



GETTING CABIN FEVER
Matt Camirand, Amber Webber,
Joshua Wells, Jeremy Schmidt
and Stephen McBean (from left).

Black Mountain Channel Sabbath

Canuck street punks go psychedelic
By Christian Hoard

BLACK MOUNTAIN ARE still an up-and-coming band, but they've already earned some big-name fans. During a gig in Oklahoma City in 2005, the Vancouver quintet spotted Flaming Lips' Wayne Coyne in the crowd. "He stood up front, totally rocking out," says keyboardist Jeremy Schmidt. "I was like, 'Holy shit!'" The next time Black Mountain played in Oklahoma City, they crashed at Coyne's house. "In the morning, we looked outside, and Wayne had all these bubble machines going," says co-vocalist Amber Webber. "He gave us one, and we used it on tour."

It makes sense that Coyne would gravitate toward Black Mountain: Their music, like his, recalls classic psychedelic rock. Black Mountain's second album, *In the Future*, is a mesmerizing opus that echoes both Black Sab-

bath and early Pink Floyd, with heavy-metal riffs, lengthy freakout jams, and ambient melodies and harmonies. "It's heaviness mixed with fragility," frontman Stephen McBean says. "Anyone can slam out a Black Sabbath riff, but nobody else can do it with Amber's beautiful voice on top of it."

In person, Black Mountain are not the stoner types you might expect. Three of their members are mental-health advocates working part time at the Portland Hotel Society, a nonprofit whose services include giving homeless drug addicts a safe place to live. "In Vancouver, you walk down the road and see people shooting up," says Webber. "Drugs are a big problem here."

Growing up in British Columbia, McBean himself was homeless for a while. As a teen, the soft-spoken singer loved Black Flag and hated school. Concerned about his affinity for cutting class and fed up with his rebellious attitude, his parents sent him to a foster home when he was fifteen, though he soon ran away with a friend. "Basically we

just went to punk shows and lived on the street," he says.

McBean has been gigging since age thirteen, when his punk band opened for a D.C. hardcore band that once featured Dave Grohl. In 1996, McBean and drummer Josh Wells formed the riff-rock band Jerk With a Bomb, but that project died one night in 2003 when McBean dreamed that they changed their name. "The next day we made a banner that said BLACK MOUNTAIN in this metal font—just like I'd draw on my pants when I was fifteen," says McBean.

The name stuck, and they soon became a celebrated psychedelic band; Coldplay handpicked them to open for their 2005 tour. "That was surreal," says bassist Matt Camirand. "Gwyneth Paltrow was backstage. I lost to her in pingpong." Black Mountain's upcoming tour will be more modest, but McBean still feels thankful for the long, strange trip they've had. "This is my dream job," he says. "As a teenager, I never could have imagined this."

Kate Walsh Gets Even

British singer calls out her old enemies
By Nicole Frehsée

KATE WALSH HAS GOTTEN revenge on her old neighborhood. In "Talk of the Town," the first single off her second album, *Tim's House*, the twenty-four-year-old singer-songwriter blasts the narrow-minded bullies in her native Burnham-on-Crouch, a small fishing village on England's east coast, where she never quite belonged. "I felt I'd never be satisfied there, and people misconstrued that as arrogance," says Walsh, who switched high schools four times to escape classmates who harangued her for wanting to get out of town and follow her big-city ambitions. "You try everything to fit in, but you're always aware this isn't the place for you."

Last March, Walsh, then unsigned, got her break when she submitted "Talk of the Town" to iTunes. After the confessional track was chosen as the free "Single of the Week," *Tim's House* shot up to Number One on the U.K. iTunes chart. Walsh has also gone prime time—"Your Song" was featured on the *Grey's Anatomy* spinoff, *Private Practice*—and her album is due in the U.S. later this month. So what do the bullies say now? "Maybe there's a bit of anger," says the now-Brighton-based Walsh, who doesn't visit home often. "If I ever end up with my head flushed down the toilet, I'll let you know."

SOUND The acoustic ditties on *Tim's House* are nuggets of Joni Mitchell-esque heartache layered with plaintive strings and Walsh's glass-clear voice. She dredges up melancholy on slow-burners like the whispery, Fleetwood Mac-reminiscent "Bury My Head," and "Tonight," which laments the lonely aftermath of one-night stands. The album owes its understated feel to its homemade roots: Walsh laid down tracks in producer Tim Bidwell's living room. "I left all the clicks in, and the knocks and buzzes and the bits that make it so nice," she says.

LOVE-STRUCK Whether she's dissing the fireworks on Britain's Guy Fawkes Day or wondering if a cute French boy could be the One, Walsh is usually singing in some round-about way about her ex-boyfriend. "Other people might get smashed at the pub and get over it, but I prolong my pain and write twenty songs about the same thing," she says. "At gigs, people shout, 'Cheer up, Kate! Find a nice man!'" Walsh finally took their advice—she met her current boyfriend at a show in August—but it may not have been a wise career move. "I'm really happy—and I'm not writing anything! My manager might start telling [my boyfriend] to be horrible to me so that I have some material."

See video of Kate Walsh, Black Mountain and other Breaking artists at rollingstone.com/breaking



PRINCESS OF PAIN
Walsh taps into heart-break on *Tim's House*.



The Formula: We Do the Math for You

Black Sabbath

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Flaming Lips



+

the munchies



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Black Mountain