

STREET SCENE

Candlebox finds happiness with new drummer

It's been a busy time for the rock-band Candlebox, so frenetic in fact that lead singer Kevin Martin has been "trying to get married" for two years to his longtime girlfriend, Renee.

"We were supposed to get married two years ago but that fell through, and then we were supposed to get married last year, and we were busy. We were going to get married this summer, but she has to work," Martin said with a laugh.

On top of that, Candlebox has just released its third album "Happy Pills" (Maverick). Martin explained that there's a lot of work ahead for Candlebox.

"We're coming back with a rock 'n' roll record at the tail end of a lot of pop music. Rock 'n' roll is making a comeback and that's the kind of band we are," Martin explained.



Dose of happiness: Candlebox will perform songs off its latest release "Happy Pills" during "WRIF Fest" at Pine Knob Music Theatre on Wednesday, Aug. 5.

"You've got, I think, right now with the resurgence of rock 'n' roll, which is nice to see, it means you have to kind of dig in and get people to kind of realize rock 'n' roll is kind of where it's at and where it's always been."

To enhance the rock 'n' roll experience, Candlebox recruited ex-Pearl Jam drummer Dave Krusen to replace departing drummer Scott Mercado.

"We had experienced a lull for a long time with Scott, and what he wanted to do was a different thing," Martin explained.

"Dave is a musician's musician. He knows where you're going. He's self-taught like we are. That's from playing the French horn to singing to playing bass to playing piano to playing drums. We're four musicians who are finally on the same page. We were inspired by Dave, and Dave was inspired by us."

The trio of Martin, guitarist Peter Klett and bassist Bardi Martin immediately clicked with Krusen. The first day of rehearsal, the group wrote four songs together.

"It's very inspirational when you find everybody's looking at the same page and the same line. That's when the magic starts to happen," Martin explained.

One of the results of the "magic" is the song "Blinders," featuring the slide guitar work of

Klett, encouraged by Krusen.

"The funny thing about that song is we were trying to write it with Scott during the 'Lucy' project," Martin said of the band's last album. "We actually just had it and it never really developed itself. Scott was mentally not in the space we were in to really work on that song," Martin added.

The song resurfaced during pre-production of "Happy Pills." "We just took that and wrote a whole song out of that. We developed it in one day - lyrics and music and everything. That's the magic of being on the same page."

The first single from "Happy Pills" is the melancholy "It's Alright," a simplistic yet heartfelt song about the individual relationships of the quartet.

"The song's just about communication. It's really about experiencing life together and the necessity of talking to one another whether it be Renee and myself, Dave and his daughter, Pete and his parents, whatever. It's about the necessity of communication and how important it is to allow yourself to get lost in who you feel your communication is with."

Cheap Trick, Candlebox, Brother Cane and The Hunger perform as part of "WRIF Fest" Wednesday, Aug. 5, at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, in Independence Township. Tickets are \$20 per adult and \$10 for kids. Showtime is 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (248) 377-0100 or visit <http://www.palaceticket.com>. Candlebox's website is <http://www.candlebox.com>.

Orlando's 'N Sync proud of being musicians first

One could say that the all-male pop group 'N Sync is a real Mickey Mouse operation.

The quintet - James Lance "Lantzen" Bass, Joshua Scott "J.C." Chasez, Joseph "Joey" Anthony Fatone Jr., Christopher "Chris" Alan Kirkpatrick, and Justin Randall Timberlake - was drawn from its hometowns to the electric light shows and intense heat of Orlando, Fla.

Chasez and Timberlake's first major gig was with the Disney Channel show "Mickey Mouse Club" which paved the way for 'N Sync. The organization lent its support to the group which recently scored the dancefloor hit "I Want You Back."

"We met (the group's now executive director) Lou Pearlman and said, 'We've got a group. Would you be willing to back us.' He put the money behind us and introduced us to our manager Johnny Wright," Kirkpatrick explained.

That association has garnered a lot of flak for the Orlando five-some.

"We were working with a lot of Backstreet Boys people," he said of the fellow Orlando five-some.

"We got a lot of flak for that. Everyone said we were trying to be like them. Actually, we were together before we associated with any of the Backstreet Boys people. We had a lot of Mickey Mouse Club backing," he firmly added.

A friendly rivalry has ensued between 'N Sync and the hugely popular Backstreet Boys, who played a sold-out show at The Palace of Auburn Hills Friday night.

"We always keep up with them and see them every time we go home. I know that we watched them on 'Saturday Night Live' and we're so happy for them that they've gotten so big. But we're

not gonna lie. There's a little bit of jealousy inside and we think, 'Man, we wish we were there.'"

"It's like when you're growing up and you have a brother and your brother gets a medal for doing something. You get a little jealous and wish you could get the medal. It just makes you work harder for yourself."

Fellow Orlandoans the Backstreet Boys played instruments during their song "Quit Playing Games with My Heart" at The Palace. Kirkpatrick stressed that 'N Sync's members are musicians first.

"On our last tour I played keyboards. There was a time when we take over on 'Giddy Up,' a song that we wrote, where we went back and took over the instruments. Our band went out and tried to sing it, but it's just say we played the instruments better than they sang," he said with a laugh.

"We're all master musicians. That's what I did to make money before the group. I'd play guitar and sing downtown with a friend of mine."

Kirkpatrick explained that although they play instruments 'N Sync is bringing along a five-piece band.

"One for each of us," he said. Like 'N Sync's self-titled debut on RCA Records, its shows are filled with upbeat dance numbers, which, Kirkpatrick explained, is something that pop music is lacking.

"If you look at all the Boyz II Men songs and other R&B groups they usually do slow songs. (They believe) ballads are better, which, Kirkpatrick explained, is something that pop music is lacking.

"The shows, he added, are all about keeping it real - vocally,

Although there's dancing involved, 'N Sync refuses to sing to taped vocals.

"It makes for a really tough show sometimes. If you come to our show, you'll definitely see 'N Sync live. Maybe every once in awhile somebody will be a little bit winded and go out of breath during a note. That's what keeps it real."

If the Backstreet Boys' show is any indication of what 'N Sync's

performance will be like, bring earplugs. The deafening screams of young girls reduced the group's songs to a swirl of noise.

But for Kirkpatrick, that's the most flattering part of his show. "I love it, just in only 17. He's around their age. He's the one they scream for the most," said Kirkpatrick, 26.

"I get the biggest smile on my face. He's so flattered by it. It's

just a lot of fun. The best satisfaction we get, though, is when somebody really and truly comes to us and says, 'I really appreciate you as musicians.' That's what it's all about."

'N Sync performs at 7:30 p.m. Friday, July 31, at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. Tickets are \$17.50 for the all-ages show. For more information, call (248) 646-7610.

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