

Pushmonkey returns with hard rock sounds

Pushmonkey has thrived in the hungry music scene of Austin and its surrounding areas since 1994. Lead singer Tony Park, drummer Darwin Keys, guitarist Howie Behrens, guitarist Will Hoffman and bassist Pat Fogarty draw from their surprisingly diverse musical backgrounds to produce a heavy sound all their own.

Park said he and the band members grew up listening to music that ranged across rock boundaries, including bands such as AC/DC, Iron Maiden, U2, Sting and The Smiths. Park said the band uses the members' diversity to blur the lines between rock genres.

Pushmonkey went national in 1999, touring with Godsmack followed by performances on the Ozzfest Tour and a stop at Woodstock 1999 in New York.

"There was a lot of mud and dirty naked people sleeping on top of empty pizza boxes at Woodstock," Hoffman said.

This year Pushmonkey has been out promoting its latest CD, *El Bitch*, which was released last September. *El Bitch* has yielded two successful radio friendly singles, "Mine to Waste" and "Myself."

In addition to promoting *El Bitch*, Pushmonkey has been working on a live album that is expected to be released later this year. Hoffman said die hard Pushmonkey fans will be excited to know the band is also planning to re-release its first album, *Maize*, as soon as the end of March or early April. *Maize* is currently out of production and will be released with bonus live tracks.

Hoffman said sleeping late is not the only perk of living the life of a rocker.

"The best feeling is when we are on stage and we can feel the juice between us," Hoffman said. "When you can feel the juice coming back from the crowd the feeling is multiplied by 10."



PHOTO COURTESY OF PUSHMONKEY

Park said he never knows what to expect from his live performances in College Station. He said he can never be sure how the amount of fans that move away each year will balance with the influx of new supporters.

"At A&M you have got tons of fans and people that like to party," Park said. "So far A&M fans have

been supportive, but there is no telling."

"We are going to bring it," Hoffman said. "If the audience wants crazy then we will give them crazy."

Hoffman said Pushmonkey does not do much planning before a show. He said the band feeds off the audience and just lets the music flow.

"I like to see people singing the words to our songs," Hoffman said. "I want to know people are having a good time."

Park said Pushmonkey has grown as a band and discovered how to make music it is comfortable with. Park said the band has realized it does not need to rely on business entities to define it.

"We are going to make it the way we want to make it," Park said. "We are just going to do what we want to do."

Hoffman said there is no end in sight for Pushmonkey, and the band plans to keep making records and touring. Pushmonkey will be performing at Shadow Canyon at 11:30 p.m. on Friday.

—Daniel Hohmann

Move to Plan B

In performance and creation, Plan B takes its music seriously.

Guitarist and vocalist Cody Johnson, bassist Wally Wronka, guitarist and vocalist Gary Dykes and percussionist Tommy Swanson have more than 45 years of collective musical experience and training on a variety of instruments, forming what they describe as a band "comprised of four members, all of whom strive to be masters at their craft."

The band's musical influences tend to be masters at their craft, as well. Bands like Led Zeppelin, Rush and guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughn all color the Plan B sound.

"The music is what drives us," said Johnson, a senior bio-environmental design major. "Every one of us feels a supernatural responsibility to [do] what we do, and we all agree on what has been termed 'Plan B. music theory.'"

Johnson explained the music theory as when the "biological body creates its own natural biorhythms and tones on the organic level."

"The job of the musician is to arrange these tonal sounds with the instrument or voice in order to evoke human emotion and feeling, something completely non-material and non-physical in nature," he said.

However lofty and ethereal its intentions seem, Johnson said the

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Kelvin brings emotion, music to Fitzwilly's

Kelvin, an Austin-based quartet, beats out emo rock jams and gathers as much inspiration from Dostoevsky and Kafka as they do from their musical influences, Radiohead and Sunny Day Real Estate.

Formed in 1999, guitarist/vocalist Vincent Hagedorn and bassist Stephen Becker played together in the Austin area as the band evolved through lead guitarists and drummers. The group finally settled on Kentucky native Jessica Campbell on guitar and drummer Yamal Said, who played in the band early on.

They spent last August on tour in the Southwest, closing the tour in San Diego opening for The Strokes.

"Our tour to California was the most fun we've had as a band," Hagedorn said. "We received a good response and played really well. It seems to me that

the bigger the crowd, the better we perform, though I think I might lose my mind if we played in front of thousands."

The band has not enjoyed a smooth ride the whole time they have been together. Sometimes, they do not ride at all.

"My worst band memory would have to be running out of gas at 4 a.m. on our way back to Austin from College Station," Hagedorn said. "We were lucky in that the first station we walked to happened to be open."

Kelvin has played in College Station several times since last fall and hopes to play at Northgate Music Festival without worrying about what the other festival bands are doing.

"I hate the idea that music is in competition with one another," Becker said. "The truth of the matter is that we're all really different from one another."

Hagedorn added that Kelvin plays with a specific purpose, dis-

tinguishing the group from other bands.

"Many bands are out to try to get people moving, many want to make you sing along, some want you to hear a story," Hagedorn said. "We are interested in making you feel something emotional."

Kelvin will be playing Thursday night at Fitzwilly's from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

—Thomas Phillips



PHOTO COURTESY OF KELVIN

Blue October ready for another headlining show

If fans need a Blue October fix, the wait will soon be over.

For Blue October band members — Justin Furstenfeld, vocals and guitar; Ryan Delahoussaye violin and mandol; Jeremy Furstenfeld drums; Matt Noveskey, bass and C.B. Hudson, guitar — playing in College Station is familiar territory. In fact, playing at the Northgate Music Festival is not uncharted ground for them either.

Blue October was an opening act for Pushmonkey at the 1998 music festival and a headlining act at the music festival in 2000. At this year's music festival, the band has a chance to again shine as one of three headlining acts. With nearly 15 appearances in Aggieland under its belt, Blue October has a good understanding of what to expect from the College Station crowd.

"When we played the festival, the venue was packed and the energy was there," Furstenfeld said.

This year's show should be no different. Music-loving Aggies seem to feed off of live music and appreciate the musi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUE OCTOBER

cians and their talent when they roll through town.

"College Station crowds are great," Noveskey said. "It's one of my favorite places to play because the crowds are always there ready and willing to have a good time."

For a band that has been around for nearly seven years, credit must be given where credit is due.

Many of Blue October's songs are personal to Furstenfeld, the brain behind the lyrics.

"It's always like the five minutes prior to going on stage that I don't think I can go up there and sing certain songs," Justin said. "But then I look at these guys (the band) and I'm ready to go full force."

With five different guys in the band, five different styles, sounds and ideas go into the creation of the music. From punk to a classic rock sounds, Blue October has created a sound that works. Its sound can be heard Saturday night at Shadow Canyon at 11:30 p.m.

"This music festival is all about having a good time," Noveskey said. "Nobody has to worry about competition or trying to sell yourself or music like other festivals. We're all here to have a good time."

—Lycia Shrum

Adamo makes first appearance at festival

Adamo, which is Latin for falling in love with or finding pleasure in, is a young band that is steadily gaining a fan base that grows with every show it performs.

The College Station-based band formed in July 2001 and already has managed to form a well-developed sound in only one semester. Kyle Close, vocals and rhythm guitar; Zach Sloan, lead guitar and vocals; James Ryan, bass; John Schreiner, drums and Katie Sloan, violin, found a chemistry that is evident in their sound as well as when they are playing on stage together.

"Generally the chemistry is higher in a live environment because we have one shot at nailing each song, and we know we have to be attentive to each other as well as the crowd," Ryan said.

First-time listeners can expect the sound to be a combination of rock, jazz and classical influences. Close said Adamo is sometimes compared to the sound of Blue October with a hint of Incubus.

"I think the Incubus comparison is based on our jazzy rock sound, but the Blue October comparison is probably more recognizable to the listeners," Close said.

Adamo is known to cover "A Certain Shade of Green" by Incubus and Radiohead's "I Might Be Wrong."

Although the band's sound has influences

from various artists, the band blends it all together to form the innovative sound of Adamo.

From James Taylor to Radiohead, members of Adamo bring their personal influences to the band. Adamo is able to infuse elements of its influences into its music, whether it is instrumentally, vocally or lyrically.

Lyrically, Sloan said music is a personal therapy for the band and that carries over to the lyrics.

"When we're writing our songs, we never use the phrases 'Oh baby' or 'Hey hey,'" Sloan said. "Our music looks at parts of life no one likes to talk about. Our music allows us to present them in a

way that says there's beauty in being broken."

Close said Adamo realizes when it comes to music, everything has been said lyrically, but it tries to find a new way to say it.

For Adamo, music is a passion and this is not a side project. Granted, when some of the band members first began playing together at gigs such as Rumours, the Memorial Student Center and once at McDonalds, they may have been not fully aware of their direction. But Adamo has focus now, and it shows. Adamo will be playing on the Promenade Saturday at 9 p.m.

—Lycia Shrum



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAMO

Alligator Dave equals high energy performance

David Grizzle, known by his fans as Alligator Dave, started playing guitar at the age of 18 and quickly realized his talents. Grizzle and the Couch Band now perform their unique combination of rap, reggae and folk music to audiences across America.

In the past, Grizzle and the Couch Band has had up to six members, but Grizzle said they will hit the stage with a three piece configuration at the Northgate Music Festival. He said the combination of Brian "Big Daddy" Grizzle on the bass guitar, Raul "Skillet" Ramirez on the drums and himself taking care of lead guitar and vocals is working well.

"I like the three piece configuration better," Grizzle said. "We are able to produce more energy."

Grizzle and the Couch Band recently signed a record deal with Brando Records. Grizzle said signing with the record company has taken some of the stress out of his life and he is able to focus on his music while Brando Records takes care of the band's business.

"All we have to do is wake up and write," Grizzle said. "They take care of the rest."

Grizzle said his style has been described as a blend of his musical heroes including Bob Marley and Snoop Dogg.

"I would like to be more like Bob Marley, because his message was positive," Grizzle said. "I am all about having a good time."

Grizzle said his life provides most of the influences for his music. His lyrics are sexually charged, but he feels it is better to sing about sex rather than sing about something negative such as death.

Grizzle said the majority of his fans are between 18 to 25 years old, and he enjoys performing in College Station because of the amount of fans in the area.

Grizzle and the Couch Band will be performing at Shadow Canyon at 9:45 p.m. on Saturday.

—Daniel Hohmann