

Transcribed

From Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Crane Wives are a stellar example of a talent fostered by a thriving musical scene. Starting off with live music performances through open-mic nights, this band would progress on to perform in packed venues to hundreds of attentive listeners. Throughout this shift in audience, the band has remained loyal to their musicality, consistently creating musical pieces steeped in meaning and refined through exceptional lyricism. Prior to the start of their winter tour, band members Kate Pillsbury, Emilee Petersmark, and Dan Rickabus were gratuitous enough to answer a few questions on topics ranging from their experiences with diversifying musically to their opinions on project sustainability.

Coronado: I wanted to start with talking a bit about that. You've just come out of your summer section of your tour, and also with your performances in the U.K. I am sure it is a big shift from performing in the U.K. to starting up in the U.S. with Buffalo coming up very soon. I am sure it has been a busy year with all those performances lined up. How do you feel that these experiences have impacted how you are going to approach this next leg of the tour?

Emilee: The U.K. felt like running a marathon, y'know? I feel like this has been a really busy summer for us. We've been promoting our newest record: *Beyond Beyond Beyond*. We've been on the road a lot more than we have been over the past four years or so, so it feels a little bit like trying to get your sea legs back under you.

This was a full time job for us for a really long time. Then we took a hiatus in 2020 when the world shut down, and so now it just kind of feels like trying to get the rhythm back. The U.K. was a lot of shows in a very small amount of time, with a lot of additional hurdles, just because we had never toured overseas before. It was a lot of learning on the fly, and trying to figure out the best ways to be efficient and comfortable while missing the comforts of home. I think what we are going to take with this tour is using that momentum, the things that we learned, to make tour comfortable and sustainable. Hopefully, try to apply that with this next run which is a little bit longer.

Coronado: That sounds like a really great learning experience as well. I am sure you had some really incredible fan interactions overseas. How is the negotiation between being very authentic in your performances, y'know bringing in your own personal experiences into those performances, and balancing performing for an audience with wide, varying interpretations of your song. I'd love to hear a little bit more about how that plays into the set-up and the actual performance?

Kate: I think that we are always trying to evolve as a band, and it is something we hone as we go. We deliberate in between tours what we are going to do in the next tour. You kind of take it a year at a time, and see what your current goals are, and what you can accomplish within that year. I am sure 2026 will look a little bit different for us as we go forward, again, just because we are always evolving.

It is sensitive being human beings, and writing about our personal lives, and then taking that to a stage and trying to create an authentic experience on a stage when what you are doing is kind of like repetitions of a very similar thing. I struggle with that as an artist. What I think always keeps it authentic, is just trying to connect with the audience that you are in front of on any given night. That is something we have practiced with for sixteen years, and we have always just tried to put on the show for whoever is in the

room with us, whether that's eight people fifteen years ago, or a brewery full of men that we don't necessarily have anything in common with, or our current audience.

The internet has blessed us with these amazing fans who are like a lot more aligned with us and our ideology, and our backgrounds. I think what I always try to do personally when I am contending with how do I show up authentically here, is just like looking in the faces of those people who are watching us perform, and just seeing how much it means to them that we are sharing these songs that they have listened to in their cars, and in their bedrooms, and with their friends, and with their families. Through y'know their heartbreaks, and their school stress, and all the other life experiences that people go through. Just trying to remain rooted in like the love we share for these fans. Trying to show up for them.

I will say, personally, it has been kind of a whirlwind the past few years because we did go from being relatively unknown to having this big fanbase that will buy tickets, and show up, and sell out our shows. We do everything independently. The machine is run entirely by us and the small crew that we have hired. It's just DIY and learn on the go. Say what moves you when you are on stage. There is a nice blend of things we've done before, and newness every time.

Coronado: I think the gradual growth of where you started out to now is something very inspiring. I find that a lot of people join music for that community, for that sense of belonging. I find it a really gorgeous idea that it has grown and developed alongside you as a band. I wanted to ask regarding that initial start, if you have any advice for people who are looking to form a community in the same way you have, and are going through similar tribulations. I know you all started out quite early on in college. As a college radio station we have a lot of aspiring artists who seek to connect with people in that deep, meaningful way, but may not have that initial audience. If any of you could share any words of encouragement or perspectives that might help them in that process of growing.

Dan: Trust yourself is kind of number one. There is a certain amount of not blind, but like just dogged belief in what you're doing. When we started doing this, the songs were all that mattered. Playing together was all that mattered. We worked so hard on our albums.

This whole experience has been wild because once we got this big wave of new fans they had four records to just go back and devour. It always has me reflecting on like, wow, we cared so deeply about the music that we were just working so hard. I can think of all sorts of different, specific memories of people being like, 'I just feel like this song needs this' and that kind of thing. So we just trusted each other, trusted ourselves, trusted the process of making the music.

We've been joking a lot lately that there is a certain amount of advice that we can't even give because it's like this internet miracle that this algorithmic kind of like fluke that happened to us, which is amazing. We're just trying to not take it for granted for one second that the algorithm spun in this perfect way, that all these people found us. A lot of that was the people making their own content about the material which then goes back to like wow, we put so much of our heart into the material that luckily there was just enough substance in there that it just caught on for people to make their own art from it, make it their own, and just extrapolate on what was inside those songs.

There is this constant balance between like this is a miracle that I had nothing to do with, also balanced with like wow, we really worked really hard in the beginning. So, I will just say, be true to yourself. Don't try to make the art for anybody, but what you like and what your bandmates are feeling in the moment as you play. Just try to keep doing that, and if it's meant to reach a ton of people, just keep going and hopefully it will.

Kate: I would love to add something to that. I like the sort of practical tips who we can give to people who are looking to start their own band, especially being like a women-led band. I know that when Emilee and I were starting out as solo artists, there were a lot more men, a lot more boys who were pursuing music. I think that's gotten better over time with the internet and social media. There's a lot more women on the scene. I think there are a lot of avenues where you can find your community. I think we look at community as this big, amorphous thing, but there are actually tons of little communities within every community. You can join clubs on campus if you're in college, you can go to open mic nights, you can start songwriter circles, there's online communities that exist, like School of Song, that can help people nurture these y'know dreams that they have. Not everyone is starting with a background, or a really skilled instrument path or anything like that. You can start from zero if you just have a dream to make music.

I started writing songs, terrible songs, but at the age of six because my dad wrote songs. I really believe in the idea that every person's voice is really valuable. The world doesn't always demonstrate that, we have lots of marginalized communities that don't get as much time in the spotlight as like white people do. I just think it's really important for women and queer people and people of color. Dan said believe in yourself, and I love that, but I also think like even if you don't believe in yourself yet. Find people who do believe in you, who can empower you and invigorate you. Find people who excite you who you can work with. Then you can kind of build the community that you're hoping to see. It might not exist yet, but you can make it exist. There are certainly people who want to be in that community that doesn't exist yet. Also, I would like to invite Emilee to answer that question, if you have any perspective on that as well.

Emilee: Yeah, I mean I feel like you guys said a lot. I would only add that we got really lucky. I think West Michigan, Michigan in general, has a really robust and diverse music scene simply because we are a peninsula. A lot of touring acts will skip Michigan and just go hit y'know Chicago and miss Michigan altogether.

We've kinda created this little self-sustaining ecosystem of really talented artists. Another way that you can help y'know other people discover your community, and also to support your own community, is just by going to shows. Participating in open mic nights like Kate said, just trying to find ways to connect with the local musicians in your area. Asking them about what they do to secure shows. When Kate and I first started playing music, we were playing a lot of open mic nights. Kate, I don't think was even twenty-one at the time, so we had to get special permission to get into these bars where the open mic nights were happening. We had the opportunity to talk to a lot of musicians who've been working and playing in our local scene for many years, and they were able to give us a lot of really great advice about ways to get your foot in the door locally. Definitely, don't overlook that resource of whatever your local scene has to offer. Go to shows, start meeting people, that's where you are going to find people who have similar goals to you.

Coronado: Those were all wonderful perspectives, and I really value that you all were able to share something from your own experiences in such a raw way. I think it's really meaningful to connect and uplift the voices in our community. Another part of that is you meet so many people who have so many inspirations and so much to bring to the table. In and of itself you are changing and morphing how you view and present music. As you gain new inspirations both from your bandmates, which I've heard before in interviews you have very varying tastes in some aspects, and also as your music diversifies as well how does that play into the band dynamics and developing new songs, or maybe just in personal projects as well?

Emilee: I like to think that it helps us take more risks to develop tastes that aren't necessarily completely aligned. It allows us to play in different genres, and forces all of us as like a 4-piece to make choices that might not be necessarily comfortable in the beginning, but can help push a song from being a formulaic comfortable place into something that is a bit more developed and interesting. Especially since we've been a band for so long, I feel like it is really easy to fall into the cycle of just creating the same thing over and over again. I feel like being able to grow in tandem with everybody, but not necessarily like parallel tracks helps create diversity of ideas when writing music that I think is really, really valuable.

Dan: Totally, I'll just jump in and say it's always been so wild when we are working on a song, and someone has brought the song, chords and lyrics and melody, we don't talk about, no one is saying "it should be this kind of song" we just all kind of start playing. Which is really interesting, because like you said we are all kind of growing in our different directions of what we are into at the time. It's really cool to hear that puzzle come together when we write a song. Suddenly, it's like, woah! I've been listening to Ben play bass for 14 years, 15 years, and I have never heard an idea like that before. Suddenly, it makes me do something else! There is never like a "we should make it like this," sometimes later it's like, "Oh, it kind of went this way, and maybe we can pull it more this way." There is an organic process at the beginning, and then it was even more so when we were making *Beyond, Beyond, Beyond*. We had a retreat, and we tried to do some stuff that was actually totally new. There was one time where Emilee was working on her song *Scars*, Ben picked up this little nylon string mini guitar, and was writing this guitar part. Suddenly, Kate is dialing in this really cool fuzz tone, and is like training that guitar part over here. Stuff like that! I had a song that was just a chorus and a beat, and suddenly Emilee's got these chords, and then suddenly Kate has this guitar part that is like syncopated, and then later I decided to write a vocal part for Kate and I on the guitar part. So, it can be really fun and unpredictable even with the same people for so long.

Coronado: What you explained is such an exciting process. Sitting down and so many minds coming together it's a noise that can't exist on its own. The product is always wonderful, I mean you guys have incredible music. I was wondering, are there some songs in this recent album, *Beyond Beyond Beyond*, that you feel encompass this creative experience? Or maybe something that's been redefined in this tour that you originally had a different perspective on when you first created it.

Kate: I think as Dan mentioned, well he didn't say the song by name, but *River Rushing* was a much more collaborative experience. They're all collaborative, but usually Emilee and I will write basically fully fleshed out songs with lyrics and chords, and bring those to the boys to add drums and guitar to.

River Rushing, I think Dan started with a melody and the drums. Emilie wrote the vocal melody. He wrote the chorus, and she wrote the verses. I contributed some lyrical content that Dan then turned into lyrics as well. In the studio we also had a little process of plugging in some pedals, and singing through these weird effects. Emilie would be singing, and I would be turning the knobs on this pedal. Dan would be singing, and Zitto would be turning the knobs. Those were just fun experiments, a little different than anything else that we do. Another song on the album was Red Clay, I wrote that song and Dan sang lead on that.

Dan: That is pretty much it! River Rushing is always the one I think of, and it's so fun to think of the bridge of River Rushing, where like "something needs to go here," and then we are doing this pass the mic around and playing with the guitar pedals. Emilie does this amazing melody line into the reverb. She kind of goes to this other place, and we're kind of like, "there is something there, and let's move on." We moved onto something else.

The next day, Kate was like, take that first half of what Emilie did, and just freaking duplicate it. Now, because it happens twice, now it's like a thing you can catch your ear onto. Those ideas and giving space for a minute is always helpful. I also think it's really neat just to listen to any demo. River Rushing is always the one I think of, but if you think about Bitter Medicine, and imagine what the demo would have been of that. As a listener out there you can kind of hone in on Emilie's melody and guitar part. That's what the song would be like in her bedroom, but then when you press play on the album it's like bass and drums. Later, there is this guitar solo that Kate crafted over like a whole day. There is randomly this part where suddenly we break it all down and do the "aahas" because there is always going to be an "aha" moment.

I think it's awesome because there are times where I'm like "wow, this one was really more collaborative than ever!" I also just like to zoom out and be like the way we do this is a lot different than if a singer-songwriter had an acoustic guitar song that they brought in, and a producer was like "oh, okay, let's do these things we hear in mainstream music, let's add these layers that are kind of expected."

I kind of wanted to circle back, you were talking about authenticity before, and it's been really fascinating because everywhere we go and we play live, we always get these comments about how little equipment we have and how we don't play two tracks, or a click track. There is nothing wrong with that, I think if you are putting on an amazing show, and you are going to use pre-recorded tracks and what not. Everything is just a tool, and there is no value judgement on that, but it is pretty crazy to be four people with no safety net, just instruments, and you are playing to two thousand people. In that way we kind of can't help but be authentic, so I am just relating that to the songwriting process. There is no board room full of songwriters, no mega-producer coming in and saying this part needs a B3 hammond organ, whatever it is. There is no quantizing the drums to make them mechanical. It's just like four people and their instruments, three people singing, and one guy yelling. It can't help but be authentic in its form.

Coronado: As you mentioned, you all run everything independently! Like you mentioned, you have more control of the creative process and everything you put into it as well. As an independent, do you feel like

it also allows you to have more say in what your band gets to say to the community and how you get to interact with the community in comparison to a band that is being managed by a label?

Emiliee: I would say, absolutely. I think what people don't understand about signing with a label is that it is basically just signing for a big loan, and then you are beholden to that label company until you pay back that loan. You're basically trapped in this place where you have to not only be profitable, really really difficult, but also to follow the rules and guidelines that the label has set out for you using their resources. Which does limit you a bit in a lot of ways, it definitely can open up a lot of doors for opportunity. I would say being independent gives us a lot of freedom to say what we want to say, and make the music that we want to make at our own pace which I think is another important aspect for making a sustainable long-term project. Is not burning yourself out trying to produce the way an algorithm wants you to produce, which is like constantly. That's just not possible for a lot of artists. Having the freedom to take breaks, to have the freedom to craft our own messaging in a way that doesn't have to necessarily prioritize profit, all of that I feel like has helped us a lot in creating something that feels sustainable long-term and authentic to us.

Coronado: In that sense, the creative trajectory you can take, is there any ideas for any future integration of new sounds. I know you have been playing around with new sounds in this recent album, but are the ideas broadening even further because you have less constraints around the production of your music? Is there anything you all are excited about as you continue to create some wonderful music.

Kate: I believe right now since it has been such a busy year, we are in the process of planning out what tours are going to happen for next year. To be honest, as a touring band, there are just different seasons of life. There are writing and recording seasons and then there are touring seasons, and then there is the oft forgotten resting season. I think a lot of creativity comes out of those seasons where you are allowed to set down what you are working on and get in touch with yourself and your bandmates, and sort of collaborate from the rested body.

I think that there are possibilities to play with sounds or collaborations, but we're excited to do our November tour and then have a few months off, so that we can really get back into the rest and then the excitement for what comes next.

Coronado: That's completely understandable. I think a break is well needed. I mean it has been a really busy year. It is something to be proud of, to soak in fully. Have a Very, Very Crane Wives Christmas which is very exciting as well. Is there anything you all are looking forward to in that break, something you go to to rest and rejuvenate and feel revitalized?

Emiliee: I just got an update that my sister-in-law's water is broken. I am really looking forward to this winter spending time with my new nephew. Family time I think is one of the things that we don't really get to do during the summer. It is kind of the price you pay for having this amazing job. You get to be on the road with your crew and your friends, but you miss out on a lot of stuff that happens at home. The feeling of being home, being available to your community, being available to your family, I think that is going to be the biggest part for me. I'm excited!

Kate: Congrats Em, that's really exciting! I also will say another part, it's funny because as artists we really can't help ourselves. I'm talking about rest, but simultaneously we all have other creative projects that we're also always working on. I think we also get invigorated in our Crane Wives process when we have other outlets as well, like solo music outlets and other collaborations. All of us are very active in different projects as well. That will be exciting to not have so much competing attention and more ability to focus. Like Emiliee said, be with people. Being with people is really amazing!

Coronado: About those projects you are developing, are there any specific ones you want to mention. I think it'd be a great way for our audience to expand their viewership, to hear a little bit more from you all. If you have any individual projects that you want to talk about that you are excited about.

Emiliee: I am going to be releasing a solo record in the fall which is really exciting. Of next year, lots of time! There is going to be a lot of time between then and now, but it's been really exciting to kind of build the pieces slowly since like 2022. Now it's in this almost finished stage which is really exciting! Everyone on our crew makes music as well. You're going to want to look up Steve Leaf who has a bunch of solo music. Both Dan and Ben participate in Steve's side project, Public Access, which is kind of like a ratatat, guitar army type band. Dan has solo music as well.

Dan: Jonah, our merch guy, has a new album that came out, the artist is called Perren, that album is called The Spot. Our other merch guy, Kendall, is a duo, indie-pop band called Cal in Red, they have a new EP. The Days is what it's called. Our sound guy, Morgan, is like one of the best songwriters I've ever freaking heard, and he has like two whole albums. One of which Ben and I participated in making, called Transmitter Blues in 2017. That is one you should really check out.

That is one of my favorite things about this whole new wave of fans, is like now that we have a budget we have been able to create these four jobs, and more jobs, there's an extended team who work remotely for us. We can take these four amazing dudes on the road, and give them an amazing job that can hopefully continue to fund their artistic records which is a really special part of it. It's always crazy to me, everyone on our crew has amazing music that I would be a fan of if I wasn't on the road with them. I'm working on something too, really quickly this winter that you'll hear more about soon!

Having been able to have this brief conversation and attend their performance, it is truly visible how their advice is embodied through their actions. A large thank you to The Crane Wives for their time and genuine care for music as a craft and an avenue for community. There will surely be much to look forward to in these coming years!

Concert Coverage

Often, conversation is a step, a piece of a puzzle with no defined image, constructed tenuously with two uncoordinated hands. Here, in the buzz of creatives, synchrony was natural. Each conversation began with a skipped beat, an abandonment of conventional pleasantries, and a rapid succession of rhythms all attuned to a central theme: music. In particular, the topic of the night was the harrowing harmonies played by The Crane Wives: a four-piece rock band comprised of Emilee Petersmark, co-lead vocalist and guitarist, Kate Bismark, co-lead vocalist and guitarist, Dan Rickabus, vocalist and drummer, and Ben Zitto, bassist.

Approaching this final stretch of their year-long touring performances, the band continues to ensnare audiences with their magnetism. The night of November 17th was no different, as an assortment of people, many elaborately dressed, filled up the District Hall Theatre in Norwalk, Connecticut. There was a stillness among the audience, not stemming from disinterest, rather, the opposite. The audience was wholly devoted to the sounds on the stage. With each new action, from the placement of water bottles for the performers to the quips made by talented opener, Spencer LaJoye, the audience was alive with responses. Spencer LaJoye laid a foundation for engagement with their dialogue throughout their expertly crafted lyrical pieces titled *Surgery* and *Plowshare Prayer*.

Prior to the start of the show, I was nervous to weave my way to the front to capture a few shots of the opening songs. I needed not worry, because the crowd graciously shifted when I asked for permission. Multiple audience members offered me a space closer to the stage, and without having to voice my question, I still felt considered. Throughout the night, one commonality among the community emerged clearly, every person was politely considerate of the needs of others. Whether through shifting to allow those with mobility aids to have a comfortable space or becoming a physical pillar for those overwhelmed by sheer emotion, the kindness of the community cultivated by this band shone through every corner of the theatre.

As I navigated this space, I was reminded of Emilee sharing in a recent interview how their typical audience has shifted dramatically after a new influx of fans found their music in recent years. Starting off as a college band in the 2010s, the Crane Wives were active in their local music scene. Oftentimes, this meant their listeners were local bar patrons or demanding audiences at open mic nights. However, this aspect of performing did not deter them from pouring in passion into their musical craft. In an interview with WYBCx, Dan, Emilee, and Kate reflected on their beginning and shared some advice for bands looking to form a community around their art:

Coronado: I think the gradual growth of where you started out to now is something very inspiring. I find that a lot of people join music for that community, for that sense of belonging. I find it a really gorgeous idea that it has grown and developed alongside you as a band. I wanted to ask regarding that initial start, if you have any advice for people who are looking to form a community in the same way you have, and are going through similar tribulations.

Dan: Trust yourself is kind of number one. There is a certain amount of not blind, but like just dogged belief in what you're doing. When we started doing this, the songs were all that mattered. Playing together was all that mattered. We worked so hard on our albums.

This whole experience has been wild because once we got this big wave of new fans they had four records to just go back and devour. It always has me reflecting on like, wow, we cared so deeply about the music that we were just working so hard. I can think of all sorts of different, specific memories of people being like, 'I just feel like this song needs this' and that kind of thing. So we just trusted each other, trusted ourselves, trusted the process of making the music.

We've been joking a lot lately that there is a certain amount of advice that we can't even give because it's like this internet miracle that this algorithmic kind of like fluke that happened to us, which is amazing. We're just trying to not take it for granted for one second that the algorithm spun in this perfect way, that all these people found us. A lot of that was the people making their own content about the material which then goes back to like wow, we put so much of our heart into the material that luckily there was just enough substance in there that it just caught on for people to make their own art from it, make it their own, and just extrapolate on what was inside those songs.

There is this constant balance between like this is a miracle that I had nothing to do with, also balanced with like wow, we really worked really hard in the beginning. So, I will just say, be true to yourself. Don't try to make the art for anybody, but what you like and what your bandmates are feeling in the moment as you play. Just try to keep doing that, and if it's meant to reach a ton of people, just keep going and hopefully it will.

Kate: I would love to add something to that. I like the sort of practical tips who we can give to people who are looking to start their own band, especially being like a women-led band. I know that when Emilee and I were starting out as solo artists, there were a lot more men, a lot more boys who were pursuing music. I think that's gotten better over time with the internet and social media. There's a lot more women on the scene. I think there are a lot of avenues where you can find your community. I think we look at community as this big, amorphous thing, but there are actually tons of little communities within every community. You can join clubs on campus if you're in college, you can go to open mic nights, you can start songwriter circles, there's online communities that exist, like School of Song, that can help people nurture these y'know dreams that they have. Not everyone is starting with a background, or a really skilled instrument path or anything like that. You can start from zero if you just have a dream to make music.

I started writing songs, terrible songs, but at the age of six because my dad wrote songs. I really believe in the idea that every person's voice is really valuable. The world doesn't always demonstrate that, we have lots of marginalized communities that don't get as much time in the spotlight as like white people do. I just think it's really important for women and queer people and people of color. Dan said believe in yourself, and I love that, but I also think like even if you don't believe in yourself yet. Find people who do believe in you, who can empower you and invigorate you. Find people who excite you who you can work with. Then you can kind of build the community that you're hoping to see. It might not exist yet, but you can make it exist. There are certainly people who want to be in that community that doesn't exist yet. Also, I would like to invite Emilee to answer that question, if you have any perspective on that as well.

Emilee: Yeah, I mean I feel like you guys said a lot. I would only add that we got really lucky. I think West Michigan, Michigan in general, has a really robust and diverse music scene simply because we are a

peninsula. A lot of touring acts will skip Michigan and just go hit y'know Chicago and miss Michigan altogether.

We've kinda created this little self-sustaining ecosystem of really talented artists. Another way that you can help y'know other people discover your community, and also to support your own community, is just by going to shows. Participating in open mic nights like Kate said, just trying to find ways to connect with the local musicians in your area. Asking them about what they do to secure shows. When Kate and I first started playing music, we were playing a lot of open mic nights. Kate, I don't think was even twenty-one at the time, so we had to get special permission to get into these bars where the open mic nights were happening. We had the opportunity to talk to a lot of musicians who've been working and playing in our local scene for many years, and they were able to give us a lot of really great advice about ways to get your foot in the door locally. Definitely, don't overlook that resource of whatever your local scene has to offer. Go to shows, start meeting people, that's where you are going to find people who have similar goals to you.

Clicking through camera settings, I operated through the lull of new conversations until rapidly they hushed to whispers. In front of me, a figure donning a stag mask emerged from the shadows barring pinpricks of soft light. The hush expanded to an excited buzz as the placement of the last lamp marked the long-awaited entrance. Lest to say, the quiet was a temporary pause before a rush of cheers and applause welcomed Emilee, Kate, Dan and Ben.

Starting with *Scars*, a staple from their recent album, *Beyond Beyond Beyond*, the band immediately brought forward an energy rivaling that heard in the studio recording. Fans sang back excitedly. The harmonies of both fans and the performers increased as songs like *Allies or Enemies* and *The Moon Will Sing* were performed. There were moments of truly raw connection, such as during *Never Love an Anchor*, wherein Emilee allowed a degree of vulnerability in her performance for a song that contains significant emotional turmoil. Audience members called out reassurances, and were respectful of her reaction. It is moments like these that magnify the manner music is a channel for complete self expression while simultaneously being a thread for uniting community. When asked about how they manage to remain authentic during the performance of their songs, the bandmates had this to share:

Coronado: That sounds like a really great learning experience as well. I am sure you had some really incredible fan interactions overseas. How is the negotiation between being very authentic in your performances, y'know bringing in your own personal experiences into those performances, and balancing performing for an audience with wide, varying interpretations of your song. I'd love to hear a little bit more about how that plays into the set-up and the actual performance?

Kate: I think that we are always trying to evolve as a band, and it is something we hone as we go. We deliberate in between tours what we are going to do in the next tour. You kind of take it a year at a time, and see what your current goals are, and what you can accomplish within that year. I am sure 2026 will look a little bit different for us as we go forward, again, just because we are always evolving.

It is sensitive being human beings, and writing about our personal lives, and then taking that to a stage and trying to create an authentic experience on a stage when what you are doing is kind of like repetitions

of a very similar thing. I struggle with that as an artist. What I think always keeps it authentic, is just trying to connect with the audience that you are in front of on any given night. That is something we have practiced with for sixteen years, and we have always just tried to put on the show for whoever is in the room with us, whether that's eight people fifteen years ago, or a brewery full of men that we don't necessarily have anything in common with, or our current audience.

The internet has blessed us with these amazing fans who are like a lot more aligned with us and our ideology, and our backgrounds. I think what I always try to do personally when I am contending with how do I show up authentically here, is just like looking in the faces of those people who are watching us perform, and just seeing how much it means to them that we are sharing these songs that they have listened to in their cars, and in their bedrooms, and with their friends, and with their families. Through y'know their heartbreaks, and their school stress, and all the other life experiences that people go through. Just trying to remain rooted in like the love we share for these fans. Trying to show up for them.

I will say, personally, it has been kind of a whirlwind the past few years because we did go from being relatively unknown to having this big fanbase that will buy tickets, and show up, and sell out our shows. We do everything independently. The machine is run entirely by us and the small crew that we have hired. It's just DIY and learn on the go. Say what moves you when you are on stage. There is a nice blend of things we've done before, and newness every time.

Vibrancy seemed to spill out of the venue, engulfing the frigid November air with the radiance of *souls* in community. Around me, I was faced with the emotions of seeing so many new faces, but yet feeling a sense of nostalgia. A form of sadness, that I may well never see them past this beautiful moment we shared. However, it is that very sentiment, that music can forge a tether between a crowd of disparate characters that I am most grateful to be able to experience. In many ways, the Crane Wives echo emotions buried within each of us, yet hardly expressed with such clarity and correct pitch. From their earlier songs that are a condensation of a pain that is so cathartic to verbalize to newer songs that sing of gentler possibilities, the Crane Wives create a space for expression.