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**INSIDE:
REVIEWS,
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CONVERSATION**

THE SECRET HANDSHAKE

**COOL KIDS
ONLY.**

By Jordana Borensztajn
When Luis Dubuc cites Steve Urkel and Laura Winslow from *Family Matters* as inspiration for some of the tracks on The Secret Handshake's newest delivery, it's a pretty good indication that fans will be in for quite a ride.

Dubuc, the mastermind behind the one-man electro pop group says he has largely drawn on the '90s as inspiration for the band's newest delivery, *My Name Up In Lights*. Exploring love and schoolboy issues in a cheeky, innocent and unsuspecting manner, Dubuc takes *The Aquarian* behind the scenes and discusses the making of his new record, which reached number 17 on the *Billboard*/Heatseekers chart. **I believe you think your first record was a bit of a mess, right?**

Yeah, totally. When you first make a record, it's hard to believe that there are songs that might not fit. You just want to put them all on there, for some reason. I think it's a good record, and I'm proud of it but it's definitely a little bit of a mess. The new one is a lot more one-directional.

And what sort of direction is that?

I would say more upbeat. It's way more upbeat, way more straightforward. It's still electronic at times but it's not electronic to be electronic, it's more like, if it calls for it, you know.

You draw a lot on the '90s—TV shows and movies.

Why did you decide to do that?

It's just what I was into when I was growing up. When I moved to

Canada from Venezuela, Spanish was my first language. I couldn't speak English and I learned to speak English from watching television. I grew up watching Bob Barker on TV and my mom said one of the first things I ever said in English was 'A new car.' That was a really good part of my life, and I felt like it would be something that a lot of people maybe could relate to, especially a lot of my fans.

Did you get 'a new car' from *Night Rider*?

Bob Barker says 'A new car.' But I definitely loved *Night Rider*.

What other TV shows have inspired you?

I would say *Family Matters* and all the '80s Eddie Murphy movies, like *Trading Places* and *Coming To America*. A lot of music in these movies, the music from *Beverly Hills Cop*, and all the background music, as well as the music from the original *Transformers* record—all of that totally influenced my record.

You've got a lot of

schoolboy themes and themes about love. It's a very happy-go-lucky kind of record. Are you a happy-go-lucky guy?

I think I am. I feel like the last record maybe I wasn't. And I got engaged and I have a fiancé and we're getting married soon, and all that kind of played into the theme of the record.

I read that you don't believe on drawing on hardship or pain to make music. It's much more of a positive thing for you?

Yeah, definitely. I feel like music should be an escape for people—I just wanted to make music for people to feel positive and have a great time. My record is more of a driving record for a sunny day.

So you recorded and produced this one all on your own?

Yep, I did it at home.

Why did you choose to do it that way?

When it came to time to do the last record, I didn't

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PHOTOS BY BEN FINK SHAPIRO



THE SECRET HANDSHAKE

MUSIC FOR A SUNNY DAY



MY NAME UP IN LIGHTS IS AVAILABLE NOW. CATCH THE SECRET HANDSHAKE AT THE SCHOOL OF ROCK IN S. HACKENSACK, NJ, ON MAY 20 AND AT HANGAR 84 IN VINELAND, NJ, ON MAY 21. FOR MORE INFO, VISIT THESECRETHANDSHAKE.NET.