

City and Colour

The voice is unmistakable – immediately identifiable by those that know it and intensely intriguing to those that don't. It belongs to Dallas Green, perhaps better known as the man who writes, records, and performs under the moniker of City and Colour.

Already renowned across Canada thanks to the success of his previous two full length albums – 2005's *Sometimes* and 2008's *Bring Me Your Love* – and a live CD/DVD combo released between the two, Green is set to propel his profile to a new plateau with the June 2011 release of his third album, *Little Hell*.

The effort shares its title with one of its tracks – a song that explores the little heavens and little hells that comprise a relationship and, as Green explains, “the things you do to get through them both.” It's a theme explored throughout the album – the balance of both the blissful and harrowing experiences that come with relationships and life as a whole. Says Green: “You have to go through those little hells to get to the really great parts of love and life.”

The collection was recorded at Catherine North Studios in Hamilton, Ontario – a converted church with wide-open architecture – with producer Alex Newport (Death Cab For Cutie, At The Drive-In) at the helm. The return to the studio where *BMYL* was documented was in-part due to the honest aural atmosphere it imparted on these 11 songs (not a single isolation booth was employed, but rather entirely tracked in the live room), but also in-part as a tribute to late studio owner, *BMYL* co-producer/engineer, and dear friend Dan Achen, who passed away suddenly in early 2010.

Adding to *Little Hell*'s signature sound is the fact that the release was recorded and mixed on tape – an at-first foreign and subsequently frustrating endeavor for Green, who struggled to stick with the decision. The songs are all the more special because of it, though, capturing the very essence of Green as a writer and performer in the purest sense. “It's just a beautiful place to make music,” says Green, looking back on the effort's birthplace, “and Alex really brought out the best in these songs. We were very much in-tune throughout the process.”

Aiding in the album's assembly are some of Green's frequent collaborators, most prominently including his close friend and creative counterpart Daniel Romano, whom Green cites as invaluable to his creativity. City and Colour's live rhythm section, Dylan Green on drums and Scott Remila on bass and beautifully harmonized backing vocals, also took part in musical masonry.

Tracks like opener “We Found Each Other In The Dark” or the gorgeously sung ballad “Northern Wind” find Green capturing some of sweet, succulent slivers of life and love, his

stirring vocals and eloquent lyrics heightening their appeal.

Conversely, songs like “O’ Sister,” with its haunting but moving melody, or the album’s first single, “Fragile Bird,” find Green relaying more arduous experiences. The former examines the struggles faced by the singer’s own sister through some tumultuous times while the latter was inspired by his wife’s frequent night terrors. Says the singer about his subjects: “I view writing as a very cathartic experience. It’s my way of coping with or processing things happening, whether they’re positive or not, and I think people can often identify with how they’re interpreted.”

Though *Little Hell*’s hooky, heartfelt numbers boast familiarity for City and Colour fans, the album also delves deeper into the folk, blues, and even soul influences that surfaced on its predecessor thanks to the gorgeously-executed instrumentation and honest essence of Green’s voice, though the two aren’t mutually exclusive: “With this record,” explains Green, “I tried to use every facet of my voice – low, high, quiet, and loud – so it’s almost like another instrument.”

When he’s not foiling the intense and aggressive post-hardcore sounds of Alexisonfire with his dreamy, dulcet vocals, Green can be found touring as City and Colour, selling out thousand-seat venues across his native North America and respectably-sized European shows weeks in advance, including an April 2011 performance at the UK’s treasured Royal Albert Hall which sold out in mere hours.

Considering his already impressive album sales, his latest album’s potential impact is enormous. Sophomore Platinum-seller *BMYL* debuted at #2 on the Top 200 Soundscan chart (Canada), #5 on Billboard’s Alternative New Artist chart, # 11 on its Heatseekers chart, never losing momentum through to the present. Though such things aren’t what drives the artist to continue refining his craft.

“I’m just always aiming to become a better player and better songwriter, and this is the culmination of that at this point in time,” says the man with the heavenly voice about *Little Hell*. “I’m very proud of it, and that’s what’s most important to me.”