

Drowning Girl
(formerly known as HiLL)
www.myspace.com/drowninggirlmusic

PRESS & REVIEWS

The Toronto Times
Entertainment Section

Drowning Girl
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By: Adam Grant

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- * Bang!
- * Caught By The Rope

When it comes to the stories that usually wrap themselves around a band that's just getting started, one of the more known plotlines revolved around those situations is the years upon years it took to get said project off the ground. In the case of Drowning Girl, this part of the plot is missing in action.

Initially centered around Hill Kourkoutis, Drowning Girl ultimately came to be following a show during the 2006 Canadian Music Week when Kourkoutis was still a solo act, but became quite enthralled by the group of musicians that took the stage with her at that festival. At that time, she was already in the midst of tracking songs for an upcoming album before eventually building a strong musical partnership with fellow guitarist/vocalist David Paoli. Once he entered the fold, a new musical perspective that included a love for Brit Rock and a "tasteful" style of songwriting was experienced by Kourkoutis, and the band then known as Hill was up and running.

"It's constantly evolving - the more we write, the more styles we explore and I think that's been the case for both of us from the beginning of us starting music, we've gone down many alley ways and experimented with different genres, but it's always been rock," explains Kourkoutis when discussing how she and Paoli compliment each other artistically. "I guess between the two of us, we bring in our own influences and create the sound that is Drowning Girl.

"What has been great is that when I got together with David, we were completely on the same page about things," she continues. "We draw influence from a lot of the same things and artists, so it was actually very easy (to collaborate). It felt great because it wasn't a big adjustment - it wasn't that big of a stretch since I'd been used to being in bands before and going through that collaborative process."

By September of 2006 Hill had completed their debut independent release Bang! and began to tour throughout North America - pretty quick progress consider that the group had only been together for a handful of months. But as much as the band began to build a name for

themselves within the independent music community, a change in identity needed to be made.

With the name of the group centered around Kourkoutis, it was decided at the beginning of February 2007 that it would be best for everyone involved to re-name themselves Drowning Girl, so that this project wasn't looked at as a one person operation. After all, with Kourkoutis and Paoli now being the equal core of the band, this decision makes sense.

With a new name in the books, Drowning Girl are looking to move ahead as Kourkoutis and Paoli are continually in the process of penning new material that will continue to shed light on their straight-up rock n' roll appreciation, while embracing more mid-tempo melodic sounds, in hopes of having a new album out within the next year or so, so that they can truly take on the music industry head-on.

"I never really had the intention of wanting to become a rock star, so I guess I didn't get a huge shock when I actually started pursuing (music) - but it is different. You kind of have this idea of playing songs and I think when you're young, you don't really take into account the business side of things which are definitely more complex," feels Kourkoutis.

"Although it wasn't a stretch when I started really getting involved into the business aspect of it - it was great and it definitely made me realize how much goes into actually pursuing this."

For more information on Drowning Girl, please visit www.myspace.com/drowninggirlmusic

Sugarcain Entertainment
Written by Talia Shewchuk
DROWNING GIRL MAKING WAVES

April 15th, 2007

It's not surprising that this strikingly unique duo is making their mark on Toronto and New York City's music scenes. Hill, who started her first band at the age of 12, is no stranger to the rock music stage. Having worked with some of Canada's most respected writers, and playing guitar and bass with artists such as Tara Slone, Graph Nobel, Simon Wilcox, Andrea England and Jeen O'Brien, this glamorous little rocker baby is propelling quite a career at the ripe old age of 19.

Paoli, who is best known for making his guitar sound like anything but, is the male alter-ego of the band named after a famous Lichtenstein painting. He studied jazz and arranging at Toronto's Humber College, moved towards a more unorthodox experimental approach (reminiscent of his heroes, Johnny Greenwood [Radiohead] and Graham Coxon [Blur]), then electronica and country before finally Drowning. Like his playing, which has gone through many evolutions to get to where it is, Dave jokes about his personal style and wardrobe, which looks like it has been through multiple revolutions, "if it breaks, I try to fix it myself".

daveMost recently, Drowning Girl are being recognized for their unique writing style. When asked about what inspires their songs, Dave leans towards the idea of catharsis, and his frustration with the general mentality of the North American culture. He also stresses randomness and the importance of keeping everyone guessing. Hill, on the other hand leans towards channeling heartbreak and negative encounters, her own personal catharsis perhaps, while maintaining a level of ambiguity so that everyone can relate. It's hard to believe that someone so young can come out and sing with such conviction and experience. There must be something profound hiding behind those big beautiful black locks and china doll eyes; whatever it is, she makes us all feel it too.

I asked Drowning Girl to take some time to think about their thoughts of the stage, their relationship and music in general.

What's the difference between "drowning" Hill/Dave and downtime Hill/Dave?

HILL: I don't think we're THAT different. There are elements of our "downtime" incarnations that are carried with us on stage. In my moments of downtime, I could go through extremes of being extremely social and hyper to remaining static, simply living life as an observer. My absurd humor also isn't really revealed to the public very often while I'm on stage.

DAVID: Totally different I think. I save up all my energy for stage. Maybe it's adrenaline too. Off stage, I'm kinda sleepy, and I like watching TV shows. I don't go drinking anymore if I'm not playing that night. But if I am relaxed, say in an enormous lazy boy with a huge Duvee, then I can make some jokes, or do some accents or something.

Do you leave yourself room for experimentation on stage?

HILL: It varies. For the most part when we're on stage, in terms of the delivery of our performance, we're just putting it all out there so we never really know how we'll react or what we'll be doing. On the other hand, our set is usually rehearsed a certain way and we generally don't deviate musically from that very often.

DAVID: We have one tune that I leave a little uneasy called "In Retrospect (you were the asshole)", There's some main slide guitar bits I'll always play, and a solo section, but I'll try to leave the end verse open, to experiment with those chords, and let the magic happen. It's the end of the set anyway, so the audience is beaten and battered to death with tight focused rock music, so a little looseness helps to ease them out of the show.

What musicians do you admire most?

HILL: So many musicians to admire. I go through phases of admiration but the artists that have stuck with me include Blondie, The Pixies, Sloan, Radiohead, Hawksley Workman, PJ Harvey, George Gershwin, Sheryl Crow and Janis Joplin (to name a few).

DAVID: I grew up with Radiohead and for a long time tried my best to be Johnny Greenwood. Graham Coxon from Blur was my other big influence at the time guitar playing became most important to me Andy Summers from

the Police, Jimmy Page from Led Zeppelin for both his Rhythm and Lead stuff, Bob Dylan for his lyrics and nonchalance singing, The Divine Comedy for their brilliant lyrics and orchestral craft. Wilco for being Radiohead's american/country counterpart really experimenting with sounds and pushing music so far.

If you weren't musicians, what would you be doing?

HILL: I'd be six feet under. Sorry...that was dramatic.

DAVID: Computer Programmer. I was the first kid on the block with an IBM 286.

What scares you most? Anything.

HILL: Judgment and abandonment. People and politics. S.A.R.S.

DAVID: People who treat this planet like it's their own personal resource and simultaneously toilet bowl. Toxins, disease and super bugs that we brought upon ourselves. Political unrest, and unevenly distributed wealth.

Have you ever had anything unexpected happen on stage? If so, how did you deal with it?

HILL: Oh god, yes! I guess the most prominent occurrence is having your gear fail on you for no good reason. We've had amps and pedals failing, guitars and drum kits breaking. Sometimes I move around so much that I get light headed and am on the verge of tripping over myself or falling over. THAT'S embarrassing. How do I cope? Wing it! Keep doing your thing and figure it out once the song is over. The mishaps, ninety-seven percent of the time, are fixable.

DAVID: I did a jumpkick once, and had my eyes closed, when I opened them again, I was on my ass.

HILL: This girl also came on stage in a province in the Prairie's once and ripped David's shirt off. It was awesome.

What have you learned from sharing the stage with each other? When does it make the performance more difficult/easier?

HILL: I've learned so much from David. He's not only an amazing musician but a unique character. I've been in many bands before but have never experienced quite a connection on and off stage as I have with this project. We respect each other highly and I think that heightens the chemistry and energy we have on stage. If anything, I've learned the importance of chemistry and the impact of having a high energy live show. It makes things more spontaneous and interesting. Naturally, this would make performing much easier. It becomes second nature in a way.

DAVID: Hill is a constant pro well beyond her years on this earth. She is the standard by which I judge everyone else I play with. There is a level of care and dedication to her art/craft that has taught me a lot, and made me more of a professional. We know when we hit the stage,

there's a job to be done, that can't go awry...She takes pride in that, and so do I.

Do you ALWAYS get along?

HILL: Surprisingly yes (knock on freakin' wood). Sure, we don't agree on everything but that doesn't mean these events have caused us not to get along. We have always handled these situations diplomatically and with open minds.

DAVID: So far so good.

What 3 words would best describe you?

HILL: Loyal, Neurotic, Workaholic

DAVID: Reliable, Absent Minded, Focused

Uncensored Interview.com
Drowning Girl in NYC
March 24, 2007 @ Adrian's Apartment

Is now Live ... it's a live interview webcast with a set of very different questions than that of a conventional interview. It's a chance for fans to get up close and personal with Drowning Girl or other fav indie band. Questions range from topics of Sex, politics, religion, Songwriting, the state of the music industry, and general craziness ... tune in for the month of May, and go deep with Drowning Girl ... short clips available

www.uncensoredinterview.com

Drowning Girl Won!!!! The nationals for the 2007 Canadian Radio Star National Songwriting Competition for their song "Dead or Alive".

Drowning Girl won the Regional a couple of weeks ago and are now representing Toronto's Mix 99.9 as the winning finalists in the nationals with their hit song "Dead or Alive". Thanks to all that Voted ... We appreciate your support in making Drowning Girl the big winners!

HiLL Won!!! ... 1st place, Regionals "Dead or Alive"
Mix 99.9 Canadian Radio Star Contest

HiLL came in 1st in the Regionals for the Mix 99.9 Canadian Radio Star Contest ... HiLL will now represent Mix 99.9 in the Nationals during CMW '07 ... Held in Toronto from Mar 8 - 10 ... The National winner will be announced at the Songwriters circle on March 10 where HiLL will perform an acoustic version of the winning track "Dead or Alive" ... Wish us Luck!

Top 5 Finalist ... "Dead or Alive"
Mix 99.9 Canadian Radio Star Contest

HiLL's song "Dead or Alive" made it to the final five in the Mix 99.9 Canadian Radio Star Contest

It's up to you to help make them winners!

Help us out by voting as many times a day as you can ... Just copy and paste this into your browser ... And start voting:

http://www.999mixfm.com/poll/canadian_radio_star07

Voting ends Wed.Jan.31/07 at 23:59 Eastern Time (US & Canada)

International Songwriting Competition (ISC)

HiLL had 4 tracks advance to the 2nd round of judging for this amazing songwriting contest ... and we've just been informed that "Dead or Alive" has advanced to the semi-finals in the Teen category

"Lifestyle"

The Star Phoenix

Thursday November 23, 2006

By Cam Fuller

HiLL (Saturday at Lydia's) likes Saskatoon because it's manager Bonnie Fedrau got her start in Saskatoon as a DJ after leaving her hometown of Watrous. HiLL was approached by The Northern Pikes to record the Pikes' hit Teenland for an album of Pikes tunes covered by female Canadians. Jay Semko was at the Recording in Toronto this past spring. HiLL's full-length debut is "Bang!" "A dark, sexy, intuitive, dig-deep rock record from the heart and mind of singer-songwriter-guitarist, Hill Kourkoutis."

HiLL's Climb Continues

The Weal - The Scene, Arts & Entertainment for the SAIT Community

by Jessica Jones, Weal Writer

October 20, 2006

HiLL, a Toronto-based rock band, is set to take over the Gateway next week with a bang.

Fronted by 18-year-old singer/songwriter Hill Kourkoutis, a film student at Ryerson University, Hill recently released their debut album, "Bang!".

So how does the young Kourkoutis find time to balance school and an up-and-coming music career?

"It comes down to wanting to do something so badly you will do it. I find a way to make both work, and I live to do a bit of everything," she said.

and thought it all Kourkoutis stays modest. "I feel like the band's just growing," she said. "There is never a dull moment. We keep on evolving and are excited for what people will hear."

Despite being a new band, Hill is developing at a rapid pace. They recently won a VideoFACT grant from Much Music for independent artists to produce a video.

Hill recently finished filming their first video for the single "Caught by the rope", a song about someone with a multiple personality disorder.

"I'm influenced by everything around me whether it's politics, or something done to me on a personal level. It sort of happens unintentionally," said Kourkoutis of songwriting.

"I feel honoured that people can take away something from it."

With a long time musical interest, Kourkoutis first played in a band at age 12. In addition to guitar, she plays piano, bass, drums, bouzouki and the saxophone.

Her band mates, Kat Lucas on vocals and piano, David Paoli on vocals and lead guitar, Andrew Franey on bass, and Mike Langford on drums, all have musical backgrounds.

"There is a collaborative process in this band; each of us comes from an extensive music background which makes for a good sound."

"If you have that dynamic, it is easy to translate what you put in the song," she said. HiLL hits the Gateway on Oct. 20.

"It's definitely going to be a high-energy performance, and very spontaneous," said Kourkoutis. "We're very excited to come to Calgary for the first time."

Hill's Tandem item
www.corrieretandem.com
by Kerry Doole
9/22/06

There may be a surplus of teenage female rockers out there, but Toronto's HILL KOURKOUTIS deserves to be paid attention. The 18 year old's band, HILL, has just released a full-length debut, Bang! (PuckEye Records), and it rocks righteously. Hill wrote or co-wrote all the tunes, some with fellow femme rockers SIMON WILCOX and GRAPH NOBEL, and is one to watch

"Club Scene"
The London Free Press
August 24, 2006

Lori Mastronardi - Anna Coutts - Brian Wong - HiLL ... opening for Hunter Valentine @ Aeolian Hall

'Hill; a Toronto five-piece, will also take the stage and will promote their debut full-length album, Bang! Written by 18-year-old frontwoman Hill Kourkoutis, the 10-track disc delivers raw rock in its finest, catchiest form. Joining Kourkoutis will be David Paoli on guitar, Kat Lucas on keys and organ, Andrew Franey on bass and Mike Langford on drums.

Saturday's all-ages show stars at 8p.m. Tickets are \$8.

THE INDIE HIGH SCHOOL STAR
Underrated Magazine, NYC, NY
THE INDIE HIGH SCHOOL STAR
BY MATTHEW ZEIDMAN

It's not surprising to find Hill Kourkoutis, 17, appearing on a show about a fictional underground radio station that promotes both struggling and well-known alternative talent on-air, Radio Free Roscoe.

The challenge of putting the proverbial nose to the grindstone and finding a fan base for one's music is not a task unfamiliar to her. Off set, the high school senior fronts the Toronto-based band that shares her first name, and is better spoken than her normally silent television counterpart, though not any less zealous. "Music's my passion, so if I could [succeed in] pursuing a career in it, then that would be my [chosen] path," says Kourkoutis. "But no matter what, I know I'll always be taking part in that world, so whether I'm a suit or just a penniless musician on the side of the street, I'll be happy knowing that I'll always be [able to] pursue [music]."

Released in August of last year, 'Blue' is a pure rock offering, sometimes putting forth a playful, Refreshments-style bifidity of pop culture and relevance ("The Sombrero Song"). Other times it displays a cool, unforced style that betrays a powerful confidence in the voice behind the lyrics ("Bend Over Backwards"). Kourkoutis doesn't perform alone when she goes out live, however, and does vocals, guitar and bass, alongside the other half of Hill, Graydon James, who helps out on the vocals, while playing drums.

While Kourkoutis mainly performs with instruments of the stringed variety while touring, she's no phony when she breaks out the drums while filming her television series. "I actually just started playing drums a few years ago," Kourkoutis modestly explains. "They're not my primary instrument, but I've been working on them for the past year-and-a-half, trying to strengthen my skills and perfect my performance."

Kourkoutis lists Tracy Bonham, The Breeders, The Go-Go's, Fleetwood Mac, Ella Fitzgerald, Jefferson Airplane and The Ramones as her influences. But she's careful not to let her music copycat any of her idols. "Each song has characteristics that have been influenced by several other artists," Kourkoutis said. "Right now, I'm experimenting and trying to find my own sound. I'm hoping to turn those influences around and make 'em 'Hill.'"

FYI: RADIO FREE ROSCOE

Radio Free Roscoe is no simple "kids' show," and its nature, yet subtle themes, original music and expert cinematography make it a rare gem. The dramedy airs on the teen cable network, The N, and is about the lives of four DJs, as they learn about love, friendship, anti-conformity and succeeding in the indie scene. Those interested in the indie aspect won't be disappointed; there are guest shots and background music by acts such as the Pettit Project and the Trews. Although the show's second and final season on The N is nearing its end, Jacqueline Nuwame, Decode Entertainment's director of communications, assures fans that this is not necessarily the end of the series, and that new episodes may be funded by an unnamed broadcaster. For those wanting a brief taste of what Radio Free Roscoe has to offer, the show's soundtrack, Music From Radio Free Roscoe, Volume 1, is available on Outside Music Canada and a partial DVD of the first season is now for sale.

Underrated Magazine
June 2005 Volume 2/Issue 6
pg. 21

Toronto.com
eye Weekly, Toronto, On
Event Profile

Pop divas currently ruling the airwaves better watch out. A young Canadian is beginning to create quite a buzz in the music industry and she's sure to give the likes of Ashlee Simpson and Avril Lavigne a run for their money. Her name is Hillary Kourkoutis, and she's ready to take the world by storm with her debut EP, Blue.

Hill - as she's known to her friends and the name she now uses for her band - first started playing guitar, singing, and writing songs at a very young age. Her insatiable appetite for music led Kourkoutis to start up her own band, the Sirens, while she was still in Grade 8. Over the years, the band evolved into Hill, as it is now, and have since wowed audiences at local music hotspots Holy Joe's, Reverb, and the renowned North By Northeast festival.

Even though Hill is only 16 years old, the young singer-songwriter has a wealth of diverse talents that is sure to make her a superstar. In addition to the guitar, Hill can also play piano, bass, drums, sax, and bouzouki. This fall, she can also be seen on the small screen, playing drummer Megan on popular teen show, Radio Free Roscoe.

From punk to pop rock to folk, Hill has it all on her breakout album. Be the first to check it out at the Blue CD Release Party on Tuesday, August 24, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Drake Hotel.