

# Altar Boyz' boy-band tribute

**Praise the Lord! Altar Boyz, the cheeky off-Broadway musical about a popular boy band spreading the word of God, opened at the Arts Club Theatre's Granville Island Stage last night.**

Complete with choreographed dance routines, impeccably gelled hair and lyrics such as "Girl, You Make Me Want to Wait," the show offers a playful look at the boy band phenomena. While the comedy-musical clearly intends to incite chuckles, it steadfastly avoids flat-out religious ridicule.

"If you really go through the script...I think you would be very hard pressed to find any moment in this show where the boys are being disrespectful," said Jeremy Crittenden, who plays Matthew, the leader of the Altar Boyz pack. "It's never mean-spirited. A lot of people have said that we're spreading the word."

Though Crittenden isn't religious himself, he had no problem connecting with the overall theme of the production.

"Religious stuff aside, the boys are really out there to do good in the world," he said. "It's really easy to get behind a message like that."

Crittenden also admitted he was once a boy band aficionado back in the day.



- PHOTO SUBMITTED

**THE ALTAR BOYZ** are performing at the Arts Club Theatre's Granville Island Stage until Aug. 1.

"I was a total 'N Sync fan," he said. "I like it, as much as they're super-duper cheesy."

What's more, he believes everyone has a secret soft spot for the Backstreet Boys and New Kids on the Blocks of the earth.

"We have this fondness and nostalgia for them," he said. "The boy bands are all physically appealing. Musically, the boy bands really did some cool work. They're fun tunes. They're catchy. Those

are all of the things people are looking for in entertainment."

But even if 98 Degrees never was your cup of tea, Crittenden still invites you to check out the show and its over-the-top corniness with an open mind:

"Come in, sit down, have fun, and hopefully laugh your ass off."

Altar Boyz runs on Granville Island until Aug. 1. Tickets are available online at [www.artsclub.com](http://www.artsclub.com).

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE, 24 HOURS

# Byrnes still burns with creativity

Vancouver music icon Jim Byrnes isn't going to have much time to lie on the beach this summer.

Between writing his memoirs, releasing a new CD, hosting his own radio show, and auditioning for the odd acting gig, Byrnes is one busy guy.

But he wouldn't have it any other way.

"There's so much to do and I have so many interests," he said. "I've been really, really lucky that way."

Indeed, the Juno-winning musician, who's also won a Leo for his acting work in TV's *Highlander*, has an equal passion for

all his vocations.

"It's like asking me which one of my children I love the most," he said when asked what he preferred, acting or music.

This summer he'll be adding a few new items to his resume: Writer and professional radio host.

As of July 4, Byrnes can be heard weekly on the new roots music station Shore 104.1. His show, *Slipping into Darkness*, will air every Saturday night and will feature blues, jazz, and rockabilly tunes.

He'll also be promoting a new album over the next few months. His new



CD, *My Walking Stick*, comes out this week and he'll mark the occasion with a release party at Richard's on Richards tonight.

"After 40 years of doing this professionally, I think I'm really finding my own voice," he said of the new

album.

And then there's that memoir he's got to pen that will probably be released at the beginning of next year.

"It's fun to look back," he said. "It's not going to be a tell-all. I just want it to be an overview of the things I've experienced."

Considering how much the busy multitasker has accomplished in his career thus far, it'll probably be one heck of a story.

Byrnes' show at Richard's on Richards starts at 9 p.m. Tickets are available at the door.

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE, 24 HOURS

# Bringing Taiwan to the big screen

Not all university students spend their every moment swilling beer and throwing toga parties.

UBC's Literature Etc. club (UBCLE) is a case in point; the non-profit student organization is responsible for the creation and production of the Taiwanese Film Festival, celebrating its

third birthday at the Vancouver International Film Centre this weekend.

"We're a group of students doing this in our spare time," said Gina Chang, the festival's vice-director. "We are a very tight planning team."

One of the six original founding members,

Chang has watched in amazement as the festival has grown from its humble origins at UBC.

"It's really amazing," she said, adding she's optimistic about the festival's future. "I'm sure we'll continue to grow."

The Taiwanese Film Festival kicks off with an opening reception tonight at 5 p.m. and

runs until Sunday. The six films screening this year, all of which have English subtitles, are *Winds of September*, *God Man Dog*, *What on Earth Have I Done Wrong?!*, *Drifting Flowers*, *Artemisia*, and *1895*.



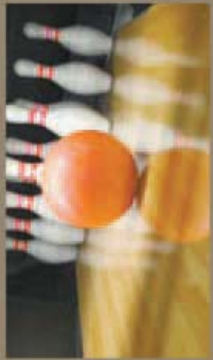
For a film schedule and tickets, visit [www.twff.ca](http://www.twff.ca).

- KRISTEN MCKENZIE, 24 HOURS

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