

STREET SCENE

Sixpence earns acclaim with self-titled album



CHRISTINA FUOCO

The music industry has been kissing up to the Tennessee pop act Sixpence None the Richer since it released the single "Kiss Me."

Matt Slocum, the band's guitarist/cellist, was thrilled about playing the notorious Viper Room in Los Angeles the night before. He's also overwhelmed that two prominent producers, including one formerly of Canton, wanted to put their spin on the single.

"Somebody of that stature being into your music is a really cool thing," Slocum said of Bob Clearmountain.

Ben Grosse did another mix of "Kiss Me." It was cool to hear his mix on the radio. It's just like tons of compression. It just really kicks. I can't wait until our next record and maybe one of them would want to mix the entire record.

Last year, Grosse moved his Pearl Sound studio from Canton to California.

Radio station WPLT was so moved by the single that it added the band to Planetfest which hits Pine Knob Music Theatre in Independence Township on Sunday, Aug. 30.

"All the bands that are playing are cool," said Slocum whose band opened for Bran Van 3000 at The Shelter in Detroit.

"Detroit's a really cool time. We really had a good time there. It's really cool that the Planet (WPLT) has picked up the single."

During the tour in support of its debut self-titled album for Sugar Records, Sixpence None the Richer is hoping to steer its fanbase from a Christian music crowd to more mainstream.

"That's what we believe. That's our faith. We're not trying to be like a 'Christian pop act.' We more just want to be a normal band playing music," explained Slocum, who also performed on Natalie Imbruglia's album "Left of the Middle."

"We're all Christians. Our faith's a big part of our lives and that naturally comes out in our music. It's part of who we are. We don't really like being called 'Christian music' because there's a lot of negative connotations that go along with that."

"Sixpence None the Richer" has been compared to albums by the cerebral British pop act the Sundays. Singer Leigh Nash's vocals float out of radio speakers like Sundays' singer Harriet Wheeler, and strings play a big

part in the music. Slocum doesn't mind the comparison.

"I've always been a helpless fan for theirs. Everything that came out I loved."

Sixpence None the Richer was born out of Texas. Nash, 21, began her career singing Patsy Cline songs in Texan dance halls at age 12. Slocum met Nash in Texas and now both of them reside in Nashville.

The trio - which also includes drummer Dale Baker - released two critically acclaimed albums before signing to Squint. "The Fatherless and the Widow" was hailed as one of the 10 best albums of the year by Billboard magazine.

For "This Beautiful Mess" Nash's vocals were placed on a level with Edie Brickell and Natalie Merchant. Although the self-titled album is its third release, the band is calling it its first.

"This is the first time we've actually had the exposure that we're getting. This label that we're on is really supporting it big time."

Slocum added that this album shows the band's progression. "Our first record was really mellow. It was definitely like an early Sundays thing. It was really stripped down with just guitar, bass and drums, a real indie feel. For the second record we went in more of an aggressive direction with more blaring guitars and that sort of thing. This album is a healthy mix of those two elements."

Pearl Jam funny?

Sunday night at The Palace of Auburn Hills, the rock band Pearl Jam proved that the grumbling (or is it mumbling?) the squabbles with Ticketmaster, and its anti-media brigade, it remains one of the best live bands alive.

Pearl Jam played back-to-back songs from its most recent effort, "Victim" and "No Code" before breaking into the single "Alive" with a 18,000-member chorus. "Even Flow" was classic Pearl Jam - Mike McCready played his guitar while arching his back, singer Eddie Vedder bent down burying his face with his hair, and bassist Jeff Ament jumped like a pogo stick.

Perhaps the most memorable part of the band's performance was, shockingly enough, its humor. After "Alive" Vedder grabbed the mic and yelled "Thank you, Good night" while laughing. When a Pearl Jam fan jumped on stage mid-song, he told a security guard to free the man and forced the fan to his knees. Vedder humiliated the Toronto man by telling him how

much he hates people who do that. Then harassed him for having short hair in front and long hair in back. To rectify the problem, a Pearl Jam roadie gave Vedder a pair of scissors which he used to chop off the man's hair.

The show was Pearl Jam's first at The Palace. Vedder told the 18,000-plus audience it was good to be back in Detroit. Judging from the well-behaved crowd and the strength of fans' vocals during hit songs, they agreed.

Misc.

Rob Zombie will visit Harmony House, 22818 John R Road, Hazel Park, at 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, to promote his debut solo effort "Hellbilly Deluxe." For more information, call (248) 543-6313. Tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. Friday for "Family Values" tour featuring Korn, Rammstein, Ice Cube, Limp Bizkit and Orgy, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 30, at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 2 Championship Dr. (I-75 and Lapeer Road), Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$29.50 for reserved and general admission floor. Tickets for the Barenaked Ladies show Thursday, Oct. 15, at The Palace of Auburn Hills go on sale at 10 a.m. Saturday.

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Playing Planetfest: Sixpence None the Richer performs songs off its self-titled album Sunday during Planetfest at Pine Knob.

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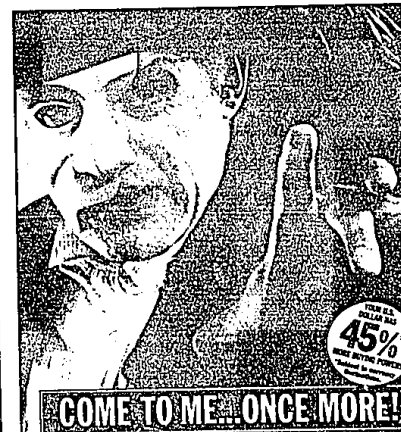
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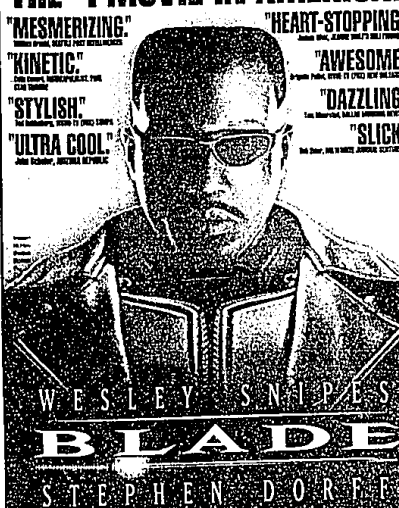


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