

Language Arts show the art of melding influences

Written by Richard Amery

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Vancouver quartet Language Arts will show they are not only about the art of language, but the art of



melding a whole mess of influences during their debut Lethbridge performance at the Slice, Nov. 12.

“All four of us have different influences which are strengths when we put them all together,” said Kristen Cudmore, Language Arts’ singer and guitarist who began playing classical guitar when she was 12.

“I heard my uncle playing guitar, a younger uncle who is more like a cousin. So my goal was to play better than him. That’s the 12 year-old mentality. So my mom got me into classical guitar lessons,” continued the Nova Scotia born Cudmore who met band mate drummer/arranger Gregor Phillips, Hilary Grist and keyboardist Aaron McKinney who fill out the band’s sound. “We’ll have as many as six people in the band. In Lethbridge there will be four of us. There’s definitely crossover. Part of it is influenced by everyday events. Lyrically I’ll write about everything from people in high school and wondering what they’re doing now to unicorns,” she said.

“People call it stream of consciousness writing,” Cudmore continued adding she had terrible stage fright and seldom performed in public until moving to Vancouver, other than classical guitar recitals.

“I was really shy so I never played in front of people. In classical music the pressure is on to not make a mistake, so I’m learning how to play jazz where it’s all about the mistakes and improvising on them,” she said adding Language Arts’ music has changed over the course of three recordings. The first one had a lot of funk and rap on it.

“It’s not what we’re doing now,” she said.

“I just want to get better trying different styles and doing what I do best,” she said.

She also has a pretty cool day job, working with Sarah McLachlan’s music outreach program, during which she teaches children to play guitar, who could not otherwise afford lessons.

“The program is all about becoming a better musician, and touring does that, so when I’m on tour, they get a sub,” she said.

“I find that people either really like what we’re doing or they really don’t. There’s not a lot of grey area,” she said.

— *By Richard Amery, L.A. Beat editor*