



The Hot Springs' Anne Gauthier (left), Giselle Webber, Rémy Nadeau-Aubin and Frédéric Sauvé are not to be messed with.

Music Feature

Hot Springs nasty it up

Montreal rippers discover bad breakups have their benefits

By BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI

THE HOT SPRINGS with the MARK INSIDE and ACTION MAKES at Lee's Palace (529 Bloor West), Saturday (September 29), 9:30 pm. \$8. 416-532-1598.

Being friends with Giselle Webber, the Hot Spring's lively lead singer, has its privileges. For one, she'll make you squash soup while you're busy recording. "It's a charitable offering I do on occasion for the starving artist," says the Montreal-based musician. Right now she's cooking for Godspeed You! Black Emperor guitarist David Bryant.

Bryant and Webber are just friends; if they were dating, she'd be making something more complex. "When I really like somebody I make them sushi, because that's a fucking bitch."

The way to a man's heart might be through his stomach, but a tasty cucumber roll can't save a relationship. Then it's time to write the revenge album, as Webber did on the Hot Springs' debut full-length, *Volcano* (Aquarius).

"Artists have huge egos, and when they date each other and someone's ego is crushed, the only thing you can do is make the most gorgeous song you can possibly think of, so when your ex listens to it, he'll be like, "Fuck her,"" she says.

Volcano is about "proving all the doubters and all the haters wrong," Webber says, although it's just as likely related to her breakup with Malajube frontman, former bandmate and ex-fiancé Julien Mineau.

Some of the lyrics definitely sound like they're by a scorned lover: "Goodbye, old snob / your soul's turned to mould / don't you know a woman needs to grow." But the album is still playful enough not to seem like it's been ripped from a teenager's diary.

It helps that the Hot Springs, also including guitarist Rémy Nadeau-Aubin, drummer Anne Gauthier and bassist Frédéric Sauvé, shroud the vitriol in a healthy dose of infectious pop rock. It's a loud, amped-up record, a leaning that can be attributed to Webber's punk rock background. The songs are also loaded with hooks, and Webber's odd but engaging warble sounds like the Wicked Witch of the West singing through a tremolo pedal.

"I have almost an annoying-sounding voice sometimes," says Webber. "I could never listen to it. It makes me cringe."

While they have a rep for sexy songs (and sexier live performances), only Pink Money, about how hard it is for lesbians to get laid, can be considered a song about sex.

"People react a lot stronger to that kind of energy than to anything that might be a little more subtle," she says. "People are like, 'Ah, you said clitoris holy crap!'"

There's definitely a double standard, she says. "It's a gender-based reality, and it's totally fucked up," Webber says. "It's not even sexy I'm just rocking out. The only other time you see a girl rocking out onstage is in a strip club. It's so sexualized. People are like, 'Oh my god, she's crazy onstage,' but I'm like, 'Man, this is your average protocol.'"

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