

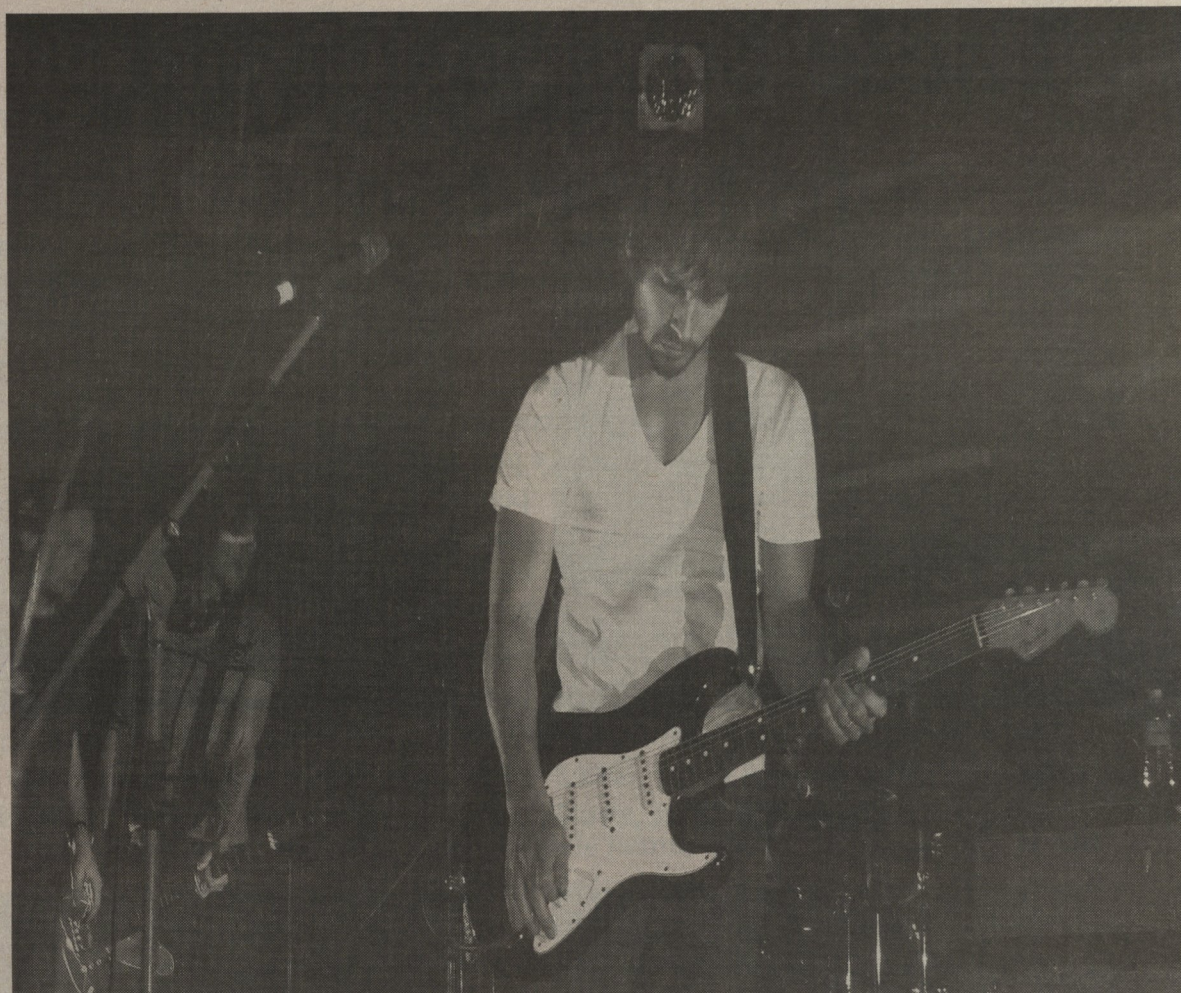
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You've placed an emphasis on the significance of history in this album and some of the songs suggest there has been a severance with music's past. Do you really think modern rock music has abandoned its roots?

I don't think modern music has struck out in an entirely new direction with completely a new palette of sounds and rhythms. I mean we will always be indebted to the traditions of the past. Nobody's inventing anything new its kind of arranging the same old components in your own way I guess. So I don't think I can say with any accuracy that we have completely lost our way but I'm not inspired by what I hear on the radio a lot of the time, you know, and it comes down, as it so often does, to your own personal taste and the things that inspire me about rock and roll music is it being a real reflection of the world we are living in. A sort of ear to the ground, finger on the pulse of society phenomenon and I think that it has strayed from that absolutely, in my own mind anyway. It's weird because as the world gets more troubled or less troubled the importance of rock and roll music specifically place tends to shift, you know. When the world is good people listen to disco and when it gets bad again all of sudden you people need it to reflect something real. **"Can't sell my songs so I'm gonna have to give**

**'em away'" - that statement carries a lot of weight with it, yet Love at the End of the World hit No.1 on its first week of release in Canada. Do you think downloading has had a negative impact on the industry?**

I think it's hard to say right now. We're still in transition and we're in that shift between the old order where selling records was the norm and where you could rely on making a living as an artist if you were doing well, whatever that is, top of the charts. As a band you could rely on deriving some sort of income on that where as now that is no longer really the case. Because even if you debut at No.1 and I mean we sold 9,000 copies across the country and that was enough to put us to No.1. That is about a tenth of what it used to be to have a No.1 debut. So clearly there's a major shift happening and it just forces us as a band to be adaptable to finding new ways of making this our livelihood, not just a hobby. But you know it's definitely shaking up the industry. Unfortunately right now one of the results of that is that from a record company's standpoint is that people are a lot less willing to take risks to sign new bands who may sort of have a few more question marks attached to them and instead always go for the safe bet which kind of brings us back to your first question which is why is it that I don't find music inspiring



Canadian rock superstar Sam Roberts plays to the Wave November 27. Bysterveldt photo

today. Well, the music out there is inspiring, it's just that you have to look a lot harder for it. And you can't just turn on the radio to find something that's new and exciting anymore because that stuff is by its very definition and nature these days always a safe bet. Always the thing that has worked in the past and they just sort of try to reconfigure it you know or give it a new name but it's essentially the same thing and that's very much a result of people not selling records anymore and people being unwilling to take risks in positions of power where they are actually footing the bills for the records are scared of losing their jobs. **Although you present a critical standpoint on society in songs like Stripmall Religion and Them Kids,**

**the album still maintains an overall sentiment of hope and gratitude. What is your main source of optimism in life?**

I don't really know and I don't think watching the news has helped me out either. I think I'll have to stop watching the news essentially, I'd probably be a far more optimistic person. I think I've just been a very forward-looking person from the beginning and despite the setbacks we face on a collective level almost everyday. Like yesterday, we watch more news and that's ten steps back for humanity and you know there just seems to be some sort of light out there that shines brighter than darkness. For me that's just kind of always been there in my life just being alive in

general makes me feel good. It's a hard thing to describe. I've always been happy to be alive and I'll always appreciate the fact that I'm alive and that sounds pretty fundamental but I think the fact that I get to play music all the time.

I'm connected to one of the things that I think again kind of pulls you out of the muck and I get to do it everyday and that's why I want to do it everyday because every time you turn on the news and you see something evil you know, you get to experience this thing that is so far on the opposite end of the spectrum. And to see the best in people and to bring out the best in people and have them bring it out in you it's a reaffirmation of the things that are good in life.