



The Acorn

OTTAWA FOLKIES DON'T MIND SINGING ABOUT MOM

by Bryan Borzykowski

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FOR MOST BANDS, deciding what a song should be about usually results in the lead singer crying over an ex-girlfriend. So when Rolf Klausener told his band, The Acorn, that he wanted to write an entire record about his mother, the group was stunned.

"They thought it was stupid," says the singer and guitarist for the Ottawa-based quintet.

But while the group, which includes bassist Jeff Debutte, keyboardist Keiko Devaux, guitarist Howie Tsui, drummer T. Jeffrey Malecki and touring percussionist Shaun Weadick, may have needed a little nudging, Klausener was sure that a 12-song album about his mom was the way to go.

It turns out he was right. You see, his mother, Gloria Esperanza Montoya, isn't your average made-in-Canada matriarch. Born in Honduras, Montoya was forced to overcome immense tragedy: her mother died in childbirth; she ran to Canada to get away from her abusive father; and her

husband, Klausener's father, died of brain cancer when Klausener was just 15.

Generally, these aren't dinnertime stories, so when Klausener wanted to learn about his mother's life, he sat her down and interviewed her for eight hours. "I didn't know how she lived for the first 30 years of her life," he says. "I didn't know how she was orphaned, what her dad did or why she left and ran away. It wasn't anything my mom really wanted to offer up [on her own]."

Thankfully, when his mother began talking, she didn't hold back. In the end, Klausener was left with a haunting story about courage, determination and survival. Mix that with quiet, heartfelt melodies and a few Broken Social Scene-like barnburners and you have the intense, but infectious collection of songs that make up their debut full-length, *Glory Hope Mountain*.

So what does the band think of the record now? "I think they're sold," he says. ●



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