



# The Parkas

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## Press Quotes

“Damn fine. The London four-piece hone their quirky live energy into sparkling ditties that show off a penchant for breathy harmonies, wicked hooks and an underlying current of back-to-basics pop smarts...a first-rate debut.”

**Now Magazine (Toronto) 4 Stars**

“The Parkas debut full-length will surely make them a household name.”

**ChartAttack.com**

“A swell debut album. There’s no fighting the realization these guys are on to something good.”

**The Calgary Sun**

“This exceptionally solid record makes good on all the accolades **The Parkas** have been accumulating in the past year and is sure to put the band’s name on the recently growing list of buzz-worthy Canadian independent musicians.”

**The Gazette (London)**

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## Press Quotes

“Best of all the record has a genuine rock’n’roll spirit that’s all too rare in these cynical times...indiepop beauties...”

**The Georgia Straight (Vancouver)**

“This is an album that deserves to be heard.”

**Guelph Mercury**

“One of this year’s biggest debut surprises.”

**CBC Radio 3 (National)**

“Seemingly out to rescue not only the pop beast but the entire kingdom.”

**Chart Magazine (National)**

“...a pop rock force to be reckoned with.”

**Echo (Guelph)**

“Chockablock full of fun fun fun...an unexpected treat.”

**Monday Magazine (Victoria)**

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## Press Quotes

“**Now This Is Fighting** is a strong debut with a positive outlook and a lot of heart. These corn-fed brothers and kissing cousins pick up where bands like Thrush Hermit and The Inbreds left off and fly the flag of hooks, harmonies and all that is good about a well-placed “doo doo doo” or “la la la”.”

**Spill Magazine**

“Long live rock & roll. That’s exactly what London’s Parkas pound into your head upon the first listen of their full-length debut, **Now This Is Fighting.**”

**Umbrella Music**

“...there’s no fighting the realization that these guys are on to something good.”

**Winnipeg Sun**

“...go out and buy it no matter what the weather.”

**Broken Pencil**

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## Selected Press

### Parkas Handed Down From Fathers to Sons

by Kelly Leschasin

The Manitoban  
October 2003

It's evident that London, Ontario and London, England share more than just a name. Endearing recording artists The Parkas, hailing from London, Ontario, have been immersed in British Invasion music such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones since they were born.

The Parkas are a family affair comprised of brothers Mark and Greg Rhyno, their cousin Grady Kelneck, and longtime friend Mike Brown. Curiously, Grady's father played alongside Greg and Mark's father in a band called The Shades, covering Beatles, Rolling Stones, and The Who songs dating back before any of The Parkas were born. Needless to say, their fathers not only became role models for the boys but also turned their ears to the sounds of classic British records which influenced their band greatly to this day.

Commenting on their father's musical exploits, Greg Rhyno divulged that "Their performances happened mainly before our birth, since they would get together and practice:" Greg continues "Every year Grady's dad had something called the Muskoka Jam where older musicians would get together and play the blues, we would go to that when we were younger and Grady's been around that all his life."

The Parkas are currently touring across Canada supporting *Now This Is Fighting*, their first full-length album recorded for Endearing records. Recorded at Andy Magoffin's House of Miracles whose production credits include Royal City's *Alone at the Microphone* and The Hidden Camera's *The Smell of Our Own*, Andy was able to capture the goals The Parkas had set for themselves in the studio. "We just wanted to make a really good record and have something that captured the personality of the band." Greg expresses. "Andy had [the] idea that we could record most of it live as a band together in a room. All of our instruments were in one room and we were standing in the doorways." Greg talks about the technicality of the recordings. "We were all together, looking at each other and playing, and fixed our mistakes later on through the magic of technology. For the most part Andy just wanted us to get together and play.

Seventeenth century colonial sketches adorn the cover art and liner notes of *Now This Is Fighting*, a blue skeleton clutching an arrow standing on a field is not the type of image you would associate with the cheery melodies of The Parkas. "We found this book of woodcuts which we thought was really cool and we wanted to use those designs," Greg enthuses, happily talking about the artwork. "We found out afterwards the skeleton on the front is actually a tarot card design of the death card, which sounds awful but apparently it has to do with rebirth. We felt that this was appropriate after the fact, after we had chosen it, because we feel the album was a rebirth.

Listening in, Mark Rhyno quips "A phoenix rising from the ashes." Greg goes on to describe what he means by rebirth. "We did our first little record on our own, we had gone out on our first tour on our own. This second time around we were more together as a band, more experienced, and we wanted to do things a little bit better."

At the Halifax Pop Explosion last year, opening for Endearing artists Paper Moon gave way for a great opportunity for The Parkas. Endearing records label founder Blair Purda happened to be in attendance and enjoyed it enough to talk with The Parkas, resulting in the signing of the band. The relationship is having a positive effect on the band, garnering them exposure to a wide audience. "They have done some nice stuff for us." Greg posits "We are going to be on Radio Sonic (a long standing CBC radio program) in a little bit. They have done some nice things for us already and they seem to be working pretty hard. They took a chance on us, originally I think they were a little hesitant to put us out because we had never put out a full album and they usually like to work with bands that are a little more experienced but then they decided to take a gamble."

Your chance to see if the gamble has paid off occurs on Friday, Oct 3rd at the Times Change(d) High and Lonesome club (corner of Main and St. Mary). The band will be showcasing *Now This Is Fighting* alongside Winnipeg act Nathan.

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## Selected Press

### Parka Power Southern Ontario Pop Posse Gear Up

By Nick Flanigan

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE LIVING IN THE same teeming urban metropolis as the rest of your band in order to get opportunities in the world of CanRock. Just ask the Parkas. "Our first songs were written while Greg was in England," bassist Mark Rhyno says before a 360 show sandwiched between electronic acts. The band includes guitarists Mike Brown and Grady Kelneck, brothers Greg (drummer) and Mark Rhyno and Keyboardist Andrew Collins.

"Grady and I would be in a room with Mike and we'd come up with stuff and put Greg's lyrics over it, from across the pond."

After three years together the Parkas have honed the harmony based-twangy pop sound of their year-old *Now This Is Fighting* release. It's on Winnipeg's Endearing Records label and was recorded at Andy Magoffin's House of Miracles, which Mark says felt like recording in Big Pink.

Despite home bases from Thunder bay to Guelph, the boys are ready to settle in to Toronto. They're scheduled for Tuesdays in February at the El Mocambo.

"It's weird thing," says Greg. "Even now, we don't live in the same city. But once you get on the road, it doesn't matter where you live. The thing about our band is that we were born in the bush and we tend to retreat to the bush. I like Toronto a lot, but I also like getting away from it."

Mark and Greg's and Grady's fathers played together in rock bands the Shades and Jalopy over 30 years ago.

"If we didn't play together, we were grounded," says Mark.

So how did the boys hook up with Winnipeg-based Endearing?

"We went on our first big tour and played the Halifax Pop Explosion, and Blair Purda, who runs the label, was there. he liked what he saw, and a few months later, when he saw us at Canadian Music Week, he signed us. We were new to the game, and it was nice to have a label behind us."

Their influences are varied, from the Rolling Stones to Robert Wyatt, but Greg says, "I want to write songs that are somewhere between the Palace Brothers and the Funk Brothers," referring to the legendary Motown studio band. The boys are excited about playing the El Mo, even if it's had a makeover.

"We would have loved to have played the old El Mo, with the dirt and grit," says Greg. "It's different now. It's somewhere between Ted's Wrecking Yard and a theatre, which is good because our act devolves into stand-up comedy.

"Hopefully they'll be a giant cane close at hand."

As for future plans and ambitions, "I would have said five years ago that our goal was to play the El Mocambo, so now we've got to adopt new goals," says guitarist Brown.

My goal's just to balance my cheque book," adds Greg.

Now Magazine  
(Toronto)  
January 2004

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## Selected Press

### Keeping It All Relative

**After Critical Success out East, The Parkas suit up for their first cross-Canada tour**  
by Kirsten Kosloski

FFWD Weekly  
(Calgary)  
October 2003

No matter how well they're received, indie musicians are always hungry – literally.

Driven by a lack of funds and radio play, they throw themselves out to explore the wide expanses of this great country and depend on the kindness of strangers – a floor to sleep on, a hot meal every second day, a ratty promo T-shirt – all in the hopes of playing to a crowd of appreciative music fans.

Some bands, like the Parkas, live in the moment and enjoy the ride in a used van. For them, nothing is as sweet as being on tour.

Comprised of two brothers (Mark and Greg Rhyno), one cousin (Grady Kelneck) and a best friend (Mike Brown), the Parkas are definitely a family affair. "Our parents are musicians," Greg says. "So there was always instruments lying around. Grady's dad organizes the Muskoka Jams festival and one night, after it was all over, we just hopped onstage and started playing the abandoned instruments."

Growing up in Ontario, the band was inspired by all-ages shows and the Canadian punk scene. Greg is humbled to think that they have come full circle – going from young punks paying admission and having their hands stamped to being the ones up onstage.

While the members of the Parkas have all played in bands since their teens, being underage made it difficult to tour, since they had no car, driver's license or money. Having whet their appetite playing shows in the East, the band is excited to play their first cross-Canada tour. They are taking it so seriously, in fact, that they all decided to quit their day jobs.

"I was a high school English teacher," Greg says. "Mark was doing his Masters in English, Mike's a visual artist and Grady was in Kinesology. We all felt like this was the time and we had to do it now, so it was an easy decision."

He attributes the band's intense motivation to growing up in a small town. "The isolation helps. Growing up in Thunder Bay, it's eight hours away from anywhere. So if you want to see a show, you have to drive to Minneapolis and back in the same night to make it in time for work," says Greg.

"I think coming from a small town makes you want to work harder and gives you a more interesting sound. You're not influenced by anything around you. You just want it more."

The Parkas' first full-length album, *Now This Is Fighting*, has been getting some serious attention from music critics, and the band's performances at Canadian music festivals has garnered comparisons to classic rock staples such as CCR, The Who and The Rolling Stones.

"We don't feel like critics' darlings right now, sleeping on floors and being broke," Greg says sighing. "I think we've

been placed in a strange category and written of as this poppy, party band. Actually we're pretty far from it."

Now *This Is Fighting* is surprisingly dark and most of their songs are quite sad and introspective. Writing drinking songs for the lonely and depressed the Parkas camouflage them with pop harmonies and country-rock. Deceptively up-beat songs like "Giants in my Field" sound like good times but are about revenge and street-fighting. The track, "My Life of Crime," is about failing miserably at being good and reflects the band's love/hate relationship with cash.

"Starting out, you have to pay for everything out of your own pockets and promote yourself," says Greg. "When we first decided to do this and quit our jobs, we bought a van and were instantly broke."

The recent loss of income has been noticed. Things the band once took for granted when they worked a regular nine to five, like CD shopping or sleeping in a real bed, have moved down their list of priorities as real life comforts become secondary to promoting their new record.

The hardest part of being broke is that the band has just become acquainted with Canada's secret resource – the independent record store.

"This is the band's first trip out West and the people who put us up are always suggesting record stores to check out. There's always so much new stuff to listen to and buy. It's hard to catch up," says Greg, slightly embarrassed, after running off a list of records he's recently bought but hasn't had the time to listen to.

"I was in Vancouver's Scratch Records today," he says longingly. "I wanted to buy five albums but didn't have the money."

The Parkas seem genuinely embarrassed by all the press attention and feel most comfortable when onstage. It's not as if they mind being compared to some of their favourite bands, it's just that they're too busy having fun on tour. It's a lot of work but somehow even the mundane business of doing a sound check makes the band giddy as they gear up for the night's show.

In a lot of ways, the Parkas are learning as they go, quite happy to stumble along the way.

#### Celeb Top Five

The Parkas all-time favourite live bands:

1. Elvis Costello and The Impostors
2. Bruce Springsteen
3. New Pornographers
4. Fugazi
5. The Doves

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## Selected Press

### Parkas' perky perky debut pops with rock'n'roll spirit

by Shawn Conner

While Parkas bassist Mark Rhyno calls from between tour stops somewhere in, as he puts it, "Nowheres, Ontario," the band's singer-guitarist, Grady Kelneck, is busy gathering bulrushes at the side of the road. "We've actually been populating our stage with as much Canadiana crap as we can find," the musician explains. "I guess we're going to have the bulrushes tonight, and we always have a giant wolf in carpet form up behind the drums. He just kind of stares and judges us while we're playing it. It's kind of unnerving, like having a patriarch looking down at you, saying you're not good enough."

Which is kind of funny, considering the indie-financed rock band's bio states the members are "children of rock'n'roll showmen". So are the Parkas bastard offspring of Geddy Lee or what?

"The four of us come from a fairly musical background," says Rhyno, who counts among the band's members a brother, Greg, on drums, and a cousin, Kelneck. (Lead guitarist Mike Brown completes the lineup.) "Our fathers used to play together in a band when they were young. They still play; they do pop/rock'n'roll, Rolling Stones kind of stuff. Grady's dad actually runs a festival called the Muskoka jam. We grew up doing that kind of stuff, so music's a little bit bred in the bone for us."

On *Now This Is Fighting*, the group's debut, these Northern Ontario bar-band origins are evident in dirty *Exile on Main Street* licks, particularly on the bloodied but unbowed "My Life of Crime". But only one of the Parkas attended the Stones' free Toronto concert this summer, and indie-pop beauties like "The Heart Is Only a Muscle" confirm there is life beyond the British Invasion for the foursome.

Best of all, the record has a genuine rock'n'spirit that's all too rare in these cynical times. *Now This Is Fighting* sounds like its creators kept warm in the studio by downing six-packs of Grizzly and Hi-Test. You can hear this casual, go-for-it attitude in "The Art of Complication" when, a minute and a half into the song, Brown lets loose with a fuzzy guitar solo.

The approach to the packaging was even more lax. *Now This Is Fighting's* insert includes various woodcuts from a book the band bought at Zellers and used because, according to Rhyno, "Apparently there's no copyright on them [the woodcuts]." Inside the jewel box, underneath a picture of an 18th-century bar patron drinking from a gourd, are the words "My Pockets Are Empty, but My Glass is Full".

"I think it's a working metaphor for the band, in sense we're kind of on our last legs money-wise but we're still going to make this cross-Canada tour happen," says Rhyno, who is here with the rest of the band, and Basil the giant wolf, for shows at the Pic on Wednesday (October 8th) and Red Cat Records and the Main next Friday (October 10). "And Greg's a drunk."

The Georgia Straight  
(Vancouver)  
October 2003

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## Selected Press

No more entries, please, we have a winner: The prize for the most obviously Canadian band name goes to The Parkas. But hey, it's not like that's such a bad thing. Without such an obvious handle, you'd be such an obvious handle, you'd be hard-pressed to tell from whence this London, Ont., outfit hails. Their music - or at least their swell debut album *Now This Is Fighting* - certainly doesn't give it away. For a bunch of northern boys, this pack of guitar slingers have a decidedly southern outlook, accessorizing their bouncy indie-pop with the twangy licks, gritty textures, choogling beats, pumping stomp and ragged harmonies of country, roots-rock and blues. The odd Stax-Volt horn line, the occasional burst of punk, a rollicking organ line every now and then and even a touch of Costelloish R&B only serve to further enhance and expand the band's sonic palette on this tastefully underproduced effort - and to further confuse the pigeon-holders. Either way, there's no fighting the realization that these guys are on to something good. Check them out tonight at the Times Change(d). \*\*\*1/2

Winnipeg Sun  
October 2003

I've been to Huntsville, Ontario, a couple of times. My mom has relatives around there. I never in my wildest dreams expected that Monday A&E man John T. would give me a disc and ask for a last minute review of a band from Huntsville. You see, Huntsville is not a big place, and I'm probably related to some of these people. Potentially disastrous nepotism? That's far from the point, which is mainly that this album is chockablock full of fun fun fun - made even better by the fact that it was an unexpected treat. Starting out with the bouncy "Bus Station Blues," *Now This Is Fighting* continues along for 36 very great minutes of patchwork pop. Parkas - thanks for not using "The," it means a lot these days - are no longer just for keeping mods warm in the winter; these Parkas know how to cook and remain cool at the same time.  
-Bill Stuart

Monday Magazine  
(Victoria, BC)  
October 2003

Before we allow that smart and straightforward breed of pop-rock record to slip away onto the endangered species list, a listen to The Parkas' sunny and guileless full-length debut might be in order. Seemingly out to rescue not only the pop beast but the entire kingdom, the boy quartet plunges right into "Bus Station Blues" - whose only catchy hook will have you knodding untiringly to the chorus, "I got lost at the Eiffel Tower/I had to wander 'round for hours and hours." The pop assault is unrelenting as songs like "Giants In My Field" and "Wildlife Reservations" reveal new reasons to foot tap, sing along and smile. Yes, smile. It's that simple. [www.theparkas.com](http://www.theparkas.com) -**LF**

Chart  
(Canada)  
November 2003

Indie whiz Andy Magoffin's gift as a producer is his ability to craft layered slices of perfect pop that crackle with emotion, and that's what he's brought to the Parkas' first-rate debut for Winnipeg indie Endearing Records. The London four-piece hone their quirky live energy into sparkling ditties that show off a penchant for breathy harmonies, wicked hooks and an underlying current of back-to-basics pop smarts. They know when to go whole hog with pogo-ready punk panache and - more importantly - when to pull back, as on the a cappella vocal parts of romantic suckerpunch *Every Light Is Red*, which nails the ever-elusive challenge of creating an unsoftened indie ballad. Damn fine. The Parkas rock the El Mocambo Wednesday (November 5).  
-Sarah Liss

Now Toronto  
October 2003

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