female ghetto job, had a relationship with a boob or been subject to the tyranny of appearance. Songs like "Flight Attendant," "Barbie" and "Being In Love," also appeal to anyone who appreciates witty, satirical songs which dip into the emotions that come from situations most of us have been exposed to. "I don't write to exclude men," she stresses. She writes for people struggling with what they think they should do versus what society tells them to do, "People I see around me, at the bus stop, at a hotel."

Meryn has a varied artistic background, ranging from film and creative writing courses at York, to dance, musical theatre, holography and playing the French horn. She finds the Canadian/Toronto music scene very supportive and finds interesting music here at the moment.

She partly credits signing with Intrepid Records in Canada for her sudden exposure and resulting popularity.

Still, she is insistent on maintaining her independence and having control over "Some of the things that Dan Quayle says are far more scary" than, for instance, her song, "Being In Love" — A kiss and a hug and a couple of fucks; being in love really sucks."

"Oh my love, you are worth your weight in subway tokens" from "The Wait"

## Carpets serious about wall to wall pop world

by Eric Alper and Prasad Bidaye

"We are very direct and very honest, and a lot of bands wanted to be respected for being actual rock or 'pop' stars. The English press feel it's almost like a fashion thing not to like the Inspiral Carpets."

And so the backlash starts very quickly for the above band's guitarist, Graham Lambert. Speaking from their Cow Records label office in Manchester, Lambert is taking some time off before coming to North America this week to promote their latest album, *Revenge Of The Goldfish*.

"The Manchester tag I don't mind," says Lambert. "I don't regret the overblown press. We really never felt part of the scene. The second album, *The Beast Inside*, was recorded at the height of the Manchester scene, but it was full of very dark and dismal imagery, where the other bands were about a good time. It was never like we would go to a club and there we were in one corner, the Happy Mondays in another, and The Stone Roses by the bar, you know? I think that was what the press wanted to see."

Lambert sees no reason for the press to change their attitude. The band hasn't changed their structure of serious songwriting techniques since their first album, *Life*.

"Our music is very serious and some people don't like that. They want to be partying all the time. We don't offer answers in our songs. It's more serious assertions, rather than solutions."

Examples of such slices of life include "Joe," the story of a local

tramp; "Sackville" is a harsh observation of Manchester's red light district ("You don't wear diamonds/You don't wear gold/In the bruises on your face there's a story to be told.")

Their tour stops in Toronto, but isn't what one could call 'grand-scale.' Three dates, three cities - New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto.

"We kinda wanted a party atmosphere on this mini-tour, and then we're coming back in February. It doesn't have to be filled with 5 to 10 thousand people, which is what we're used to in Manchester, to get a good vibe."

"Generations," will be the second single. "For the remix, (available on *Generations* EP), we wanted to work with The Orb. We're all heavily influenced by them, although we were into the hard, thrashy pop music. "We'd love to work with the Orb. But I don't think he (Dr. Alex Patterson, head Orb person) spends a lot of time on this planet. Ha! Ha! It's hard to get in contact with him, you know?"

Where *Life* dealt with emotional travesty, *The Beast Inside* was their view of the world's problems, both ecological and political. The band

tried a different method of writing songs for the new album, *Revenge Of The Goldfish*, as the underlying messages were closer to home.

"The new album is kind of inverted lyrics. It's more based on personal relationships. Everybody contributes to the music and lyrics, but for this album, we teamed up in twos, which we've never done before. I wrote "Two Worlds Collide" with Clinton David Boon, the keyboardist, but it wasn't like...hey, let's write a song. We had one song I wrote in which we used the chorus from, and one song that Clint wrote the verses, and that gave it the extra meaning of "Two Worlds Collide."

The 28-year old Lambert is excited about the winter tour schedule for another reason: He's going to become a father for the first time.



Inspiral Carpets' Graham Lambert, middle front, takes pop music so seriously he's prepared to go on at length about it.

"February 13! I think it'll be unfair for the baby to be on the road when we tour, though. I'd like to be at home, but you know, I have to go away and do the gigs.

"We wanted to start a family, but we both realized that I have to be away some of the time. I guess the baby will be able to see me on the telly... Look! There's Daddy with the weird haircut!"

### TOM by MCAN

