



PROFILE

# POP HARD

Blogosphere darlings go big time!

**F**or Bad Flirt, standing on the stage of an outdoor Christian-music festival in New Jersey in the dead of winter with a pastor blessing their set was just another day on the job. Such is the norm for the Montreal-based hard-pop band that has made a name for itself playing hundreds of shows all over North America, from a kitchen party in the deep south to the backwoods of Quebec.

Before the present-day power-pop quintet joined forces a few years ago, singer/guitarist Jasmine White-Gluz was a solo act. "I travelled around on a Greyhound bus with my guitar, known only as 'that acoustic girl at the metal shows,'" she recalls. Today, she rocks out with Raf

De La Durantaye (drums), Evan Dubinsky (keyboards and vocals), Laura Lloyd (guitar) and Nick Knowles (bass). The Internet has been good to the band: Besides boosts from the blogosphere, the group acquired a new legion of fans after winning Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen's online Battle of the Bands last spring. This led to gossip blog shout-outs, a Bad Flirt-chosen iTunes playlist, booming Web traffic and increased show attendance. It also created plenty of buzzy anticipation for the group's first label-released album, *Virgin Talk* (Kartel/Universal).

The album features fuzzed-out guitars, hard-rockin' exuberance and danceable, indie-style hooks that are reminiscent of the loud, girl-fronted groups of the '80s and '90s but with a splash of pure pop. The themes on *Virgin Talk* may explore love and loss, but they're never maudlin. "We're a pop band!" says White-Gluz, laughing. "So our sound is a mix of melancholy but with a touch of sweetness." White-Gluz is used to such contradictions. "Just because I wear designer jeans and heels, people think I can't be in a band and sleep in a van," she says. "You don't have to dress punk to rock hard—you can wear stilettos and still do the work!" **BRIONY SMITH**



music

● With each successive album, Toronto's **Constantines** seem to expand their reach and become less categorizable and more exciting. *Kensington Heights* (Arts & Crafts/EMI) is heavy, psychedelic, ominous, moody and intense, interspersing hair-tossing guitar riffs with dramatic empty spaces and thoughtful lyrics. Springsteen, Young and Replacements influences pop up from time to time, but no one could say that the prodigiously talented Constantines aren't blazing their own trail. ● **Elephant Shell** (Mean Beard Records/Universal Music Canada) is the long-anticipated first full-length album from **Tokyo Police Club**, a quartet from Newmarket, Ont., that has achieved household-word status in the indie-rock world with a couple of EPs and a zillion energetic performances. The album's songs are characteristically short, sharp and stuffed with hooks, as if the band members bounced a Strokes sensibility against a wall of Britpop before catching it in their crafty and confident little hands. ● Brooklyn's **Jealous Girlfriends** add surprisingly fitting touches of synth and sax to a richly melodic guitar-rock base on their self-titled new album (Good Fences/Last Gang Records). They've taken full advantage of all the sonic tools available to them—including two contrasting vocalists, breathy soprano Holly Miranda and gruffer Josh Abbott—to bring the diverse elements together. **MARY DICKIE**

RICHMOND LAM (BAD FLIRT); BEATRIZ JUAREZ (CD COVERS)