

ARTS

Republic gets real on sophomore album

Reflections of town's growth on *Population*

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

For members of home-bred band The Most Serene Republic, honesty isn't just the best policy, it's the only policy — particularly when it comes to their music.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in their sophomore studio album *Population*, released across North America Tuesday.

With its unique indie rock sound and poetic lyrics, *Population* isn't an album of rainbows and butterflies, but of "seeking out the truth," said vocalist and Milton resident Adrian Jewett, 22.

Inspired by what the group refers to as "the sprawling suburbs of... Milton," *Population* isn't about sugar-coated love songs. That's where the honesty comes in.

"(The goal was) to be as honest to ourselves as we could and cram as much virtue of each of us onto the album," said Jewett, who writes many of the band's songs with keyboardist Ryan Lensen, who moved away from Milton about a month ago.

Added guitarist and local resident Nick Greaves, 22: "*Population* is about things happening in the world."

He added much of the album is about reflecting on the negative aspects of life.

"It had to do with coming back and forth to Milton and seeing the town grow at an incredible rate it's not ready for," he told the *Champion*.

Both Greaves and Jewett spoke about a certain sadness when it comes to Milton's growth; having grown up here, it's no longer the town they remember.

"Milton was grand at one point in my life," said Jewett, a graduate of Bishop Reding. "Now it's become a mass family mess."

Local musical talent is more than represented on the new album, with guest vocalists Stephen Kabakos (a.k.a. Elvis Presley) and Men II Boys both making appearances.

Milton even makes its way onto the album cover and lyric booklet, which contains photos of the town's newer areas, taken by Greaves.

After a whirlwind two years of touring across Europe and North America with such bands as Broken

Social Scene and The Strokes, band members took the past year to write and record the new album, a follow-up to *Underwater Cinematographer* and their tour-only EP, *Phages*.

But their time in one spot is once again nearing an end as they prepare for a fall cross-Canada headlining tour, sponsored by Exclaim! magazine and Toyota Yaris.

The group has undergone some major changes over the past year. Its bassist and drummer both quit, resulting in the joining of two replacements plus an additional guitarist.

The group now consists of Jewett, Greaves and Lensen, as well as vocalist/guitarist Emma Ditchburn and newcomers Sean Woolven (guitar), Simon Lukasewich (bass) and drummer Tony Nesbitt-Larking.

The two former members simply wanted to pur-

sue a different life, Greaves explained.

"It's a hard life — living out of a suitcase for two years," he admitted.

The fact the band now consists of seven members means there's an even fuller sound than before, Greaves said.

A little more than two years after signing with label Arts and Crafts, Greaves said he still can't believe how far the band has gotten in such a short period of time.

It was, he said, simply a case of being in the right place at the right time.

"We got a break, and we're very grateful for that," he said, adding, "Looking back, everything happened so fast; we didn't realize what was happening."

Members of The Most Serene Republic are proud of the fact they're involved in every step of the album's creation, particularly with Lensen producing it; bands often hire someone else to do all the post production work.

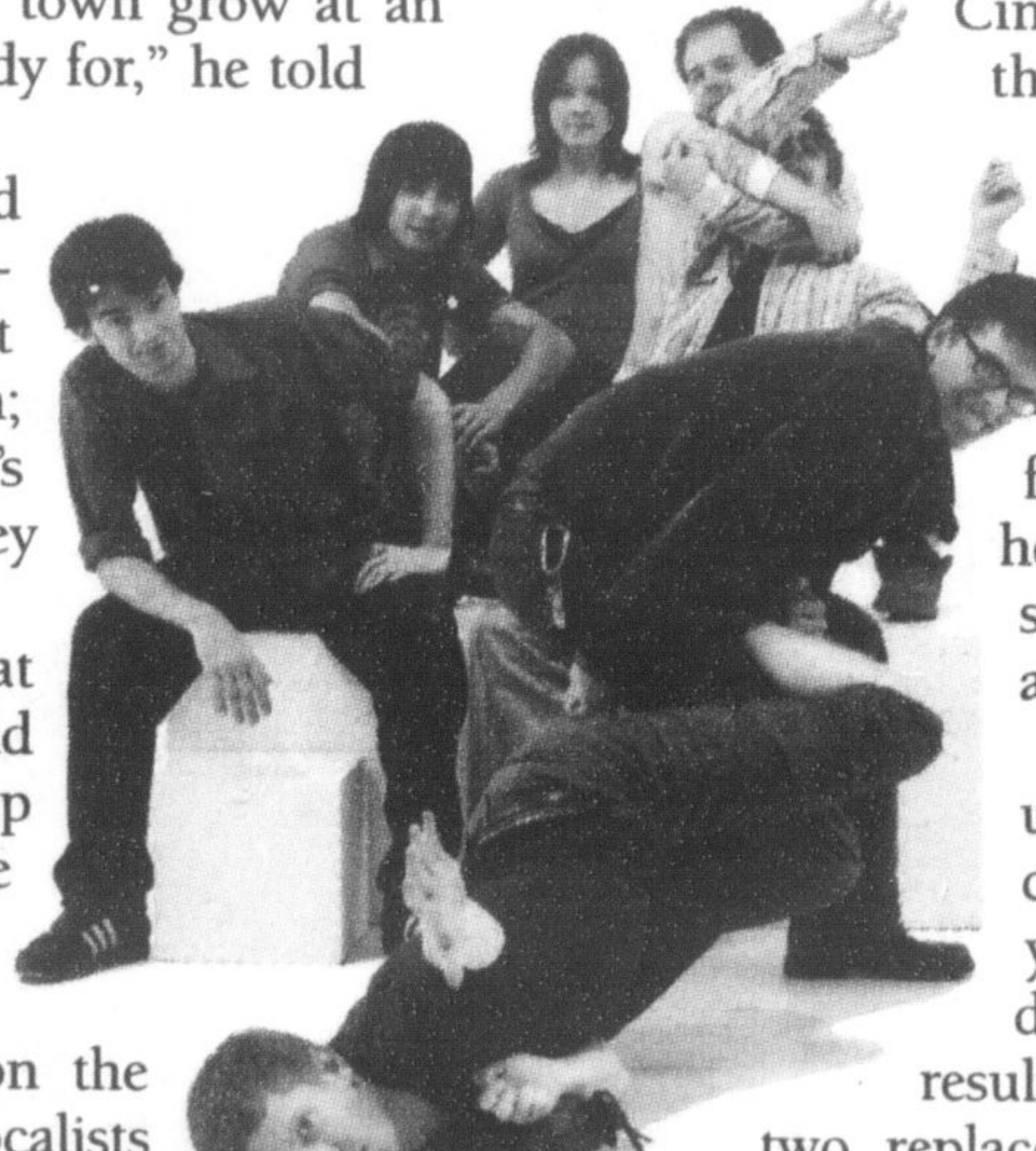
"It really is our own as much as possible," Jewett said.

Though Greaves said he'll probably move to Toronto sooner than later, Milton will continue to be part of him — and the band.

"We'll always be that Milton band. I'm proud of my roots," he said.

The Most Serene Republic will play Toronto's Mod Club Thursday, Oct. 25.

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HANGIN' WITH THE

REPUBLIC: Clockwise from left, Most Serene Republic's Sean Woolven, Simon Lukasewich, Emma Ditchburn, Nick Greaves, Tony Nesbitt-Larking, Ryan Lensen and Adrian Jewett are no doubt excited about the release of *Population*.

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