

## STREET SCENE

## UK's Coldplay is ready for warm welcome



STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

"I've pretty much been interested in music since as long as I can remember," said Guy Barryman, speaking in a leisurely tone from his home in England. The bassist for the latest greatest Britpop export - Coldplay - has been playing music since he was a teenager.

"The difference is, now the whole world can hear him."

## Raised on radio

Barryman was born in Scotland, but raised in Kent, England, where he discovered a penchant for record collecting early on. "I guess I started collecting records when I was 14, probably very bad records. I can just remember (that feeling) when you found the (perfect) record. You put a lot into it. It's different when you're a grown up. As (kids), you go out and find it like a treasure."

Now Barryman and his bandmates Jon Buckland (guitar), Chris Martin (vocals) and Will Champion (drums) are making the records for young collectors to treasure. Coldplay's debut *Parachutes* entered the record charts at number one in their native England - a dream most musicians will never realize. It also spawned the mega-hit radio single, *Yellow*, which has since boasted the band to the top of Britpop royalty and made Coldplay a household name on either side of the pond. Coldplay share its throne with the likes of Radiohead and Travis - offering an emotive soundtrack that leaves its mark on anyone willing to listen.

## Push play

Coldplay began in 1996, just four college friends. "We were living in the same halls, little rooms with 600 people ... in Central London," said Barryman. "There were a lot of musicians. We would jam with guitars in the room. Me, Chris and John got together and started writing songs. We needed to find a drummer. We talked Will into playing drums. He picked them up really quickly."

An accomplished musician who proved talented at guitar, bass and piano, Champion had never played drums before joining the band. He got behind the kit before the first gig - an

assigned band festival in Manchester called In the City - in 1998 and never left. Soon after, Coldplay released its first 6-song EP, *Safety on the English label Parlophone*. Another label, Parlophone snapped up the promising foursome and released a second EP, 1999's *The Blue Room*, which revealed Coldplay's first single, *Shiver*. A drifting song of devotion with lyrics like "I'll always be waiting for you," the song made it onto *Parachutes* as well.

## On tour

Though it seems things came together quickly for the young band, it didn't feel that way, said Barryman. "We've worked so hard for 4 years now." He remembers crowds growing from 50 to 700. "It just began escalating, up and up." It hasn't slowed a bit.

Coldplay has embarked on its first headlining U.S. tour - which stops at Detroit's State Theatre today, June 7. The band will be accompanied by Grandaddy, the hand-picked choice to open these shows. "If they had played us, we'd be out there in a flash," said Barryman, a fan of their music.

So far, audiences in the United States have been good to Coldplay. "In America people are more up for it, there's a bit more energy," he said. "We always get a warm response from the crowd. Europe is more laid back, like their judging you."

The judgment on *Parachutes* is in, and it's an undeniable hit. Mixing melancholy with hope are songs with the gentle rush of *Spies*, the moping piano that trails Martin's apologetic voice on *Trouble* and the sentimental reassurance of *Everything's Not Lost*. The record was completed in nine weeks over a period of six months. The band went into the studio assuming it would only take a couple weeks, but Barryman said, "We didn't want to put something out until we were 100 percent happy with it."

"We were really quite hard on ourselves. When I look back, we were in the studio until 1-2 o'clock in the morning."

Along for the ride was producer Ken Nelson. "He became a fifth member of the band," said Barryman. "He was making stuff up. He's such an easy-going, helpful guy. We're going to continue to work with him."

It wasn't easy to find a producer in the beginning. "We met so many people and they all wanted



Coldplay

to put their stamp on it," said Barryman. "A lot of producers are doing it for themselves. We knew what we wanted and what we didn't."

## Look how they shine

On *Parachutes* the band had but one objective. "We just wanted to create atmosphere really," he said. "That melancholy essence spills from the record's second single, *Yellow*. "It was an obvious single. There was no real reason for debate. It was very sort of poppy, catchy."

Barryman remembers the creation of this song clearly: "We were in the studio in Wales, an old converted farm. We went outside and looked up at the sky. I've never seen so many stars in the sky, as far as I could see. Chris went inside with a little idea. We bashed it out really quickly."

Though he plays the songs each night on tour, *Parachutes* seems like a distant memory to Barryman. He's focused now on

new songs. "It's always nice when you have new songs to play. They're a lot more up tempo. It's just getting a lot stronger. It's much more coherent. I'm really excited about it."

Coldplay will return to the studio with Nelson in August to record the follow-up to *Parachutes*. New songs like *Murder, God Put A Smile on Your Face*, *A Rush of Blood to the Head* and *Warning Sign* are expected to make the cut. "They're really more powerful-sounding songs," said Barryman.

Coldplay fans are waiting patiently. Coldplay performs with openers Grandaddy, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 7, State Theatre, Detroit. Tickets for the all ages show are \$21.75. Call (248) 645-6666.

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