

C-Note enjoying success of first hit, breaking into Latin market

BY CHRISTINA FUGGO
STAFF WRITER

For Jose "Brody" Martinez of C-Note, working with his songwriter Diane Warren was quite the aviary experience.

"She has this bird she sits on your shoulder... The bird is really mean. It won't let you touch it. Only Diane can touch it. She put the bird by the phone when the phone was ringing. When one of the producers (Guy Roche) tried to answer the phone and the bird kept stabbing him with his beak," Martinez, 24, said with a laugh.

"It's a pretty bird but nobody can touch it."

Two Warren-penned songs appear on C-Note's debut album "Different Kind of Love" (Epic) - "Till We Where It Hurts," and "One Night Only," originally recorded by Luther Vandross.

"It was a great, great experience. I was kind of intimidated because she's Diane Warren because she's a Grammy. Every song she writes is just about gold."

After awhile, Martinez began to feel comfortable with her.

"She'll eat Doritos with you. She sits down there and she'll chill with you," said Martinez, one of four vocalists in C-Note.

The Orlando, Fla.,-based C-Note is enjoying the success of its first hit, "Wait Till I Get Home," written and produced by veteran hip-hop hitmakers Full Force, and samples Hall and Oates.

Besides mainstream success, C-Note is breaking into the Latin market, which, thanks to performers like Ricky Martin, has burst onto Top 40 charts.

Three-quarters of C-Note is of Latin heritage. Martinez was born in the United States, and fellow singer Raul Molina was reared in the Dominican Republic. David "D'Lo" Perez's parents are from Cuba and Puerto Rico. C-Note is rounded out by Andrew "Dru" Rogers.

"Being here, growing up in the States, we listen to all the urban music, all the R&B, all the hip-hop, all the pop, the rap. There's

all sorts of music here in the States."

"When I go back home, we listen to the music of our country. It's about time music like this came around."

Martinez grew up in Orlando, Fla., but spent a year in Clinton Township living with an aunt who fell ill. When Martinez was a child, his father pushed him to become a baseball player. Eventually, Martinez, 1993 graduate of Chippewa Valley High School, made his way into music.

C-Note falls into the "boy group" category that also includes 'N Sync and the Backstreet Boys. But Ceci Kurzman, VP of worldwide marketing at Epic Records, thinks differently.

"First and foremost, we don't see them as a boy group, but as a very talented vocal group. It just so happens that they're good looking," Kurzman told Billboard magazine.

Either way, C-Note is set to open for Brandy during her tour, which makes a stop at Joe Louis Arena on Friday, July 2.

"What I like about it is the tour's more soulful in a vocal way. Brandy's total R&B but also a big-time cross-over star. Silk is a big-time R&B act. For us to be put in there and be respected for our vocals, that's something I'm really looking forward to."

C-Note along with Silk and 702 open for Brandy's 8 p.m. Friday, July 2, at Joe Louis Arena, 600 Civic Center Dr., Detroit. Tickets are \$28, \$38 and \$48. Call (313) 983-6600 or visit www.ticketmaster.com for more information.

Imperial Teen

For Imperial Teen founder Roddy Bottum, touring with Courtney Love and Hole was like being a part of a traveling circus.

"It's as entertaining as a circus. Well, Hole are really great. There's not like any clowns or tigers," explained Bottum, the former keyboardist for Faith No More.

Imperial Teen's latest album, "What is Not to Love" (London) was released in February and carries a 1960s pop sensibility.

Witty and catchy, there's a lot to love on the band's sophomore effort.

When asked if he prefers the majestic sounds of Faith No More, or the lo-fi feel of Imperial Teen, Bottum answered, "Well, let's just stick with Imperial Teen."

"I think our first record was a little bit lo-fi," he said of Imperial Teen.

"This one we spent a little more time with. The first record we just sort of jumped in the studio and recorded a bunch of songs that we just learned how to play. This one we took a lot of time with it - like months. We took a lot of time in the studio, refining the sound, experimenting, having a good time."

Bottum explained that the

quick turnaround time of 1999's "Seasick" is reflective of the "theme of the last record."

"We were at a point in all of our individual artistry where we had just sort of learned all the instruments we were playing. We were writing songs together for the first time. We wrote the songs really fast. It just was where we were going with that record. It was just a very novice approach. We were pushing the point that you don't need to spend a lot of money, or be hyper-proficient to write good, passionate pop songs. That was sort of the theme that came into the first record."

"We're not really there anymore. We've been playing together for close to five years. We know each other really well. We play together really well so we're

not gonna stick to some lo-fi pretentious charade," he said before adding "that just rolled off my tongue, didn't it?"

Imperial Teen and Owsley open for Fountains of Wayne 8 p.m. Wednesday, July 14, at The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door for the all-ages show. Call (313) 961-MELT or visit www.961melt.com for more information.

Misc.

The Cult's concert at the Viper Room on Hollywood's Sunset

Strip is available on demand through July 23 at www.mp3.com/theCult. The Web cast includes songs like "Wild Flower" and "Love Removal Machine."

The Cult, lead by frontman Ian Astbury and guitarist Billy Duffy, are performing together for the first time in four years. The Cult reunion also includes drummer Matt Sorum, formerly of Guns 'N Roses, and bassist Martyn LeNoble, formerly of Porno for Pyros. The Cult plays Clutch Cargo's in Pontiac on Thursday, July 29. For more information, call (248) 645-6666 or visit www.661melt.com

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