

West Coast Rock Group 10 Speed Gets Into Gear For Its A&M Debut

BY DOUG REECE

LOS ANGELES—While on the verge of recording its self-titled debut album for A&M, due May 19, local band 10 Speed ran into Monster Magnet's Dave Wyndorf, who happened to be working in the same studio at the time.

As recalled by 10 Speed singer/guitarist Hutch Walker, a short exchange with Wyndorf proved to be both prophetic and unnerving.

"We were kind of worried, and we were complaining and talking about all these lofty expectations we had, and [Wyndorf] just looks at us snidely and goes, 'Records are never finished.'

"We've heard that from a couple sources since then, but it never meant what it did to us right as we were about to make our first record," adds Walker. "At the time, it kind of rubbed me the wrong way, but by the end of recording, you realize you go into it with all these intentions and only a certain amount of money, a certain amount of time, and a certain amount of ability to stay sane."

While Walker says the band, which includes bassist Dimitry and recently added drummer Newman, ended up being 75% satisfied with the album, A&M director of product development (U.S.) Scott Carter says he expects a higher satisfaction rate from listeners.

"We think it's a super-creative album that will appeal to classic rock fans who dig Queen and T. Rex, and we also think it will go over with the modern rock kids that are into Beck and Spacehog and the like," says Carter.

The band's flirtatious, space odyssey-themed, occasionally narrative "Space Queen" single shipped to specialty and college radio in late March and will be worked at mainstream and modern rock outlets starting April 8.

So far, the track is getting tested at such modern rock stations as WBCN Boston, WLUM Milwaukee, WXDX Pittsburgh, and XHRM San Diego.

Future Bob, who programs "Detour," a specialty show on WTFX Louisville, Ky., says 10 Speed and acts like Spacehog are fueling a retrograded appetite for glam rock. "Everything is going back to hair," he says. "That seems to be where the trend is headed."

Though the song—as well as some other album cuts—begs comparisons to David Bowie, the band takes umbrage with what it sees as lazy analogies.

"Every song takes from its own generation, so whatever turned up on the record was what we picked from all the colors we like and what feels good," says Dimitry. "When we go in to do a record, or any kind of recording, each song has its own life and its own story."

"10 Speed" features several charismatic, playful songs. The group's music, published by Beaker One Music/BMI, runs the gamut from the dark quirks of "When Your Lips Are Blue" to a hidden



10 SPEED

track, in which the act runs through the letters of the alphabet in a psychedelic "Sesame Street" mode.

The band, which originally intended to release the album itself, already has a toehold in Los Angeles.

"After being [in L.A.] three years, you kind of get the feeling you must have been picked over," says Walker. "You figure someone has looked at you, so it's like, 'Forget it. Let's do it all independent.' We started looking for a producer and bought Adats.

"There were times we were playing

three shows a night," he adds. "We chose to think, 'All right, we're the Beatles in Hamburg. Let's play every possible show we can get our hands on.'"

Before the band could enter the studio, however, A&M intervened.

"One of the reasons we really like them is how hard they work," says Carter. "They go snipe the streets, and right after they're done with a show, they jump down in the crowd with a clipboard. They've got a few thousand people on their mailing list."

Hoping to capitalize on that West Coast flash point, A&M is planning on focusing on such cities as Los Angeles; San Francisco; San Diego; Santa Barbara; Portland, Ore.; and Seattle.

At retail, "10 Speed" will be offered at a developing-artist price and featured in point-of-purchase displays.

A video for "Space Queen," directed by Ted Critenden, as well as cassette samplers and the album, will feature secret codes that can be cracked with a decoder sheet offered free with the album.

"10 Speed" will also be the first enhanced CD to be issued by A&M. The multimedia content includes a video documentary, three acoustic songs, and an in-studio interview.

"They've got one of the clearest images of themselves of any band I've ever dealt with," says Carter. "They have an image that is really fun and colorful, and they're very specific about how they want to be portrayed."

"In an age where every alternative band wants the camera to be out of focus and hide their lead singer, these guys are so in your face," he adds.

The act, booked by the William Morris Agency and managed by Steve Stewart Management in Los Angeles, will visit markets where the single reacts. Opening for another act is also being examined.

"Let's face it," says Carter. "We've got a lot of hard work to do. When the album is released and we see the radio picture develop, we'll have them tour, whether it's the Midwest that's hopping on it or the Northeast."

'SUN' ILLUMINATES LENNON'S INFLUENCES

(Continued from previous page)

sound and still make a cohesive album. That's why I love the Beastie Boys and Beck so much, because they explore many genres and fit all styles of music into their own unique form—which is what I aspire to do."

Lennon's affinity for the Beastie Boys facilitated his signing with their Grand Royal label. "They're such an incredible force," he says. "Any kind of kid my age is into them, so when [Beastie] Adam Yauch asked me to put out a record, it was a big honor, and I jumped to it!"

Grand Royal president Mark Kates says that "Into The Sun" is bound to surprise listeners. "We feel very strongly that Sean has delivered a record that can reach a wide audience," he says, "but it's very important to establish him first and foremost through his music. Clearly there's a

lot of media interest, so it's our job to make sure they talk about the music, because it's an incredibly personal and honest and brave record, and it's unusual to hear this kind of debut album from somebody you've heard of."

Grand Royal's campaign for Lennon rolled into high gear in March, when he started an extensive round of promo appearances, including an April press jaunt to Europe followed by performances and more press there in May. A domestic concert tour commences in late May, to be capped by the Tibetan Freedom Concerts, June 13-14 in Washington, D.C., with another European tour slated through the end of June, followed by Japan in July.

"This is an incredibly important record to us worldwide," notes Kates.

"It has massive potential musically, and it brings us into a new arena as a company audiencewise: There may be a lot of people out there who might not have bought a Grand Royal record before, despite the success of the Beastie Boys and Luscious Jackson, but who are interested in Sean, either because of his pedigree or because he comes from the downtown New York music scene. He's made a record that's not too slick for fans of Cibo Matto and other bands from that scene yet is also pop."

"Into The Sun's" pop potential is significant for Roland West, assistant PD at San Francisco alternative rock station KITS and an avowed John Lennon fan, who has received the "Home" single, which has gone out to college, alternative, and triple-A formats. "It's something radio will want to deal with because of the Sean Lennon name and mystique," says West, noting that major-market alternative stations like KITS are trending toward alternative pop. "We look closely at the pop factor, and we'll weigh that when we listen to Sean."

Noting the John Lennon/Yoko Ono romantic/creative connection, West is also interested in the relationship between Sean and Honda, who is his girlfriend and, according to Lennon, the spiritual inspiration for the album.

Lennon, whose publishing company is the BMI-affiliated Usagi and is currently without management or agent, plays guitar in his band, which also includes Honda on keyboards, Cibo Matto singer Miho Hatori on drums, percussionist Duma Love, and Cibo Matto drummer Timo Ellis on bass (Lennon plays bass in Cibo Matto). He has managed to slot time for recording Cibo Matto's next album but has had to curtail his role in his mother's band while concentrating on his solo project.

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TOP 10 CONCERT GROSSES

ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
ROLLING STONES	River Plate Stadium Buenos Aires	March 29- April 5	\$14,818,850 (14,816,886 pesos) \$150/\$25	271,766 five	Rock & Pop TNA International Ltd
ROLLING STONES	Tokyo Dome Tokyo	March 12- 17	\$10,025,410 (1,283,252,720 yen) \$7.35/\$69.65	138,020 two	TNA International Ltd in-house
ROLLING STONES	Osaka Dome Osaka, Japan	March 20- 21	\$5,317,800 (896,631,200 yen) \$7.35/\$69.65	69,427 two	TNA International Ltd in-house
U2	Athletic Park Johannesburg	March 21	\$2,467,843 (12,265,179 rand) \$52.71/\$24.32	64,320 one	In Concert Entertainment TNA International Ltd
GEORGE STRAIT, TIM MCCRAW, JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY, FAITH HILL, LEE ANN WOMACK, LILA MCCANN, ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL	Louisiana Superdome New Orleans	April 4	\$1,576,648 \$45/\$17.50	43,419 two	PACE Touring
GEORGE STRAIT, TIM MCCRAW, JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY, FAITH HILL, LEE ANN WOMACK, LILA MCCANN, ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL	Legion Field Birmingham, Ala	April 5	\$1,531,436 \$45/\$17.50	44,045 two	PACE Touring
U2	Green Point Stadium Cape Town, South Africa	March 16	\$1,338,233 (6,835,988 rand) \$52.71/\$22.30	50,362 one	In Concert Entertainment TNA International Ltd
GARTH BROOKS, TRISHA YEARWOOD	Dean E. Smith Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Chapel Hill, N.C.	April 3-4	\$802,040 \$20	40,800 two	Varnell Enterprises
ERIC CLAPTON, DISTANT COUSINS	Arena, St. Paul Civic Center St. Paul, Minn.	March 30	\$143,279 \$56.50/\$19	15,571 one	Jam Prods
JANA GABRIEL	Universal Amphitheatre Universal City, Calif	March 28- 29	\$883,642 \$131/\$38.50/\$56.50	11,417 two	Universal Concerts

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