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NEW PSYCH ROCK

BLACK REBEL  
MOTORCYCLE CLUB

DANDY WARHOLS

THE HIGH DIALS

DEPECHE  
MODE

HAPPY TO BE  
ALIVE

HIM

GOTH DOT  
RETURN

CONSTANTINES

GET TO WORK

PUSSYCAT  
DOLLS

"EVERYONE IS FREAKY  
AND RAW AND HOT"

NARDWUAR VS.  
MY CHEMICAL  
ROMANCE

SHOULD  
PEARL JAM  
DISAPPEAR?

PLUS

TOMMY LEE

TRICKY WOO

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C'MON

# METRIC

LEADING THE NEW  
ROCK 'N' ROLL REBELLION



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# METRIC

FIGHT THE WAR

ATTACKS ON SOCIETY  
AREN'T ONLY COMING  
FROM AMERICA  
— ONE GROUP OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
ROCKERS ARE  
DROPPING A FEW  
BOMBS OF THEIR OWN.

STORY BY  
BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI

PHOTOS BY  
ANITA ZVONAR

HAIR & MAKE-UP BY  
ANDREA HELDMAN

LOCATION  
STEAM WHISTLE BREWERY, TORONTO

**M**etric have had a long day and bassist Josh Winstead is restless. The Texan-cum-Californian is sitting in MuchMusic's green room with his friend of 14 years, Metric's drummer Joules Scott-Key, while singer Emily Haines and guitarist James Shaw are being interviewed on-air. Winstead doesn't seem to mind that he's not chatting with a Much VJ — he doesn't complain once — he's just parched and the only water in the room is sitting behind a window, in a fridge secured by a closed combination lock. "Fuck! I'm so thirsty!" says Winstead while trying to pull the lock open. He fumbles with the closed lock a little more then falls back on a green leather couch, defeated.

"I just want some water," he says, slightly pouting and looking around for some help. He spots a phone in the corner of the room.

"I'm gonna throw that phone through the glass," he jokes. By now Scott-Key is laughing and notices the water cooler next to Winstead.

"Put your head under that," he says.

Winstead decides that Scott-Key's suggestion isn't so bad. He slowly moves off the couch and plants his head under the water spout. Just as he pushes the cooler's button a woman walks into the room to get water for herself. Winstead snaps back to the couch, but not fast enough — his arm is left hugging the top of the water cooler.

"Do you want a cup luv?" she says with a hint of sarcasm.

"Um, yeah, that would be great," he says as he slinks into the couch.

Now that Winstead's got his water, Metric's rhythm section can focus, stress free, on the TV in the room. The band's new video for "Monster Hospital" — the first single off their recently released sophomore LP *Live It Out* — is playing.

The video is in black and white, save for the red blood dripping from Shaw's, Scott-Key's and Winstead's neck, head and face. It's a gruesome sight that's curious at first, but when Haines belts out the chorus — "I fought the war but the war won" — the imagery makes sense. Metric have never shied away from criticizing society and with blood spurting from the zombie-like musicians, this particular statement can only be directed at the government to the south.

"When America starts effing up, they eff up the whole world," says Scott-Key, a born and bred Texan, who now lives in Oakland near Winstead.

"[Bush] obviously doesn't care about people," he says. "That whole administration doesn't care other than making money. He's a bad man." ▶



**"I'M ATTACKING MYSELF. I RECOGNIZE I PARTICIPATE IN WHAT'S UNPLEASANT ABOUT AMERICA."  
—EMILY HAINES**

[L-R] Jules Scott-Key, Emily Haines, James "Jimmy" Shaw, Josh Winstead

## MADE IN AMERICA

Metric's perspective on politics is presented through a different lens than most "Canadian" bands. It might come as a surprise, but the group — who have lately been mentioned in the same breath as Broken Social Scene and Death From Above 1979 as ambassadors of Canadian rock — aren't as Canadian as their fans think.

"Josh and Jules are from America, I'm a dual [American/Canadian] citizen and was born in India and James was born in England. He's a dual EU Canadian citizen," says Haines, at the Steamwhistle brewery during their cover shoot for *Chart*.

"We're a very modern band," she adds. "We feel like we represent a lot of places and we travel a lot."

No doubt a product of their diverse backgrounds, Metric have a lot to say. On *Live // Out*, Haines' dark and detached lyrics attack everything from war to consumerism to society's gender roles.

The line "Only do what I'm told/Only do what I'm told/Last to leave cold calling/You're gonna lose your arms/Amputate plasticine/There's no knight in silver armour shining" on "Glass Ceiling" directly attacks the war in Iraq, using a haunting first person account of a helpless soldier. While on "Handshakes," placed appropriately after "Glass Ceiling," Haines presents an all too familiar scene — an American president rubbing shoulders with his cronies — proving just how heartless her second home can be. ("Flip to the right/Slip back to the left/For handshakes at the ranch/Small talk at the crossroads/Rubbing up to the ladder/Sucking on every rung/Coming up forever and hanging on.")

"Patriarch On A Vespa" is a particularly scathing commentary on America's manufactured fear of terrorism. In it Haines sings, "Are we all brides to be/Are we all designed to be confined/Buy ourselves chastity belts and lock them/Organize our lives and lose the key." She continues with some classic Metric black humour, "Fear of pretty houses and their porches/Fear of biological wrist watches/Fear of comparison shopping/Dogs on leashes behind fences barking," to show just how ridiculous America's culture of fear is.

If Metric were 100% Canadian, like most people think, these criticisms wouldn't be any different from all the other non-Americans slamming the States. But because of Metric's American blood, Haines' lyrics come off as more genuine and personal.

"I'm attacking myself," she says. "I recognize I participate in what's unpleasant about America. It seems that some people don't take things as seriously as I always have. A part of an individual's life is being involved in the collective reality and what your country or city or community is doing."

With their biting attacks, Metric clearly want to be involved in their world. However, they don't consider themselves a political band.

"We're a political band in the sense that we're political people, but it stops right there," says Scott-Key. "I think if we became a little bigger and affected people by playing at a protest, we'd be into that."

"It's not anything else than us wanting the world to be a little more compassionate and conscientious and that's politically easy," says Winstead. "It doesn't matter what country you're from or what you believe in. You just want people to be a little more free."

Haines, the band's main songwriter and lyricist, says the reason her words have a

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message is because she can't separate the personal and the political.

"I'm just seeing it and feeling it in myself," she says. "When you say there's politics in the music, that's fine, but for me the personal and political are the same thing. My personal life isn't like this vaulted padded room where I just eat what I want and dress and think about sex or romance. There's this idea that that's personal life, that's what a lot of records are about — you said this, I said that — and I just can't find the meat in that. To me my whole life is infused with the awareness of the planet."

## STAR SEARCH

World events aren't the only politics Metric have dealt with over their career, they know first-hand how difficult the music industry machine can be.

In 2002, a year before Canada was introduced to Metric's catchy new wave sound on *Old World Underground*, *Where Are You Now?* Haines and Shaw put together a trip-hop-heavy debut disc in London, England ("there's virtually no guitar on the whole record," says Shaw). The album, *Grow Up And Blow Away*, was supposed to be released on Restless Records, but because of restructuring issues the album never saw record store shelves. While the twosome waited for either the disc to hit stores or the

record label to release the band from their contract, they picked up Scott-Key, and later, Winstead.

Now, with their lost record making the rounds in cyberspace and a deal with Last Gang Records, Shaw is able to put Metric's early days in perspective — and he's thankful for all the crap the band went through.

"It was really good for us actually," he says. "I think it's almost an ideal situation for a band just starting out to sign to a record deal in which they're going to make a record with a budget, get right out of their contract after and then have it be a free download for whoever wants to download it for the rest of time. It's the perfect trial run. No one's going to judge you on it because it never got released; no one's going to review it because it never got released. No one's asking people to buy it. It's basically just using music as free promotion."

"While no one wishes to make music that never gets released, it did end up teaching us a lot," says Haines. "What we learned is that we didn't want to spend our time doing studio recordings and demos and waiting for someone else to realize our potential. Everything was sort of a fantasy. Could we be a star? We had meetings with people about that possibility and we realized that's just not a good life."

With a full band in tow, Haines and Shaw dropped the trip-hop in favour of intense, dance-ready new wave and recorded *Old World Underground* in Los Angeles. On *Live It Out*, the band kept their guitar-heavy, ass-shaking sound intact, but turned up the axe, bass and drums even more, creating a more aggressive follow-up.

"When we made *Old World*, we weren't even really a band yet," says Shaw, explaining the reason for *Live It Out*'s punkier vibe. "We had no road legs and we were just using our instruments to create songs. After two years of playing on the road we turned into the band that's on *Live It Out*. We had people for years saying, 'I really love your record, but your live show is so much better' and I wanted the two things to be the same."

"Yeah, there is a shift in our sound," says Scott-Key. "When we were touring *Old World*, we were on stage playing these songs that we'd never played before except in the studio. So it's just a direction of us feeling a little more free and trying to have more fun with ourselves and I guess that turned out to be a little more aggressive."

Metric's amped up sound isn't the only difference between *Live It Out* and *Old World Underground*. This time around Shaw took the producing reins, recording the group in his Toronto home.

"I've always been fascinated with recording and engineering and I figured it's wiser to buy a studio and build it than it is to spend money renting someone else's," says Shaw.

"I also like the process of having a studio in your own house," he continues. "You can work whenever you want. There's just no business about it. There's no secretary, there's no guy coming in making sure you're done on time. It's just pure creativity."

And there's also more room to party.

"Oh my God. In the first couple of months there were so many after-parties at my house it was insane," Shaw says with a grin. "I remember one night we were having a whole dance party in the studio room. All the mics were set up around the drum kit and it was just like, 'OK everybody. Just don't bump into a microphone.' Everybody was dancing around. It was one of those stupid mornings where there were people passed out, lying on couches."

It's obvious the band had fun with Shaw at the helm, but to Winstead, recording with his guitarist gave him his first positive studio experience with Metric.

"I was uncomfortable making the first album because of the producer. I had a hard time relating to him and I actually feel like he stifled my music ability. I don't feel like I've played anything on the first disc that's good at all, I appreciated the music but I hated the experience of making the album. The vibe was definitely different now. This album I love."

Metric have more to talk about than just world affairs and their music industry headaches (living in New York, their love of Death From Above 1979), but it's hard to get the band — and especially Haines — off American foreign policy. After the group's on-air *Much* interview, another VJ whisks the foursome away to a hot skywalk to conduct a taped segment for *Much News*. After asking the usual questions — about the new album and their live show — the VJ asks Haines about sex.

"Can't we talk about war?" she asks, slightly whining.

After being told "no" she comes up with a better idea.

"Well, I'm going to make this totally political." **C**

## IN AMERICA WE TRUST



NEKO CASE

**Metric aren't the only group of American citizens to fool us into thinking they're Canadian. Here are some other musicians who got their diapers changed stateside.**

**WIN AND WILL BUTLER** (Arcade Fire) — Two of Canada's rock 'n' roll heroes actually come from Texas.

**TORQUIL CAMPBELL** (Stars) — Canada's best romantic pop rocker doesn't even have his Canadian citizenship. He was born in England and grew up in the States.

**NEKO CASE** (The New Pornographers) — Although this sultry songstress went to school in Vancouver, she was born in Virginia and currently lives in Chicago.

**RONNIE HAWKINS** — This Can-rock legend is not only from Arkansas, but he served in the U.S. Army and owned a popular club in his home state.

**LEVON HELM** (The Band) — Before he played drums in one of Canada's best '60s acts, he was banging the skins with Hawkins in Arkansas.