



## HEAVY-WEIGHT HAWKS DRAFTED

Key football players land tryouts with CFL franchises ... **PAGE 6**

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## Roberts rules

Reluctant rock star Sam Roberts caps the year off at the Turret

**JOE TURCOTTE**  
A&E EDITOR

Sam Roberts' strained voice speaks for itself, cementing the fact that staging the "Mother of All Tours" is no easy task. In between setting-up in order to rock WLUSU's Year-End Party, Roberts sat down and spoke with the *Cord* about the rigors of touring and the rock 'n roll lifestyle.

"I'm in preservation mode right now, but you've got to do what you've got to do," a tired and raspy-voiced Roberts said. "It's just about trying to keep going, man. There's no recovery time, we get one or two days off. Touring is deadly, man; touring is hard as hell. Touring is the hardest thing."

But while the schedule may be grueling, the Canadian singer-songwriter has no regrets, as he realizes that touring is essential. "Anytime you put out a new record there's only a few ways to promote it. There are interviews and the press, but you're not really in control of that. Then you have the marketing strategies that your labels devise, and then you have shows, which to me [are] the best way to get your point across and the only way where you're ever fully in control."

While he remains in control over performing, Roberts acknowledges that he loosened-up on the reins when recording his newest album, *Chemical City*. Instead of personally performing all the instruments and later assembling the tracks in the studio, as he did for 2003's *We Were Born in a Flame*, Roberts and his band assembled in Australia and recorded together.

"It was good not to be alone in the studio, that's a pretty lonely existence. [This way] you have five people propping up the energy of the record, instead of one person trying to carry it all on his shoulders. I don't know if great rock and roll has ever come from that," the increasingly excited Roberts said.

When speaking about his music, Roberts speaks like a father talking about his children. That being said, Roberts doesn't want to take anything away from his major label debut by comparing it to *Chemical City*.

"I'm really happy with the first record. It meant that I was starting off down the road. I don't ever want to take away from it by comparing it to what I'm doing now."

- see **ROBERTS**, page 14



Paul Alviz

**SPARE SOME CHANGE?** - With the UPASS expiring on May 1, Laurier students now have to scrounge together \$2.25 to get around on GRT.

## No UPASS for summer

Due to a number of logistical concerns, GRT and WLUSU were unable to come to terms for a summer extension to the popular new bus pass; both sides remain optimistic as negotiations continue

**MIKE BROWN**  
NEWS EDITOR

On May 1, the clock struck midnight on the pilot project of a WLUSU initiative that has had more than its fair share of the limelight in the past year, as the UPASS' eight-month preliminary contract expired and OneCards throughout Waterloo were rendered ineffectual on the city's busses.

The collaboration between Wilfrid Laurier's Student Union and Grand River Transit was not without its potholes, such as the initial revolt of part-time students displeased at having to pay for a service that was by and large useless to them.

Still, the initial bump in the road was dealt with and, once part-time students were removed from the agreement, their full-time counterparts generally warmed to the \$40 per term fee. Ridership jumped from 25,000 OneCard sightings on GRT busses in September 2005 to 65,000 by November.

Alas, calm waters rarely persist for long and GRT and WLUSU may now have a much larger student demographic to appease, as it's not just part-time

students who have been sad to see the UPASS unavailable for the summer term. While there are certainly a number of motorized students pleased to wave goodbye to an unwanted mandatory fee, they appear to be outnumbered by those without wheels.

"It really, really sucks," laments third-year political science student Chris Zaldua. "[My girlfriend and I] use the bus all the time and having that pass is extremely useful 'cause it saves us over \$100 every two months

**"It really, really sucks. We use the bus all the time and having that pass is extremely useful 'cause it saves us over \$100 every two months or so."**

- *Chris Zaldua, disappointed student*

or so."

Zaldua has a kindred spirit in fourth-year business student Saurabh Chaudhry.

"It's pretty ridiculous that it's not offered during the summer

because there are students here - there are quite a number of students here," Chaudhry notes. "I'm not sure what the cost-benefit for GRT is, but I think they should offer it."

And that's where this astute business mind hits the problem directly on the head. The inability to hammer out a mutually-acceptable summer contract stems from logistical difficulties that were far less prevalent in the fall and winter terms.

"Where we found it challenging was, 'How do I identify that a student stayed in school during the summer?'" explains John Cicuttin, associate director of transportation planning for the Region of Waterloo. "We got hung up on that a little bit and, at the time, it didn't seem to

be a great ground-swell.

"We said, 'Let's park that and we can deal with it next summer.' We're open-minded to it; it's not something we're opposed to, but we need to figure a way to

make it work operationally."

The major obstacle to the summer UPASS is the GRT's concern about fraudulent use. While the number of students attending classes in the summer drops from about 10,650 to 1,235, many students opt to stay and work in Waterloo.

Of course, without any means of identifying which students are paying tuition fees, Grand River Transit is concerned about free rides occurring in a much higher proportion than they would during the other eight months of the year, when a comparably small number of co-op students remain in Kitchener-Waterloo.

"I just don't think it was a priority for them," shrugs Jen Mitchell, recently-departed vice-president: university affairs and the woman who was charged with doing much of the leg work in the project's inaugural year. "I think they were far too worried about fraud and things like that to actually tackle the issue."

"It was a lot of stuff to talk about," adds Mitchell's successor, J.D. Muir. "Unfortunately, along the GRT side, getting everyone together for a meeting

- see **UPASS**, page 2

# Reflecting the landscape

A hoarse Sam Roberts tells Cord A&E editor, **Joe Turcotte**, he doesn't want to push a social agenda, but push his music as far and as wide as possible

- from **ROBERTS**, cover

But your musical instinct is to pursue different musical avenues. Different approaches to your song writing and the lyrical content, anything. You should never try to consciously direct what you're doing."

And while he was writing for the new album, Roberts admits that sometimes his musical inspiration seemed to come from unconscious sources.

"Sometimes you feel like a medium, that you're channeling something from beyond. And then sometimes it's very much something that you have to work at. You have to sculpt a raw idea. You take that and hope that you can make something, but that takes a lot of work," the ever-humble Roberts revealed with a smile.

For someone that has had so much success and has had so many lofty comparisons made about his music, Roberts' humility is refreshing.

While *Chemical City* is bound to be a smash success, Roberts is reluctant to acknowledge the comparisons to legends like Bob Dylan and John Lennon that the media often makes.

"I don't think it necessarily reflects reality. They're two of my idols for sure, people that I look up to as songwriters. Their music inspires me, but it inspires a whole lot of other people too. I think every musician would love to be compared to Dylan and Lennon, but that doesn't mean they measure up at all. It doesn't

make it a fact."

But like Dylan and Lennon, Roberts' music is more than just catchy hooks and inviting melodies. *Chemical City* has been described as a response to the urban decay that the band has witnessed first hand while touring.

"We don't just play the 10 to 12 major cities in Canada, we go everywhere. When you put it all together [the album] has this feeling to it in a way. The songs we write are a reflection of the life we live and the places that we see. For me I'm very much rooted in an urban landscape every day. But I'm not obsessed with it or anything. 'Mind Flood' is very much set in Algonquin Park or some place like that. That's where I see that song."

While Roberts admits that some of his songs may look as though they have a social agenda, he is quick to dismiss the idea that he explicitly tries to be political or push an agenda.

"I never want to tailor what I do to a certain crowd," Roberts admits, "if I'm political or socially conscious it's because that's how I feel. I don't want it to be like I'm getting on my soap-box or anything."

As a Canadian who has had the fortune to travel from coast to coast, Roberts' music is an expression of the diversity of the Canadian landscape.

Nuanced and complex, Roberts' music does not take well to being defined in simple terms. With Canada seemingly conquered, Roberts sees the next logical step as taking his music to

the United States.

"I want to push my music as far and wide as possible," an excited Roberts beamed.

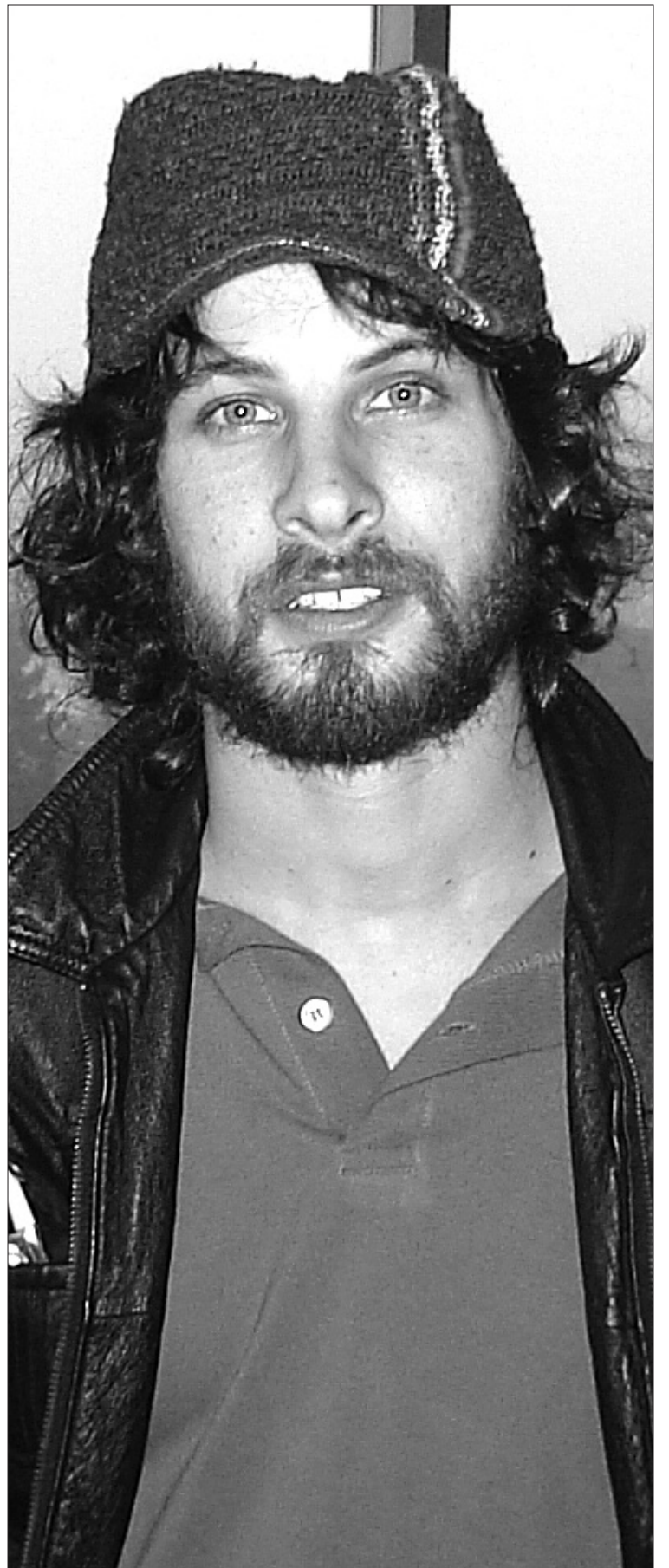
He does seek some sort of validation from the scene in the States, "I do feel that, for sure. Not because it's a matter of pride or anything like that. But at some point you have to expand your boundaries and push your horizons. That just leads to a longer and healthier career. It's not a personal thing like 'I have to conquer the States.' It's just the next place to go, it's right there and there are 300 million people who just love rock and roll music."

Although Roberts is looking to take the next step to the United States, he still feels proud to be part of the burgeoning Canadian music scene.

"I think there's a lot of great bands who are all gifted in their own right working right now," Roberts acknowledged while deflecting away any talk of being responsible for the success of the Canadian music industry. "No, no, I don't think we were in any way at all responsible for it. I think they're all tremendous bands who are doing their own thing."

While Roberts may be reluctant to be seen as more than just another artist doing what he loves to do, he is viewed by many as a premier member of the Canadian rock music community.

And if the Canadian success of *Chemical City* is reciprocated in the United States, maybe this rock and roller from Montreal will become an international sensation.



Joe Turcotte

**ROBERTS TAKES IN THE VIEW** - Before he rocked the Turret, Sam Roberts got an eye full of the Waterloo skyline.

# Pearl Jam returns with a vengeance

Pearl Jam's anti-war album may be the band's first foray into grunge

**DRU JEFFRIES**  
STAFF WRITER

The May issue of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* features a small article dubbing Pearl Jam "the new Grateful Dead," citing such belittling similarities as "generally bad hair," "shorts onstage" and "a lot better than Phish."

Aside from being derogatory to both bands, the joke piece lands one significant punch to Pearl Jam's reputation. The first similarity listed between the two bands, that "they sell out arenas in two minutes, and you can't name any of their last five albums," is only partly true.

The albums in question, 1996's *No Code*, 1998's *Yield*, 2000's *Bin-Aural*, and 2002's *Riot Act* are all terrific albums. Furthermore,

their latest effort is self-titled, so good luck forgetting what it's called.

Pearl Jam's latest album has little in common with the Grateful Dead, though it proudly wears its classic rock influences on its sleeve. Like many of today's popular bands, the latest Pearl Jam offering is full of abrasive chord-based riffs, harkening back to Pete Townsend's work with The Who.

While Pearl Jam hail from Seattle and emerged around the same time as Nirvana, they have always had more in common with classic rock bands like Led Zeppelin than their contemporaries, who demonstrated more of a punk influence. That being said, this album might be their first true full-length foray into "grunge" territory.

The album opens with "Life Wasted," a hard-rocking grunge piece that features uncharacteristically primitive guitar work by Mike McCready and Stone Gossard.

The length and quality of the guitar solos, on this track and throughout the album, separate Pearl Jam from their peers in the "nū-grunge" movement. McCready and Gossard, both equally adept with the pick and the wah pedal, stand out as the only contemporary practitioners of the 1970s-style of rock guitar.

Album highlights include "Gone," which begins as a quiet, Kurt Cobain-esque acoustic meditation, but by the end of the first verse winds up in familiar Pearl Jam territory, evoking shades of "Oceans" from 1991's debut al-

bum, *Ten*. Vedder's bluesy chorus melody in "Come Back" stands in stark contrast to the rest of the album, in which they have eschewed the blues elements of their sound in favour of the grungier rock that is popular now. The album closer, "Inside Job," sounds vaguely like "Black" (also from *Ten*), but with more drive and optimism.

The first single, "World Wide Suicide," hides Vedder's thoughtful and poignant lyrics beneath brash and primal guitar work. It is here that his vocal opposition to the Bush administration and U.S. foreign policy first manifests itself on the album.

*Pearl Jam* is as much an anti-war statement as Neil Young's recently released *Living With War*. Vedder-penned songs like "Marker in the Sand" ("Now you got both sides claiming killing in God's name/But God is nowhere

to be found, conveniently") and "Army Reserve" ("She tells herself and everyone else/Father is risking his life for our freedoms") are not as polemical as Young's album, which features a song entitled "Let's Impeach the President."

While Young's album is about living with war, ultimately Pearl Jam's is more about living... with war.

