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The Uglysuit raises the metro's temperature with shiny indie rock and good vibes

Wednesday, July 30, 2008
By Lucas Ross

Should Oklahoma's sweltering summer forecast of triple-digit heat already have you fantasizing about January temperatures, the remarkably sunny sounds and upbeat outlook of metro indie rock band The Uglysuit might just make you fall in love with the warmer season all over again.



FAMILIAL KINSHIP POSITIVE VIBES

Now preparing for the release of its self-titled debut album next month, the local outfit will take the stage Friday night at The 51st Street Speakeasy. Comprised of six friends in their early 20s, the Oklahoma City group has tried on various sound styles since coming together as teens but the act has clearly found a perfect fit in The Uglysuit.

"We grew up as a real tight-knit group ever since we all got instruments when we were really young," said vocalist and guitarist Colin Bray. "I remember (lead singer Israel Hindman) just started showing up at my and my brother's (drummer Crosby Bray) house about 7 a.m. around third or fourth grade."

FAMILIAL KINSHIP

The familial kinship between the band members has bred an atmosphere of heartfelt honesty and comforting optimism that shines through in the nine songs found on the release and in the group's well-regarded live performances.

"We really just like getting together in one room and writing music with one point of view based on hope, happiness, love and just wanting to make people smile," Hindman said. "There's a lot of parts on our album that kind of get a little down or a little more serious at times, so we're always trying to break that mood and get to the happy parts, too. We're about seeing the beautiful skies above and not focusing on all of the gloom and doom on earth."

In its attempts to strike a proper balance between blissed-out optimism and shuffling jadedness, The Uglysuit has crafted both a winning pop sensibility and an album that plays like a soundtrack custom-made for the sun-drenched season.

"We've been told that the album has a happy vibe and an uplifting sound to it, which is good because that's the kind of music we want to write," Hindman said. "It's good that the resulting vibes on the finished album met up with our views from the beginning."

POSITIVE VIBES

Nowhere are the album's positive vibes better evidenced than on the group's first single, "Chicago," which is swirling with lucid guitars, organ flourishes, a super-catchy refrain and all the wistfulness of a sultry dog day. Originally written as part of a side project several years ago, the song was a catalyst for helping The Uglysuit become what it is today — recently selected by Rolling Stone's editors for inclusion in the magazine's annual "Hot List."

"'Chicago' was written probably four and a half years ago," Bray said. "It was kind of the perfect breaking point for something new."

"(Being in Rolling Stone) is very surreal," Hindman added. "It's just one of those magazines you never expect to see yourself in."

In addition to their gig at The 51st Street Speakeasy, the guys also have organized a block party in Norman next month to celebrate the release of their album and showcase some of their fellow friends and musicians.

"If you would have told us that we'd be releasing an album with Touch and Go / Quarterstick Records a year ago, we would have probably fainted,"

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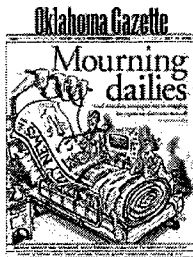
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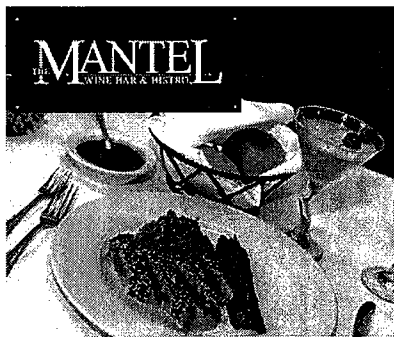


Bray said. "We were trying to think of how we could have a CD release and do something different than just play in a venue, so we decided to try to have a big party. We see it as a big opportunity for everyone." —*Lucas Ross*

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