

The boys in this band are far from Idyl

interview by Todd Lee

WARNING! WARNING! CITIZENS OF EDMONTON, RUN FOR YOUR LIVES! Reconnaissance missions have sighted at least 1000 Idyl Tea albums cryptically entitled *How I See This Table*, ready to leap out and render you senseless with soaring choruses of danceable, but nonetheless fatal, melodies, and hooks that could catch on porridge. Clinical studies have shown that repeated listening to *How I See This Table* will lead to an overload of one's pleasure centre, which in turn will cause your brain to pour out your ears, and finally, make you smile and feel happy for hours upon end. I repeat, RUN FOR YOUR LIVES....

AAAAAGGHH!

...However, in a more lucid moment (pre-listen to 'Idyl Tea's' new album *How I See This Table*), I talked to 'Idyl Tea' about the new album. For you unwashed who are not cool enough to have heard this absolutely sensational trio, 'Idyl Tea' is: Ev LaRoi (guitar, vocals), Craig Metcalfe (drums, percussion), and Henry Engel (bass, vocals).

Over a pitcher of beer, 4000 'Camel' cigarettes, and a box of kleenex, we talked at

length about the past, present, and future of Edmonton's finest pop trio, 'Idyl Tea'.

Gateway: The album was supposed to have been out by now. When is it going to be out?
Craig Metcalfe: Two and a half to three weeks. (Approx. October 15).

Gateway: I've listened to some of the material for the album and it is great. However, you guys really have your butts on the line with this, as it's a self-financed project. Here is a possible scenario for the record: the album is a success and it goes through the first pressing (1000 copies), the critical response is favourable, and your tour is a success, but despite all this, no record label interest.

Henry Engel: I would be very surprised if anyone from a record label expressed any kind of interest. I think the most we can really hope for in our first record was if we got a letter from a label and they said, 'We like it, send us your next record, and if we like that, then...'

Metcalfe: The best situation would be if we were signed to 'Netwerk', 'Zulu', or one of the small labels out in Vancouver. But we can't really expect to be signed simply

because so often in this business, if you expect too much, you're just going to open yourself up to a bad case of depression.

Gateway: Then you will do this again?

Metcalfe: Oh yeah, sure, if we're still into it. I don't like to take the band for granted or anything, however I can't really see in the immediate future anyone of us slipping out of music altogether because I think the three of us... don't really have a helluva lot else going on in our lives. This is it.

After that, we'll hit the road again and play in Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon...

LaRoi: Eastern Canada.

Metcalfe: Yeah, Hamilton, Toronto, and if things are working well for us, there is a slim possibility that we'll go down the west coast of the States and work our way back. We'll tour down there just after Christmas.

Gateway: In the past, you've been criticized for suffering from the 'R.E.M.' clone syndrome. However, the 'R.E.M.' tag is not

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...we're not fame hungry.

Gateway: What about a worst case scenario: the album flops, panned critically, no gigs, etc..., what then?

Engel: I can't lie and say that we wouldn't be disappointed. We'd like to see it received well because we tried to make the best record we could with the money and materials we had. If it does get panned and nobody's interested, we'll be disappointed, but I don't think we'll lose any of our enthusiasm to continue.

Gateway: How do you think the public perceives 'Idyl Tea'?

Ev LaRoi: I have no idea how people perceive us. We just do the stuff that we do and everyone just makes their own decision as to what kind of band we are and that's up to them.

Gateway: How would you guys like to put yourself across?

Engel: The two things we'd like to think are that people are welcome to become involved in the show. So many people pay to see a show and they just sit there and don't do anything because they think that the band doesn't want their input. I'd also like to put across that we're not fame hungry. Even if our next 25 albums have to come out of our own pockets, we'd still be doing it. The bottom line is that we're doing it because we really love doing it and there is nothing else we'd rather be doing.

Gateway: Once the album's released, what are your plans?

Metcalfe: We're going to have a record release party in Edmonton sometime in early November, possibly at the Riv Rock Room.

nearly as applicable now as it was, say, a year ago. I was wondering whether the change was precipitated by a self-examination, or was it a case of yourselves hearing criticism from fans, or whether that tag ever had any merit whatsoever with respect to 'Idyl Tea'?

Engel: We heard that ('R.E.M.' clones), a lot of people said that, and I think we're fans of that band, but all three of us are big fans of other bands like 'The Replacements' and 'The Velvet Underground'. I think it's just that 'R.E.M.' are big right now. If you're in a band and you don't have any keyboards and it's just guitars and you're in any way melodic and use harmonies or your songs are catchy, you're gonna get compared to those guys.

Metcalfe: I couldn't believe it. The other day I was reading a review of the new 'Guadalcanal Diary' album and the critic compared them to 'R.E.M.'. It's so absurd, here's a band with a totally different track record and quite a difference in sound and production, yet they get the label. Rock 'n' Roll critics stink.

LaRoi: Whenever a new band comes around, people love nothing else but to tack a label on them. Now I think we sound more like 'R.E.M.' than we do Ozzy Osbourne, but lyrically and melodically I don't think we sound like either of them. I can think of worse bands to be compared to.

Gateway: But would Tipper Gore like your album?

Metcalfe: I don't care!

Engel: I don't think so... but that's good.

How I See This Table should be available at S.U. Records, Sound Connection, Freecloud, Southside Sound, and Auracle Records within the next two to three weeks.

Steve slays them



by Glenn St-Germain

Gregory Peck, Jimmy Stewart, Barry White, the Village People, and Andre Gromyko, among others, appeared at the Jubilee Auditorium Monday night.

Well, not quite.

Actor/comedian Steve Landesberg performed his off-the-wall stand-up comedy to a nearly filled auditorium, bringing with him his mixed bag of characters, accents, and imitations delivered in a fast-paced, semi-improvisational style.

Landesberg, in his seventy-five minute show, changed voices and situations in rapid-fire succession, keeping the audience laughing throughout. Yet, he came across calm and relaxed, completely at ease with the situation.

A variety of accents and a few impersonations were used to present bizarre and/or humorous situations, ranging from his pregnant wife's craving for a bagel in the middle of the night — in Tokyo — to the proliferation of country music award shows. He established a rapport with the aud-

ience, responding to audience suggestions every so often, and exchanging comments with some of the more vocal members of the audience.

Much of his humour is Jewish, reflecting Landesberg's own background, growing up Jewish in the Bronx. Yet, other peoples of the world were also well-represented: Polite Japanese baseball players ("I think you missed the call") and a redneck Southern sheriff were intermingled with bits like why there are no Jewish country music singers.

Landesberg imitated famous people with the same off-the-wall style: A few lines of Barry White, a look at Jimmy Stewart, as President, an explanation of why Soviet president Andre Gromyko has been able to hold on to power for so long (explaining he must have something on everyone to keep them in line, then slipping into a Russian accent for "I have film of you and duck. Quack quack turns you on, eh?").

On the whole, Landesberg gave a memorable performance. He answered questions from the audience, and recounted a few anecdotes from his five years as Sgt. Dietrich on *Barney Miller*. Mostly, though, he made everyone laugh.

Landesberg's opening act was Dale Downing, billed as a "magician", who combined magic tricks and comedy. His magic tricks, although for the most part fairly standard, were well executed, and he was more than a little amusing. However, his set was a little short (only 25 minutes, only slightly longer than the intermission which followed); a longer act would have been more appropriate, for Downing's appearance was too brief to leave a strong impression (although his closing illusion, the locked-in-a-box trick, was beautifully executed).

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