

## **Enter The Haggis – Short Biography**

Toronto roots rock band, Enter The Haggis, is at the heart of a true grassroots success story, and never has this been more evident than with the group's latest release, *Whitelake*. Recorded at a rustic cottage surrounded by Canada's picturesque landscape, and funded entirely through the generous contributions of loyal fans, *Whitelake* occupies a musical space that lies somewhere between the fiercely creative and contemporary soundscapes of Radiohead, and the heartfelt story telling and infectious grooves of The Band.

Five albums and a decade on the road have seen Enter The Haggis evolve from wildly popular local band to established international touring act. Their formula for success has been a simple one: record great music, back it up with inspired live performances, and tour constantly. It's this uncompromising commitment to their music and fans that has seen the band garner top ten charting positions on Billboard, Amazon, and iTunes; major television appearances such as A&E's *Breakfast with the Arts* and *Live with Regis and Kelly*; and their very own PBS special.

Eclectic. Electric. Roots Rock Reinvented.

[www.EnterTheHaggis.com](http://www.EnterTheHaggis.com)

## **Enter The Haggis – Long Form Bio**

Brian Buchanan almost died on White Lake. The singer-fiddler-keyboardist for Enter The Haggis went out into the middle of the lake to finish up some lyrics during the recording of the band's sixth studio album, the aptly named *Whitelake*, and tipped the canoe half a kilometer from shore. The ice had melted only a week before, and he was fully clothed and without a life jacket. Remarkably, he managed to swim the canoe to the far side of the lake but faced the added challenge of a three-kilometer walk, shivering through the dark woods on the way back to the band's cottage / recording studio. "If I'd died, there's no doubt it would have been called a suicide," laughs Brian, tentatively. "I had just finished recording the vocals for a song called "The Flood", which talks about life being out of control and water rising up around you." Thankfully, the 29-year-old from Guelph, Ontario survived to tell the tale as the band releases its anticipated new album, the follow-up to 2008's *Gutter Anthems*, which hit #2 on the iTunes World Music charts.

*Whitelake* is more heartfelt and lyrically honest than anything the band has done to date. The first track, "Headlights 1&2", reflects on the possibility that each album could be the last: "*It's all or nothing, beginning or end...*" Some stories behind the songs take on a more serious tone: "Devil's Son" is about Bernie Madoff's son, Mark, who committed suicide; "The Whistleblower" is about an ex-child soldier returning home.

Musically, the band has brought more instruments to the table this time around. Adding flavors of mandolin, accordion, trumpet, and ukulele to the usual compliment of fiddle, bagpipes, harmonica, and a roots-rock rhythm section, results in an album which is timeless and familiar while being undeniably contemporary. With the current rise in popularity of Americana and roots music, *Whitelake* will appeal to music fans whether they prefer Led Zeppelin or The Decemberists.

After parting ways with their New York City-based record label and management company, the band decided to try to finance the new album through a fan fundraiser. "We couldn't afford to record the way we

wanted to on our own, but we also didn't want to jump into another record deal," says Buchanan. "A fundraiser seemed like a great way to engage our supportive fans and make the album we wanted to make." To their astonishment, \$40,000 came in over just a couple of months. "We offered various packages, everything from a signed pre-sale copy of *Whitelake*, to selling instruments, to getting a matching tattoo with me," explains Buchanan. Patti, a fan from Pennsylvania, bought the tattoo package, so she and Brian will be heading to a parlor the next time the band is in her area. Another offering was the opportunity to play or sing on the album. Two fans drove from New Jersey and Michigan to the makeshift studio, several hours northeast of Toronto, to take part in the recording. "We hadn't met Joe or Kelly before, so it was a bit weird having two strangers drive up from the U.S. to our cottage in the woods," says Craig Downie. "It was great, though – Joe turned out to be an accomplished trumpet player and Kelly is a really nice singer. Both added to the songs that they performed on, and we enjoyed hanging out and getting to know them, sharing some beers, and watching hockey while we weren't recording."

The idea of engaging fans isn't a new concept for Enter The Haggis, which is perhaps the reason that the *Whitelake* fundraiser was so successful. The band has been performing through the U.S., Canada, and Europe for a decade, and getting to know people has always been a part of being on the road. "We always make ourselves available to the folks who come out to support us," says Mark Abraham, the band's bass player. "We'll stick around after a show until everyone who'd like to say hello to us has had a chance to." It's the kind of attitude that's turned fans into friends and has made the band feel at home wherever they go, even if they're a thousand miles from Toronto. The next project on the band's radar is a trip to Ireland in April 2012, whereby fans are invited to come along, travel the country in buses, do some sightseeing, and attend Enter The Haggis' shows. Information about the Ireland trip and *Whitelake* can be found on the band's website, [www.enterthehaggis.com](http://www.enterthehaggis.com).