

Coming clean with Maria in the Shower

By Holly Miyasaki - Penticton Western News - May 28, 2008

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A Vancouver band doesn't want its provocative name to fool you.

Maria in the Shower doesn't perform racy shows for its audiences — it brings a mix of jazz, classical dance music and folk to the stage.

"The 1930s period jazz stuff is a big influence on all of us," explained Martin Reisle, vocalist and guitar, trombone, banjo and cello player.

"I have a real love for straight-up traditional folk music and the jazz traditions and the things that were birthed out of various folk traditions."

Maria in the Shower — the name's origins are kept secret — started as a duo performing old-period jazz, but before long they were joined by a bass player that Reisle went to high school with and a drummer who they met at a gig.

He describes their sounds as "Cab Calloway on honeymoon with Bela Bartok," and says more often than not, audiences are dancing to the music of Maria in the Shower. The quartet released Consequences, Amazing Grace and Blood and Butterflies this year and have expanded their audience, solely made of Vancouverites.

Touring through the Kootenays, Invermere and Canmore just whet their appetite for sharing their sound with a wider fanbase.

Their upcoming tour starts in Penticton and will hit Kelowna, Nelson, Calgary, Edmonton, Dawson Creek and Prince George.

Playing alongside Reisle's many instrumental and vocal talents are Jack Garton on trumpet, accordian and vocals; Brendon Hartley on bass, banjo and analog electronics; and Todd Biffard on percussion.

While the Okanagan stops are just gigs to most of the bandmembers, Biffard gets to stop in at his hometown of Kelowna while in the Central Okanagan.

From 1994-1997 Biffard was a part of the Kelowna Pipe Band before moving on the Simon Fraser Alumni Association Pipe Band and schools and band in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto before settling in Vancouver where he currently plays and teaches music.



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Despite billing themselves as mainly jazz musicians, Maria in the Shower's show may have some tricks up its sleeves.

"We have a travelling medicine show," explained Reisle of the miracle-peddling schemes with roots in 19th century United States. The show is an entertainment offering for audiences, but won't take away from the music.

"We always seem to inspire a great deal of dancing and it's always a very entertaining theatrical endeavour regardless of where your tastes lie," said Reisle, adding regardless of musical tastes, listeners are always impressed by what they hear.

Maria in the Shower performs at VooDoo's on June 13. For more information about the band, visit their MySpace page at .

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