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UNIQUE BLEND

Jon and Roy create a combination of sounds, from hip hop to folk

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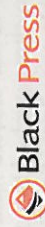
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ENTERTAINMENT

Folk gets down

Jon and Roy blend laid back sounds with rap-style lyrics in new album

Patrick Blennerhassett
News staff

Folk and hip-hop music usually aren't coupled together. One is an age-old sound that's been around for centuries, the other birthed itself revolution style in the 1970s in New York. But one local Victoria duo are blending the two quite effortlessly. Jon and Roy's debut album *Sittin' Back* came out in 2005, a hybrid of rap-style lyrics and laid back tunes.

The duo will officially release their sophomore album *Another Noon* on March 8, and Jon Middleton – who provides the majority of the lyrics, said the marriage of rap and folk came quite naturally.

"I listen to a lot of hip-hop and because I have an acoustic guitar they kind of came together that way," said Middleton. "Playing stuff on my acoustic guitar and digging the hip-hop style of lyricism."

Middleton and Roy Vizer originally got together back in 2001, meeting through a mutual friend at the University of Victoria. Vizer had moved from Vancouver and the two hit it off instantly.

"Sometimes when you play with certain people things just tend to click," said Middleton. "We really worked off of what each other was doing. I think we're into, not the same kind of music, but similar styles in terms of funky genres like reggae and Cuban and African stuff. I think that ties us together."

By 2003 they were playing regularly, but it will be a current upcoming mini-tour that will definitely be the highlight of their career so far. Canadian hip-hop artist Buck 65, known also for blending genres, asked the duo to open for

him for six dates in England starting March 18.

"He takes a lot of different styles and fuses them together" said Vizer. "And although we're not per se a hip-hop act I think we'll blend together really well."

"I listen to a lot of hip-hop and because I have an acoustic guitar they kind of came together that way."

Jon Middleton

Middleton adds the two knew of his music prior to the offer but have since become fans, for various reasons.

"I had just started listening to him – actually my friend played it in his truck while we were driving to work," he said. "And I was starting to dig him, I'd heard about him for ages and I'd never really taken the time to listen to him until recently. He's one of those guys that I think takes a little time to get used to but once you do get into it it's really interesting music."

The tour will be huge for the up-and-coming act. Middle-



Don Denton/News staff

Duo Jon and Roy (musicians Jon Middleton (L) and Roy Vizer) will tour England next month.

ton will be hanging around England after the tour to do a little travelling while Vizer will be returning home to finish the semester at UVic.

"We kind of got over the nervous part of things," said Vizer about opening for such an established act like Buck 65. "Unless we were opening for the Stones, I think we're going to be OK and just do what we do and hopefully people like us."

The tour has already started to generate interest by association for the local duo. They've been getting hits on their MySpace page from across the pond, something Middleton said epitomizes the music industry in 2008.

"Considering we've never had any publicity anywhere. That's obviously the benefit of something like MySpace. Someone in England has heard your stuff and wants to come to your show even though you haven't had any type of publicity or radio play or anything."

Jon and Roy's CD release party of *Another Noon* is on Saturday, March 8 at Sugar Nightclub, 858 Yates St. Also on the bill is Tequila Mockingbird Orchestra. Doors at 9 p.m. show at 10 p.m. Tickets are available at Lyle's Place, 770 Yates St. & online at www.hightideconcerts.net.

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