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A rock band with bluegrass roots

Greensky Bluegrass returns to Columbus on heels of new album and free EP

By Justin McIntosh

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Rock bands typically aren't devoid of a drummer and a bassist (well, sometimes), and they're typically not an all-acoustic outfit either. But that doesn't stop Greensky Bluegrass from identifying itself as primarily a rock band.



For a while, there was even a rumor that the got its name because green sky is an inversion of blue grass, which seems fitting for a five-piece bluegrass band that hails from Michigan and routinely covers songs from Pink Floyd, the Beatles and other classic rock outfits in its concerts.

Guitarist and vocalist Dave Bruzza, however, is quick to shoot down that theory.

"The name came from a guy a long time ago," he said. "It was just a coincidence; it was the kind of thing we got stuck with, but I like our name."

Bruzza, however, didn't deny the band, despite its pieces — upright bass, banjo, guitar, dobro and mandolin — is a rock group.

"We're more of a rock and roll band," he said. "And we like rock and roll, so we tend to do a lot of rock and roll songs."

On Wednesday, Greensky Bluegrass returns to Columbus after playing shows at The Basement, The LC and Woodlands, for another appearance at Woodlands.

Hitting the road to promote its upcoming LP, which comes out Oct. 4, the band is definitely ready to stretch its musical legs after being couped up in a studio. The new songs, which can be previewed in a free EP titled "Handguns" (available at greenskybluegrass.com), still contains the group's intricate interplay. But the emotional heft behind the music is more mature, more honest, more direct.

"We've definitely explored some new territory," Bruzza said. "For one thing we recorded it in a studio; usually, we take over a cabin."

"(The album) is definitely a little more hard-edged and a little prettier," he said. "There's a lot of struggle, a lot of overcoming, a lot of work, a lot of fear, a lot of emotions. It's pretty real content; it's everyday life we're dealing with with this record."

A feeling of wandering is evident throughout. Bruzza said that's inspired, in large part, by touring.

"It's definitely not for everybody," he said of spending so many days on the road. "I get really inspired (when we tour). We live in an amazing country, and I've had some amazing opportunities (through touring). A lot of my songs are dealing with traveling."



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But don't let all this rock talk fool you. Greensky knows its roots and it can jam with the best of its scene, collaborating on stage with such stalwarts as Larry Keel, Railroad Earth and the Hackensaw Boys. The group's shared bills with even bigger boys in the bluegrass world, like Bela Fleck, Yonder Mountain and The Avett Brothers.



Comments



Dig the Music @ 09/21/2011 10:32 am

i heard about these guys who saw them at hookahville and all good fests. i think i am gonna go catch them tonight



osufan24 @ 09/25/2011 11:41 pm

"We're more of a rock and roll band," he said. "And we like rock and roll, so we tend to do a lot of rock and roll songs."- I am sorry but I have seen these guys and they are not a rock group from what I heard.

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