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LIKE FATHER; not like son

Waylon Jennings' son Shooter to perform with band Stargunn at 3rd Floor

By JASON BENNYHOFF
The Battalion

While the band Stargunn is biologically linked to country singer Waylon Jennings (lead singer Shooter Jennings is his son), sound-wise it is a different breed. On a Texas tour which stops at the 3rd Floor Cantina in Bryan tonight, the band is determined to make a name for itself.

Johnny Whiteside of *L.A. Weekly* described the band as "dedicated to ... as thoroughly wild a sound as can be achieved" because of their screeching guitars and hard-rock influences, including AC/DC and Motley Crue. The description seems apt, if the band's first release, *The Only Way Up is Down*, is any indication. Though they sound more like a late 80s or early '90s hard-rock-hair band than a 2001 alt-rock ensemble, drummer Alex Lipsitz refuses to be pigeonholed as a throwback.

"A lot of people say [our sound] is old school," Lipsitz said. "But that is where we came from, we do not want to be labeled as retro. We are a rock band."

The band currently is based in Los Angeles, but all five members are from the South, which explains their Southern-rock influences like Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Black Crowes. Though he grew up in Texas, Lipsitz said he has been surprised at the reactions of some Texas crowds to Stargunn's music.

"We just played at Tarleton State, and they were line dancing to our stuff," Lipsitz said. "That was weird ... but everybody has been loving our [music]."

Stargunn's aggressive style and eclectic background have been gathering the notice of crowds and major labels.

Chad Kudelka, Stargunn's booking agent, said Stargunn's album and energetic performances have been making record labels stand up and take notice. With that in mind, Stargunn will be playing the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, or ASCAP, show at the annual South by Southwest music conference to catch the eye of more label executives.

"We are waiting to see what is going to happen at South by Southwest," Kudelka said. "Hopefully, soon after meeting with the labels, we will put on more tours in more states."

While acknowledging the upside of playing South by Southwest, Lipsitz downplayed the pressure of displaying the band's talents to record executives.

"We do not look at it as a showcase," Lipsitz said. "We will play it like



PHOTO COURTESY

any other show. We are confident that [a record deal] will come until then, we are just interested in playing for the people."

Stargunn has not made it to "the big time" in music yet, but it has made it to the big screen. *The Crew*, a film about a group of agents starring Burt Reynolds, featured Stargunn's song "White Lines Ties." "Katwalk," another track by the band, will be featured in the film *Made*, which stars Vince Vaughn and Famke Janssen.

While film exposure may help the band sell records, so far singer Shooter Jennings' relation to country crooner Waylon Jennings has generated the most attention for the band. Stargunn makes a sound like the elder Jennings, but Kudelka said the occasional Jennings' name is helpful in arousing interest in the band.

"Putting in Waylon's name does create interest in a lot of people, especially in Texas," Kudelka said. "Since this is the first Texas tour done as Stargunn, it is helpful."

THE WAY IT PLAYS OUT

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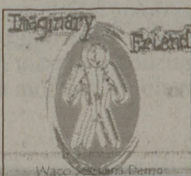


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Costumes worn in movies benefit AIDS auction

NEW YORK (AP) — Catherine Zeta Jones' stunning costume from *The Mask of Zorro*, Harrison Ford's *Indiana Jones* bullwhip and Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* sword are on display at Sotheby's for an auction to benefit African children fighting AIDS.

Several Hollywood celebrities "have donated items they intended to keep forever," said actor Liam Neeson, who started "Movie Action for Children" through the United Nations Children's Fund.

The auction, to be held Tuesday, also offers a personal telephone call from Michael Jackson on the bidder's birthday. Bids also are being accepted online.

Other items include Neeson's light saber from *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*; the red

dress Meryl Streep wore in *The Bridges of Madison County*; and memorabilia from *Titanic*, including a deck chair and a lifejacket.

Proceeds will go directly to UNICEF's efforts to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ivory Coast. Sotheby's is waiving its commissions for the sale.

Blue Man Group says they have not sold out

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The original members of the Blue Man Group say they haven't sold out, despite the TV commercials.

Sure, there are the Intel commercials for the Pentium computer chip and a performance at this year's Grammy Awards.

But Matt Goldman, Phil Stanton, and Chris Wink say their artistic vision hasn't changed since starting as a guerrilla theater troupe in New York 13 years ago.

They still cover their heads and wear shiny blue makeup. Shows can still splatter paint, using homemade percussion instruments and tossing food.

Actor Dustin Hoffman described the Los Angeles Times as "like an in first grade that happens when the leaves the room."

Nowadays Blue Man Group produces a \$28 million annual budget. Blue Men (one actually is a woman) from Boston to Las Vegas.

Still, the company has turned down offers to perform rap music and hawk theme parks and a slew of blue products.

"If, by art, you mean something simple available to everybody that's not a big deal, yes, we're art," he said. "But if you mean important and elitist, we'd rather be comedians."

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