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Review: Faire des voeux

July 14, 2011

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 by **Virginie Hamel**

After a year of silence, Soir de Semaine is back, with something solid. With their new album *Faire des voeux*, it seems like they have found a sound more assertive and proud. Previously described as a festive, funk, rock and roots band, Soir de Semaine decided to attempt the reggae and ska experience.

However, the band obviously doesn't stick to one musical style, and easily marries reggae and rock, jumping once in a while into ska and world music within the same songs.

There's a bit more of everything on *Faire des voeux*: more accordion, more lead guitar, more voices, more bass: it's a music package that is more defined. Certainly, building on their experience, everything is more balanced.

Founded in 2003, Soir de Semaine is, so far, the most exported and well-known Yukon Francophone band, expert at making people dance and have fun.

The band members are Marie-Maude Allard (flute, voice and accordion), Cory Chouinard (percussion), Marc Paradis (drums), Pascal St-Laurent (lead guitar, vocals) and Alain DesRochers (bass, vocals).

Not all the players are born-and-raised musicians, but they have developed a *je ne sais quoi* that keeps people wanting to see them in performance. Made up in the style of Kiss, and playing with the audience as the party animals they are, they rapidly transform any space into a festival.

Since their first gigs, they gradually found their place in the local music scene and have become a sort a symbol of the Yukon spirit.

The group is stronger instrumentally than vocally. However, compared to their previous album, *Toi du monde*, there's serious work done here on the harmonies.

I'm thinking here about two songs, *Mon paradis* and *Faire des voeux*.

Desrochers, Allard and St-Laurent have become more vocally proficient than ever; we can hear the lyrics (which wasn't always the case before).

If the lyrics were not always understandable in the previous album it now seems as if the members of Soir de Semaine want to be heard not only for their music but also for what they have to say. The lyrics are as light as the music that accompanies them, wanting to be festive.

Keeping the texts really simple serves the rhythms well. The words depict a real *joie de vivre*. Happiness, holidays, party, sex and love are mixed together as a sort of reggae poetry, almost naïve.

It's not surprising that they have so much success with kids. Their subjects create an atmosphere that is absolutely fabulous in live shows, but sometimes harder to appreciate on CD.

The new album is beautifully presented, with cover art by local artist Maxime Duchesne. *Faire des voeux* is a bilingual album that clearly shows that the band was ready for something new.

The first part of the album is a good representation of what we already know from their shows: lively, groovy, but not necessarily new.

The surprise arrives at the seventh song with a new Gitane rhythm well interpreted by the voices and the accordion.

The rest of the album is more cool-headed and easy to listen to, leading up to the conclusion with a rhythmic performance by Chouinard and Paradis.

Soir de Semaine will perform on July 23 at the Frog Mountain Music Festival.



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Virginie Hamel writes the French Toast column for What's Up Yukon, reporting regularly on activities in the territory's Francophone community.



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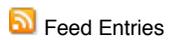


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