

## Keep it rockin'

### Local band Choosing Sides aims for national recognition, returns to College Station

By Crystal Dobson  
THE BATTALION

As a band that delivers a high energy, crowd-pleasing show, Choosing Sides has had little time to get its act together. The three members reunited in September 2001 and played their first show a month later.

Jason Wyatt, front man, guitarist, writer; Dan Nowlan, bassist and Ernesto "Ernie" Chacon, percussionist, make up the aggressive rock style of Choosing Sides.

As a whole, the goal of the group is to grow into a nationally-recognized band that financially supports its needs.

"I have always wanted to be able to say, 'I play for a living,'" Nowlan said. "How great would that be?"

Choosing Sides has four recorded songs on a demo CD that is given out at shows, as well as about 20 written songs. The band plans on recording a full-length CD this summer.

During shows, it is guaranteed the band will play several popular covers. It is always sure to play its favorite cover, "Tyler," by the Toadies. The band closes out the show with "Bloody Cupid," a song that keeps the crowd pumped.

"If our band and crowd aren't exhausted by the end of the show, it wasn't a success," Wyatt said. "I have to have broken a pick, Dan is bleeding

and Ernie's usually broken a drumstick or two by the last song. The crowd is totally into the music, singing along with the band, even after we are done playing. That describes a successful show."

Choosing Sides was originally formed in 2000, when the members attended Texas A&M. The band primarily played cover songs. Three months later it broke up.

After the band reunited, it decided not to stick with its former name. Wyatt dubbed the group "Choosing Sides," a thought spurred by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"There are always two sides to everything," Wyatt said. "A name such as Choosing Sides gets people to think about what side to choose; good and evil usually being the sides presented."

Less than a year later, the band has gained recognition. It has been on KAMU's "Between the Lines" and performed at places such as Big Pauly's and the Texas Hall of Fame. Choosing Sides played at Big Pauly's "Toys for Tots" and participated in the Northgate Music Festival.

The group loves what it does, mainly because of the fans.

"Being onstage is such a rush," Wyatt said. "The influence our band has on people is amazing, and it is even greater experiencing this with

Ernie and Dan."

All of the members in Choosing Sides believe that the music scene is changing in College Station.

"The music industry has been growing exponentially over the past few years," Nowlan said. "The businesses on Northgate see a need for entertainment, so the bands help them out, and in turn, that provides us with a job. Everyone is gaining fans and customers."

Big Pauly's is the favorite venue of the group.

"We love the people at Big Pauly's," Chacon said. "Owner

Cameron Smith has helped by providing a place to perform, and he is great to work with."

Chacon also said their success has a lot to do with a few select people.

"Besides the fans, we are very grateful for Vanessa Reece and Casey Mack," Chacon said. "Vanessa has helped out a great deal by booking us at places like Texadelphia, Big Pauly's and the Crooked Path. As for Casey, his Website AggieLandConcerts.com has contributed to the success of many small town artists performing in College Station."

Choosing Sides will return to College Station May 4 at Big



Jason Wyatt, Ernesto Chacon and Dan Nowlan of Choosing Sides perform one of their hits.

#### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

### Natalie Portman has grown accustomed to show business

NEW YORK (AP) — Natalie Portman used to hint in interviews that she would give up acting someday. Now, she knows it is in her blood.

"I know that I need it," Portman told Vogue magazine for its May issue. "When I'm in school I miss it like crazy, and it feeds me."

The 20-year-old, who reprises her role of Queen Amidala in the upcoming *Star Wars* prequel, said she has learned how to juggle her fame with her studies at Harvard University.

"It makes all social interactions a little harder," Portman said. "It sort of eliminates the level of the middle friend — people either are acquaintances or they're my best friends. Because the middle people are usually the ones who just want to rub shoulders, you know?"

After 10 years in the business, she has also learned how to deal with people staring at her.

"I used to do really immature things — this is a couple of years ago — where I would just, like, stare someone down, like, 'See how it feels to be stared at?' Which is horrible," Portman said. "I mean, it's completely natural to stare. If Harrison Ford walked in right now I'd be totally checking him out."

*Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones*, co-starring Ewan McGregor, Hayden Christensen and Samuel L. Jackson, opens May 16.

### Ted Danson will portray medium he consulted to contact his father

RADNOR, Pa. (AP) — Ted Danson stars as best-selling medium James Van Praagh in the CBS movie *Living with the Dead* on April 28 and 30.

It turns out the role might not be much of a stretch for Danson, who stars in the CBS sitcom "Becker."

After network executives sent a script and offer to Danson, they learned that subject and star had met a week earlier.

"I had been to Ted's house just that week before to do a spiritual reading for him and his wife, Mary Steenburgen," Van Praagh said. "Now, how wild is that? It all seemed to be part of a divine plan."

Danson told *TV Guide* for its April 27 issue that he believes he made contact with his late father through Van Praagh.

"I've had several evenings with James and he has transformed me," Danson said. "The experience is like a two-by-four across the forehead."

Steenburgen called the sessions "extraordinary, uplifting and beyond any rational explanation. And believe me, I tried to explain them away."

*Living with the Dead* is inspired by the life and work of Van Praagh, author of *Talking to Heaven* and *Reaching to Heaven*.

# Hey TAMU PLAYBOY is here interviewing

Attention female student body! Ever fantasized about being pictured in the number one men's magazine in the world? Now's your chance to turn fantasy into reality. Representatives from **PLAYBOY** magazine are in **College Station** to interview and photograph female students for "**Women of the Big 12**," the 2002 **25th anniversary** edition of the magazine's annual fall pictorial. Thousands of coeds have tried out for **PLAYBOY** since it began its college conference pictorials 24 years ago. Many have gone on to become **PLAYBOY Playmates**, models and actresses. Who knows what the future holds for you?

To be considered for this pictorial and to qualify for an interview, candidates must be at least 18 years of age and registered as a full- or part-time student at a Big 12 university. Clear copies of identification—one verifying enrollment in school and one photo ID that shows date of birth—must be brought to the interview. All photos become property of **PLAYBOY** and cannot be returned.

INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD CALL TO ATTEND THE INTERVIEW SESSIONS:

CALL GEORGE GEORGIU  
312/401-7343

TUESDAY, APRIL 23 & WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24