

RCA BRINGS DAVE MATTHEWS BAND TO MAJORS WITH 'DREAMING'

(Continued from page 11)

development. "In fact, the way I heard about the band is that an intern played them for me off one of those exact cassettes!"

Matthews was born and raised in South Africa, which he says may be one of the sources of his band's multicultural feel. "I call [our style] a stew," he says. "When I write songs, I use circular riffs that have an African bent."

The Dave Matthews Band comprises a diverse group of musicians, each ea-

ger to contribute his own ideas. Both Leroi Moore (sax/flute) and Carter Beauford (drums) are seasoned jazz veterans, while Stefan Lessard (bass) has been playing in clubs since age 15. Boyd Tinsley's classically trained violin skills complete the band's sound.

"I'm really lucky to work with these guys," says Matthews. "They can follow the crazy ideas I have and toss in crazy ideas of their own. I mean, I know nothing about jazz except that I

enjoy it, but Leroi can play this riff and I'm like, 'Yeah, yeah, that's it!'"

"Under The Table And Dreaming" was produced by Steve Lillywhite (U2, Talking Heads, XTC), and Matthews says the collaboration was a perfect fit.

"We had a choice of some terrific people to work with, but Steve was so adamant that he be the one," says Matthews. "I couldn't argue with him—my heart is easily stolen by eagerness."

BIG HEAD TODD

(Continued from page 11)

to film what Backer says he hopes will be a "spectacular" video for the leadoff single, "In The Morning." The song has already received great exposure from its inclusion on the "Blown Away" film soundtrack. The videoclip will be directed by Josh Taft, who has also worked with Pearl Jam. "I don't believe MTV will be able to deny this," Backer says.

Big Head Todd & the Monsters' listeners won't be able to deny that "In The Morning" and other new tunes—such as "Kensington Line," "Magdalena," and "Angel Leads Me On"—sound markedly different from the ones on "Sister Sweetly." The last record was derivative of the blues Mohr and band mates Rob Squires and Brian Nevin are so fond of, but "Strategem" is more of a raw, straight-ahead, earthy rock'n'roll album.

"We're not a blues band," Mohr says. "I once classified us as a white band that couldn't play blues, so we played rock'n'roll. I think ['Strategem'] is a great record. It's more of a band record, and we produced it ourselves and paid for it out of our own pockets."

"It was a painful album to write," he adds, "because it was such an isolated experience for me."

In recording "Strategem," the band returned home to Boulder for two months this spring and rented the Boulder Theatre to use as a recording studio. Jeff Aldrich, Giant's head of A&R, says the band benefited greatly from being in familiar surroundings. "They were able to produce a record in an environment where they were comfortable and had a long history of performing," he says. "They wanted to come up with something more representative of their live sound, and this album is more natural and organic sounding."

Backer hopes more than album rock listeners will be able to hear these new sounds. While album rock radio will continue to be the "mainstay" for playing Big Head Todd, he says, efforts will be made to get the new music on alternative and mainstream radio as well. "We'll be working alternative radio, and when top 40 has a reason to play it, we'll take the song to top 40," he says. "Top 40 radio play does not connote selling out."

Backer says that retail has been a big supporter of the band in the past, but adds that Giant won't rest on its laurels in making Big Head Todd's presence felt at those outlets. "We will set up tremendously at retail with displays," he says. Giant will also add two new titles, as it will distribute the group's first two independent releases from several years ago, "Another Mayberry" and "Midnight Radio."

Lillywhite attempted to showcase the Dave Matthews Band for a wider audience without distilling its distinctive sound. "He had a sense of how we wanted to go, definitely," says Matthews. "He brought a calmness to the record. It's still pumpin', but now it's more focused."

RCA hopes the Dave Matthews Band can expand the label's alternative appeal, which has been limited.

"I think this record is a marketing person's wet dream," says Flohr. "That's the beauty of a fan base of this size: They know when the song's on radio, they know when the album's out, they know what the album cover art looks like even before I do. For us to come in, say, 'Thanks for the fan base,' and then take over—that's when we'd lose them."

RCA will target the band to many radio formats, from modern rock outlets to album rock—even R&B stations. A first single has not been se-

lected.

RCA will market the record selectively at first, "letting the record fuel its own fire," says Flohr. For retail, "we'll look at listening posts and some new-artist programs, but the biggest thing going into the retail side is the right accounts. We have a track record from the first record, and that's where the focus is."

RCA plans to market the band first through its established base in the South and on the East Coast, relying on touring—more than 200 dates through 1994—to raise awareness.

The Dave Matthews Band also is taking part in the H.O.R.D.E. tour this year, hitting the road with such acts as Blues Traveler, the Allman Brothers, and Big Head Todd & the Monsters. "You can learn something by being around [the other bands]," Matthews says. "Looking at Blues Traveler and seeing where they are, and saying, 'That's where I wanna be.'"

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