

MUSIC

# No Knife cuts out of California, heads for Detroit

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Mitch Wilson is trying hard not to laugh.

He's calling from a telephone in a noisy cafe hallway somewhere in Austin Texas, but someone else has caught his attention.

"There's this kid — wearing all camouflage — standing right in front of me, yo-yoing," said Wilson, vocalist for the San Diego-based quartet No Knife. "He's like 'check me out, I'm around the world.'"

For a band whose name was derived from a line in the 1978 film, "The Deer Hunter," which depicted the Vietnam War, the camouflage kid was all too appropriate distraction. While Wilson neglected to elaborate on the exact line in the script which spawned the moniker, he said they were striving for a name that wouldn't conjure up pictures in people's minds. No Knife's music alone would do that.

The band is touring the country in support of their third album, "Fire in the City of Automations," released on May 18.

Playing music was something Wilson always knew he wanted to do. He joined his first band at age 15 as a singer. Every time he tried to pick up a guitar his bandmates would tell him to put it back down. Two years later he grabbed a guitar and never put it down again. By 1983, he had written several songs and needed the right vehicle in which to perform them. That vehicle became No Knife. After two line-up changes, three albums, and almost-constant touring, No Knife established a strong chemistry among its members: singer/guitarist Wilson, guitarist Ryan Ferguson, bassist Brian Desjean and drummer Chris Prescott.

The result of that union can be heard in the band's latest sonic exploration, a collection of 12 songs rich in texture and poetic language.

Wilson said the album was "a



Cutting edge: No Knife (left to right) is Brian Desjean, Ryan Ferguson, Mitch Wilson and Chris Prescott. The band, hailing from San Diego, will perform at the Magic Stick in Detroit on Thursday, Aug. 19.

more collaborative effort," compared to previous albums "Drunk on the Moon" and "Hit Man Dreams." Rather than writing an entire song and sharing it with the other members of the band, the songs were written collectively. With the addition of Chris Prescott, Wilson said the band's sound changed.

"The difference in drumming styles is amazing," he said. "Chris has more of a jazz influence. It's less bombastic. Now we're trying to layer and create space and notes and arrangements."

No Knife worked with Australian producer Greg Wales to create "Fire in the City of Automations." Fresh off of tour, the band found out that Wales' visa was about to expire. Without wasting a moment, the band and Wales jumped in to write

and record a new set of material.

"It worked out better we were under the gun," said Wilson, who describes some of the songs as experimental, happy accidents. Wales encouraged the band to stay open to the possibilities, to have an idea, but not set it in stone.

"We could be a little more experimental," added Wilson. "As a result I think it breathes a little more. It's got a better energy to it. It's a blast to work with."

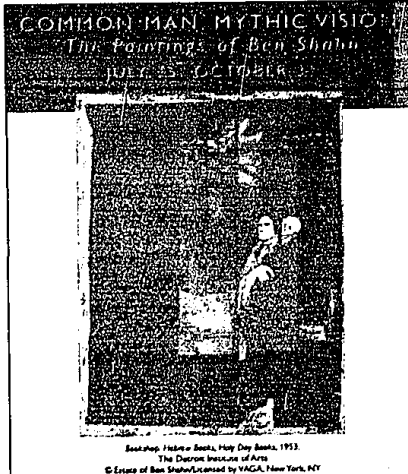
Some of the songs Wilson likes most on the new album are those that came together quickly, and somewhat on their own.

"Mission Control" didn't have lyrics until about 30 minutes before it was recorded, Wilson said. "Under the Moon," was that way too, all of a sudden."

Ent World on June 10. Wilson remembers it fondly. "It was awesome, free bowling. They fed us," he said.

No Knife will perform 8 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 19, at the Magic Stick in the Majestic complex, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$7 at the door. All ages are welcome. Call (313) for information.



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Wilson said the lyrics to "Under the Moon" just "came into his head and didn't leave. The song paints its picture with words and music: 'Under the moon/facing the water we drank wine/late night, fireside/ Under the moon facing the water we swan dive/late night, high tide.'"

"My favorite songs are written in five to ten minutes," said Wilson. "A lot of the themes, even though they're not always conscious, seem to be not falling in with the whole group mentality." Other songs have a personal edge to them, dealing with life on tour.

No Knife will stop in Michigan next Thursday for a show at The Magic Stick. The band last played at the club with Jimmy

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