

Wolf Parade's Spencer Krug on his music's viral moment, courtesy of Heated Rivalry

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Wolf Parade's Spencer Krug wrote I'll Believe in Anything in the early 2000s. Now it's a hit thanks to the song's use on Crave's Heated Rivalry.

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Warning: Spoilers below for the first five episodes of the show Heated Rivalry.

Spencer Krug wrote *I'll Believe in Anything* as a solo song in his 20s, before his band Wolf Parade went on to become a centrepiece of Montreal's now-storied 2000s indie-rock scene. The song became a focal point of Wolf Parade's 2005 debut *Apologies to the Queen Mary*, and a staple of the band's live set in the two decades since.

Save for a 2010s hiatus, Wolf Parade and its members, which include co-front man Dan Boeckner and drummer Arlen Thompson, have played to steadily enthusiastic crowds over these past 20 years. Those crowds might get bigger when the band tours through southern Ontario next March. Thanks to the unstoppable force of Jacob Tierney's hockey romance show *Heated Rivalry*, *I'll Believe in Anything* has gone viral.

What began as a recurring motif for the budding relationship between the characters Scott Hunter and Kip Grady explodes into the anthem that soundtracks their cathartic kiss in the show's fifth episode – which shares its name with the song. The song's Spotify streams are up 2,658 per cent since the episode first aired Dec. 19. Some viral posts have declared it Spotify's No. 1 song, though there was no evidence to suggest that prior to this interview's publication. Still, the song is the subject of memes and Reddit-thread dissections the world over.

Crave's Heated Rivalry is hot as h-e-double-hockey-sticks Canadian television

Krug has spent his career coaxing emotion out of endless sounds. He's covered the topography of rock, alongside records exploring solo piano, organ and marimba. Wolf Parade's *Apologies* era is wonderfully shambolic: songs with a deep melodic core that somehow feel like they'll fall apart at any moment.

I'll Believe in Anything is a love song about a couple who keep a relationship going in spite of its pitfalls. It's also an improbably cacophonous hit: It opens with a jarring-but-stunning sequence of notes from a Roland Jupiter 4 synthesizer's arpeggiator set to "random" mode – and much of the recording is overlaid with a copy of the original audio pitched down a tiny fraction of a semi-tone. "It creates this strange warble," Krug says. "Back then, I wanted everything to be dirty, and a little more lo-fi."

Krug is somewhat confused, but certainly happy, about the surge in interest in his music this month. He spoke to The Globe and Mail by phone this week from his home on Vancouver Island.

Hudson Williams, left, and Connor Storrie in a scene from Heated Rivalry.

SABRINA LANTOS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's your relationship with hockey?

Umm. (Pauses, then laughs.) I really love watching hockey in a room full of people who love watching hockey. I find that really infectious. But I don't usually sit down and watch hockey.

How did you learn Heated Rivalry wanted to use your song?

The offer came down through our publisher and label in tandem. This one was easy – for one, the premise of a sexy, gay hockey show sounds fun. And two, Jacob Tierney is someone we're familiar with as a band. I met him before, years ago, when he was first starting up. We talked a little bit then about me doing music for one of his projects.

We had no idea that the song would trend the way it is, or that it would be such, like, a main character in that last episode.

How did you find out how the song was used?

The other night, our friend who is, for lack of a better word, obsessed with the show, came over and said, "You're such a big part of this." She wrote out *Heated Rivalry for Dummies* notes for me, and we watched episode five. And it is a big moment. More instances of this kept happening.

What do you remember about writing the song?

It was 2003, maybe 2004. I was living in one of those mythical, massive lofts that you heard about in the 90s and aughts in Montreal, where you could live for next to nothing. The shower was in the kitchen. I had a bedroom at one end overlooking Saint-Laurent. There was a piano left there by the person who lived there before me.

I wrote it on that piano. I don't remember it taking very long. It was a solo song, under the name *Sunset Rubdown*, at first. Wolf Parade found what the song actually needed and wanted to be.

People are really dissecting the lyrics and drawing connections. There's a line in the show where a character's best friend tells that character's lover, "He deserves sunshine, and so do you." And your lyric goes, "Give me your eyes / I need sunshine." How do you feel about so many people giving your words such a close reading?

To be honest, it's like another person wrote the song, because it was so long ago. I don't really connect with my 25-year-old self any more. We're all reading work that someone else did. I've always had the philosophy that once you record a song and release it into the world, you let it do its thing. It's interesting to watch. I'm not going to try to control anything.

We almost always play it live. I'm curious how this changes the reception of the song. It's all very surprising.

You've seen episode five. Will you watch the rest of the series?

I for sure will. Our kid is in kindergarten, and he's been home for the holidays, so I don't have time to catch up on an entire show. But my wife said she'll gladly rewatch it with me, so I will get caught back up.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

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