

# Drinking in Halifax

## Bran Van 3000 ready to play the Citadel

BY KARAN SHETTY

Talking to James DiSalvio of electronica group Bran Van 3000, I didn't get the impression that I was speaking with the leader of a band which is making a big name for itself both internationally and here at home in Canada. With its origins in Montreal, the group has toured extensively throughout the United States and will begin a European tour after they play the Great Big Picnic in Halifax on Saturday.

DiSalvio is an easy-going sort of guy, a former DJ and music video director who once shot a music video for Celine Dion. Although the video wasn't released on the grounds that it was too strange and experimental for Dion's mainstream pop stylings, DiSalvio bears no grudge.

And why should he? On the strength of the singles "Drinking in L.A." and "Couch Surfer", Bran Van 3000 has sold 70,000 copies of its debut album *Glee* here in Canada, 50,000 in the U.S. and 15,000 in Sweden, where they currently top the charts.

Bran Van's music, much like DiSalvio's videos, is experimental. A lot of sampling and actual vocals combine to create a type of music which works, but few others could pull off so well.

"I like music that isn't too self indulgent," DiSalvio said. "I like Curits Mayfield

because he makes you shake your ass and feel melancholic at the same time."

Besides Mayfield, DiSalvio lists the Clash, the Smiths and many others as artists he admires.

Bran Van recently came off the Horde Tour in California, where they were billed with the likes of slide guitar master Ben Harper, the Barenaked Ladies and Blues Traveller. DiSalvio says he enjoyed the opportunity of playing with bands which are perhaps a little more mainstream than his own. He joked about "stealing the show" and mentioned in particular that the band enjoyed jamming with John Popper of Blues Traveller.

The band's music has even caught the ears of many Hollywood producers. Their music will be featured in the upcoming Miramax movie *Dancing with Architecture*, which stars Sean Connery and Gillian Anderson. Some of their music will also be used as the leitmotif in a Griffin Dunne movie which happens to be scored by Michael Nyman.

With a Juno Award under their arms, Bran Van 3000 remains loyal to their Canadian fans. Their next global tour will include many Canadian cities at the insistence of the band.

Bran Van 3000 plays the Great Big Picnic on Saturday,

September 12.



**Colin James and the Little Big Band II**  
*Colin James and the Little Big Band*  
Warner

Tuxedos, glasses clinkin', the murmur of the crowd and the music twirling towards the top of a high, smoke-filled ceiling. Colin James and his Little Big Band

lay down a high class groove that fills up the space you're in and floats a lively vibe. This album is simply more proof of the soul and ability of one of Canada's premier artists.

This album is Colin James' second with the Little Big Band. Deviating only slightly from his rock roots, this is the second album featuring the "jump blues" style made popular in the era of Cab Calloway and Jimmy Wilson. James' pleasure in covering this music is being able to reveal an "amazing legacy that was just kind of unknown".

The live feel of the album is real. The 14 tracks on the album were recorded in just three days. This is amazing, considering the album contains a large intercontinental all-star cast.

The music feels old and wise, and kind of classy too. On tracks like "Jumpin' From Six to Six", the old school style shines through. This is no surprise. Jackie Wilson's "Let's Shout", which James

covers on the album, first reached the Top 5 in 1963.

James and his Little Big Band have the sound down cold. It may not be as layered and intricate as an ambient drum beat, but that doesn't seem to matter. With previous albums featuring Mavis Staples and Lenny Kravitz, and having grown under the wings of Stevie Ray Vaughan and B.B. King, James' has much ahead of him.

James has changed his style over the last couple of years with much success. Where will he go next? Hopefully we won't be waiting for long. That would be blue.

AVI LAMBERT

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