

WAKE UP & FEEL THE MAGIC

ME & MOUNTAINS CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF DEBUT EP

By Kyle Melton

While some new bands rush out to the stage with little more than a handful of songs at various stages of completion, local indie-pop quintet Me & Mountains stormed onto the Dayton scene in 2009 as a fully realized concept. With carefully crafted songs filled with passionate lyrics, intricate arrangements and engaging dynamics, the band's sudden emergence was certainly the product of hours of artful craftsmanship. Me & Mountains will celebrate the release of their six-song debut EP with a show at Blind Bob's on Saturday, June 5.

With years of shared friendships between its members, Me & Mountains came together at various intervals during the course of just over a year's time. Currently comprised of Pete Bowser (drums), Tim Collette (guitar), Burris Dixon (bass/vocals), Marshall Norman (guitar), and Roger Smith (keyboards), the band's humble beginnings start as so many band tales do:



Members of Me & Mountains

Contributed photo

in a basement.

"Pete and I started jamming in his basement," Norman recounted. "We did that for a few months and then I ended up getting a house and thought we should get some other people involved. Burris and I (had) played to-

gether in an awful band called Draw Your Knife. We were friends through Sinclair and stuff, so I called him. It definitely helped that we were all friends before we started."

Over the course of the next year Bowser, Norman and Dixon recruited guitarist Collette and finally keyboardist Smith to arrive at their current incarnation. Although the group began working as a five-piece in 2008, the band struggled to define the scope of their music and an acceptable working method.

"We all tried to write songs originally," Dixon explained. "We were all writing songs, but no one would write lyrics to anything. We didn't start playing shows until after we had played (together) for like a year. We wrote and forgot at least six or seven songs, maybe more. We were so picky about everything when we first started."

Though the band struggled to find its direction, ultimately it was the songwriting and vocal delivery of Dixon that came to provide direction and form to the burgeoning band sound.

"Before I wrote songs for this band, I had a whole bunch of songs that were god-awful," Dixon admitted. "I started writing songs with these guys and it just started working out a little better. I don't know if it was practice, like anything, you just get better at it. Typically I write parts for the demos, but the usually change and get better. We call it 'Mountainizing'. We'll play (a new song) a few times and it will sound really bad. Then after like the fourth or fifth time it will sound 'Mountainized'."

With the material at last in place, Me & Mountains began playing around the Dayton area in earnest, quickly earning a reputation as one of Dayton's most promising young bands. In their jaunt through the local circuit, the band came in contact with local recording guru, Darryl Robbins, who agreed to record them. Tracking mostly live to 8-track analog tape, the band sought to harness their raw energy.

"I think he really captured how we sound live," Bowser said. "When we play our best shows, and there's really good sound like at Blind Bob's, that really sounds like us. That's what we wanted to do. We wanted it to sound like a live show. We did it all live with just a couple guitar overdubs and vocals."

In addition to twiddling the knobs for the recording, Robbins is also putting out the EP on his Fictionband Mechanics imprint (fictionbandmechanics.webs.com). With this debut, Me & Mountains presents an incredibly sophisticated cross-section of their current repertoire. While tracks like "Foxy Friends" and "Rock King" possess an undeniable mastery of pop construction that could easily land them on the airwaves, they also possess a venomous



TROY STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

Visit the 34th annual Troy Strawberry Festival this weekend. A parade will be held in downtown Troy on Saturday, June 5 from 9 to 11 a.m. The levee site opens immediately following the parade, and festivities continue through 8 p.m. Festivities are slated on Sunday, June 6 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. You can enjoy the strawberry-colored water fountain, numerous strawberry delicacies and over 260 arts and crafts vendors selling handcrafted glassware, jewelry, holiday items, metal works and pottery. There will also be bed races and the infamous strawberry pie-eating contest. In addition, there will be a plethora of strawberry foods, including strawberry hot wings, pizza, salsa, kabobs, funnel cakes, cotton candy, lemonade and even strawberry burritos! Admission, parking and shuttle services are free. For more information, visit online at www.Gostrawberries.com or call Strawberry Festival Manager Sabra Johnson at (937) 339-1044.

lyrical streak masked by Dixon's powerfully smooth vocal delivery. The band's range is best heard in the one-two punch midway through the disc of the bouncy "Wake Up & Feel The Magic" and the sinewy slither of "Blackbird," propelled by a menacing synth line weaving in and out of prickly guitar stabs and rolling drums. Taken together, the disc provides a snapshot of a young band that seems fully in command of their prowess.

"I think the songs we put on this CD are the songs we feel are our best work so far," Collette suggested. "I don't know if there was ever really a conscious decision about these being the six songs."

While the future remains to be seen for Me & Mountains, the quintet seem expectantly pleased with their new disc and seek to enjoy the continuation of making music with friends.

"I think we're all pretty honest about what we're trying to do," Norman concluded. "We're not really trying to fit into any niche or sound any certain way. I hope people can get half as happy as we do when they hear our music as we are playing it."

Me & Mountains will celebrate the release of their self-titled EP with a show on Saturday, June 5 at Blind Bob's, 430 E. Fifth St. Also on the bill are Okay Lindon and The Harlequins. Doors open at 9 p.m. and admission is \$5 for 21 and up. For more information, visit www.myspace.com/MeAndMountains.

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