

# Maria in the Shower

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## *Vancouver Folk Cabaret Band*

Maria in the Shower is a uniquely entertaining band at the leading edge of Canada's new folk sound. Their musical approach is a simple but potent alchemy, marrying traditional folk and jazz with lyrics that explore fundamental human questions, delivering it with pure fun and energy. Simultaneously humorous and apocalyptic, human and otherworldly, these four young men have the entertaining power of a traveling circus with musical depth to back it up.



Already well-known to festivals and concert presenters in their home country, this fast-rising quartet has performed over 250 times in the past three years. Highlights include: Kaslo Jazz Fest, Folk on the Rocks, North Country Fair, Vancouver Fringe Festival, Komasket Music Fest. They have shared the stage with some of Canada's finest performers, including Buffy Sainte-Marie, Ken Whiteley, Tanya Tagaq, Veda Hille, and Geoff Berner among others.



Samples are available online by following these links:

**[VIDEO](#)**

**[MUSIC](#)**

"The band is unique, borderless, fun-loving, highly danceable, and very cooperative and easy going. Any festival would be lucky for the opportunity to share the contagious energy of Maria in the Shower with their audience, and they will undoubtedly end up being one of the highlights of the event."

-Nico Todd-Cullen, Artistic Director  
Folk on the Rocks Music Festival

"Maria in the Shower are a musical, theatrical experience, not unlike stumbling upon the travelling cabaret/vaudeville shows of long ago... They are simply irresistible and before you know it, you've fallen in love with them!... They were a highlight of our festival this year, and I would not hesitate to have them back."

-Shara Gustafson, Artistic Director,  
Robson Valley Music Festival

# Folkies' road show makes frequent onstage detours

Maria in the Shower steers concert toward 'realm you never knew even existed'

## CONCERT PREVIEW

Maria in the Shower

**With:** Low Flying Planes and Swear by the Moon

**When:** Thursday

**Where:** The ARTery, 9535 Jasper Ave.

**Tickets:** \$8 plus service charges, available through [theartery.ca/](http://theartery.ca/) or at the door

TOM MURRAY

Special to The Journal  
EDMONTON

The members of Vancouver's Maria in the Shower have a day off in Moose Jaw, and they've spent part of it singing in the old rum-running tunnels associated with Al Capone underneath the Saskatchewan city.

"There's a local with a key, so we all went to have a look. It's pretty amazing: beautiful typewriters, an old radio, a very organized filing system," remarks vocalist, trumpet and accordion player Jack Garton. "The acoustics are great as well. Maybe we should record an album down there," he says, talking to the rest of the band.

If there's a group that would make the trek out to Moose Jaw to record an entire album underground it would be Maria in the Shower. The four-piece folk outfit is often noted for coming out of left field, and not just in their presentation. Swing, samba, ballads, rockabilly, blues, Gypsy soul, all are grist for their musical mill, utilized in a concert that, at its best, can take audiences places they've never been.

"It's like good sex: You have to warm things up first," Garton explains. "You can't come out of nowhere and expect things to happen."

"The real art is in how you approach people, building bridges to where they're at with music and then taking them on side track elsewhere. This usually happens about two-thirds of the way through a show, after we've done the regular tour-guide thing through the history of music.

"It's like we're taking everyone



SUPPLIED

Maria in the Shower's latest album is rooted in pre-pop musical styles.

through the regular tunnels running under Moose Jaw, and then we show them this trap door that leads to some hyper-psychedelic sex den that nobody knew was there. Once in a while we open a trap door in the bottom of the music and there's this whole other realm that you never knew even existed."

If the band has an overarching purpose, it might be just that — to show the audience a realm they neither expected nor knew was even there. Garton and bandmates Martin Reisle (voice, trombone, guitar and cello), Brendon Hartley (voice, bass) and Todd Biffard (voice, percussion) love to mess with preconceptions.

To do this they've been known to dress as mimes or in clothing from the early 1900s; often they'll bring in staged absurdist moments that break down the fourth wall between performer and audience. For one show they abandoned their usual personas as old-timey musicians by embracing the '80s and playing on vintage

synthesizers

Their newest album, *Hidden Sayings of Maria in the Shower*, shows nothing of their onstage shenanigans. Steeped in the sounds of bygone days, it shows the band's facility with many pre-pop musical styles, which are now so buried under the blare of current radio fashion that first-time listeners are often stunned by their freshness.

"That's the weird thing. People say everything we do is so new, but really we don't do very much that's new at all. What's funny is that you can see where old is now coveted over new, because new is everywhere, and it's kind of boring. There's an oversaturation of newness, and old is much more novel to people."

Does this mean the next musical trend might be even further back than the usual 10-year cycle?

"A ragtime revolution," he ponders. "That would be great; we would be in the vanguard of the ragtime Dixie revolution!"