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# The Phoenix Foundation

Wellington band The Phoenix Foundation are back with their fourth album *Buffalo*. Before heading off on a nationwide tour, which includes a gig in Queenstown tonight, frontman Samuel Flynn Scott talked to **Jule Scherer** about awkward feelings, movie scores and how the band connects with its listeners.



**Music masters:** The Phoenix Foundation (from left) Conrad Wedde, Samuel Flynn Scott, Luke Buda, Tim Hansen, Richie Singleton and Will Ricketts.

IT'S almost three years since Wellington band The Phoenix Foundation released their acclaimed third album *Happy Ending*. But being the creative bunch of people that they are, the six band members used the time to release at least one solo album each and composed two movie soundtracks, most recently for Taika Waititi's hit comedy *Boy*. The band were formed in 1997 by secondary school students Samuel Flynn Scott (guitar, vocals), Luke Buda (guitar, vocals, keyboards) and Conrad Wedde (guitar, keyboards). They were joined by Richie Singleton (drums) and Will Ricketts (percussion) and Warner Emery (bass). Emery has left the band recently to focus on his solo projects and was replaced by Tom Callwood. Now they have released their fourth studio album *Buffalo*. "I think it is a kind of odd-

sounding record in some ways," singer Scott tells NZPA. "It is not this big gestural album but it's got this kind of internalised weirdness. I am quite proud of it, that it is not a particularly commercial

sounding album," he says. After doing rather radio-friendly rock songs like *Bleaching Sun* and *Bright Grey* on the last album, the band felt it was time to move on. "The album is pretty much us being honest to our own creative

desires and angles that we usually go for," he says. They worked on and off for over a year on the new album. "We did a lot of the work ourselves in our own studio. That was a big change for us, not doing

the whole thing in a studio but actually doing a lot of the production ourselves. "That gave us a bit more freedom and took a bit of the pressure off, and we really got to experiment with a bunch of different stuff,

**'It is not this big gestural album but it's got this kind of internalised weirdness. I am quite proud of it, that it is not a particularly commercial sounding album.'**  
 Samuel Flynn Scott

How is a bloke meant to have fun?

**MATE**  
 MARK WILSON



I'M surely not alone in returning from duck shooting with a near-full ammo belt. However, ducks or no ducks it was another great weekend of blokes' bonding over hunting, sport and a few brews, which must be lapped up while it's still not banned or priced out of the reach of ordinary New Zealanders. This has been the fate of many traditional Kiwi pastimes. Duck shooting is one of these last bastions of normality and Kiwi culture battling on in the face of mollycoddling law reforms and PC madness. Duck shooting culture is considered bliss by so many southerners yet barbaric and tarnished with binge drinking by a few to the north of here. Seriously, though, did someone wake up 30 years ago and decide that the world was so bad that they needed to radically rethink how Kiwis lived. Now everyone is either lactose intolerant, on a gluten free diet or spiritually opposed to eating real food. God forbid anyone just eat what would have been considered normal food 50 years ago in case they are genetically predisposed to being obese. (Is that the same as eating too much and not doing any exercise?) A diet of air, water, hummus and soy milk is now seen as the way forward. Our mai mai wouldn't get the heart tick, but we are not queueing up for insulin or stomach staples. We drink and sometimes run amok - does that make us hoodlums or criminals? We better ban alcohol or work towards it over time with gradually tightening rules and restrictions matched with prices increases. There has been talk of tightening gun controls. The licensing process has already been ramped up and costs a lot more than it did when I got my license. From what I can gather, the older generation's yarns at the mai mai and nostalgic recollection of my own youth, things were not that bad - in fact they were better, so why do we need to meddle? We are capable of looking after ourselves and making our own decisions. Punish those who aren't, harshly, not everyone together. In 50 years we won't be drowning in fat or at the bottom of a bottle but under the sheer mountain of rules we have created.



**Songwriter:** Phoenix Foundation frontman Samuel Flynn Scott.

which was great and I think that led to a lot of pretty collaborative songwriting moments and a real team effort for a lot of things," he says.

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