

Matthew invites 'Everybody Down' to The Shelter

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Chicago-based quartet Matthew are just starting to make a name for themselves in modern indie rock circles. But it hasn't taken very long for the band to grab our attention—thanks to a solid foundation of catchy-but-meaningful rock songs and a strong belief in themselves.

'Everybody Down' is Matthew's latest release from Rykodisc. They've just hit the road with Gene and will make their first-ever Detroit appearance tomorrow.

Here's what singer Brian McSweeney shared about the band a recent interview with the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers:

O&E: So, you're just back from Europe, how did the tour go?

B.M.: "It was wonderful. Europe is always beautiful. It's the third time we've been. Ryko U.K. is keeping us very busy. They're licensing our record to a few different record companies in Paris, Germany, Holland and then Ryko U.K."

O&E: Tell me how Matthew originally came together?

B.M.: "Matt (Sumpter) and I grew up together. I've been playing music since I was 19 years old.



Matthew, a Chicago-based rock band, will make their first Detroit-area appearance tomorrow at Detroit's Shelter. The band is singer Brian McSweeney (left to right), guitarist Jason Sipe, drummer Matt Sumpter and bassist James Scott.

We met because we were dating the same girl at the same time and we didn't know it.

"We've been playing together for several years. The band we were in broke up. Matt moved up here. I was the guitar player and he was the drummer in

Lackluster. When the singer quit and decided to become a solo artist, the two of us set out writing songs together.

"We worked on songs for about a year and a half. We had been doing this for a while. We knew we wanted to be a four-piece rock

band."

O&E: Tell me what each member brings to the project?

B.M.: "Matt and I are the backbone. I've always believed for a rock band it is really important to have a great drummer. He and I have always been the structure of the songs. The other bassist (James Scott) and guitar player (Jason Sipe), they are more of the colors. They're the paint on the canvas."

O&E: Having spent so much time on tour since the start, how long did it take for this record to come together? And have some of the songs been around for a while?

B.M.: "A few songs were probably done for more than four years. A few of them are as new as a year old. The newer songs, I think, are a little more cohesive as a band. In *Your Car* was added at the eleventh hour. *Breathing* we did in the hour. *The Darkest Night* was the first song."

O&E: The songs are all very melodic and quite emotional and personal. Is it very taxing to perform them night after night?

B.M.: "We all love to perform. It's a chance to make the record over again and do things differently every night."

"Sometimes the songs really take you somewhere. The most

taxing thing is writing the songs. It's just a long process. It just takes a lot of patience."

O&E: Where do you feel Matthew fits into the Chicago music scene?

B.M.: "I feel we're becoming more a part of it. We didn't really grow up here. We made the record and first thing, started touring. We were lucky enough that our booking agent (who sends us) outside the U.S. We

haven't been home.

"Slowly, it's kinda building. We have our first big show at the Metro on the 12th. It's the first show of the tour with Gene. It's pretty exciting."

The following night Matthew and headliners Gene will perform at the Shelter, below St. Andrews Hall, 431 E. Congress in Detroit. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Call (248) 645-6666 for tickets and information. scsola@homecomm.net (034) 953 054

American Mars to take the stage in Ferndale

When Detroit's own American Mars released its second record last winter, audiences quickly stood up and took notice. And for good reason. The spacey alt-country delight known as *No City Fun* delved into intriguing musical territory, attracting listeners to lose their way in the dreamy melodies and stormy ambience of songs like *Over the Gun, If Monday Were Mine*, and *Loneliness is Murder*.

Dave Feeny's tell-tale pedal steel evolved into a signature element of American Mars' sound.

The instrument lends just enough melancholy beauty to compliment Thomas Trimble's thoughtful, often introspective lyrics.

performing amid an intimate setting or presiding over a large audience, it's almost impossible to look away. The band often adds a visual element to its live shows—like home movies or video projected onto flowing white sheets. The upcoming performance is sure to include some new surprises.

American Mars perform with special guests Overcoat Recording artists Boxstep and Detroit's Jetway, featuring former members of Ansonia, 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 13 at The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Cover is \$7.21 and older.

Call (248) 244-3030. For more information see www.americanmars.com.

By Stephanie Angelyn Casola



American Mars is David Feeny, Mike Popovich, Garth Girard and Thomas Trimble. Catch them Friday at Ferndale's Magic Bag.

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