

An evening with the Marauders: Rockabilly resurrected

by Kiernan Schalk

Armed only with their chosen instruments and the desire to play, the Marauders belt out some of the greatest rockabilly ever. People who miss Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley need to see the Marauders.

The band formed in 2001 after Ben Dumm, lead guitar, approached friends with the idea of playing some songs he had written. Their musical experience was extensive, but none of them had ever played rockabilly.

"[We] always wanted to play rockabilly," said Dumm, so when the opportunity to form a band presented itself, they jumped on it.

The Castle Pub in Ebensburg, Pa., is where everything came together for the band. Drummer Abe Weber recalls that the first time he met with the rest of the group, he said, "This is a line-up."

There were originally five members, but two have since left and gone on to other things. The remaining players feared that something might be missing in a three-piece band, but that fear subsided as soon as they played their first show.

"For us, less is more," said Dumm. "It's easier to keep everyone on the same page," said Chris Lawson, who plays stand-up base, adding that they realized it was easier to play off of one another and "[fill] in the gaps."

The Marauders love to play in front of a large crowd.

"It's a big rush for me," said Lawson, but if they had to, they would play for three people.

"We just want people to have a good time," said Dumm. "We give these guys everything we can give them."

The band has built a loyal fan base. It's not uncommon to see almost every age demographic represented at their shows, and because of this fact they feel very fortunate, said Dumm.

In addition to being grateful for a supportive fan base, the Marauders are very thankful for friends, said Dumm, and for family who have encouraged them to keep making music. They are proud of what he's doing, said Lawson.

The band receives the "best criticism from friends and family ... [it] comes from the heart ... their criticism is criticism we can use," Dumm said.

Weber's parents allow the Marauders to use their basement for practices, and they keep the band in all the pizza, wings and beer they need. But Weber advises caution at the fridge door because of the "mystery beer." The door contains a wide array of unlabeled beers acquired over the years of practicing, and nobody knows what is inside a bottle until it is opened.

Three albums and many mystery beers later, the Marauders show no signs of slowing down.

"We're not trying to be ..." Dumm starts off, and Lawson finishes the sentence: "...anything but ourselves."

The Marauders have toyed with the idea of going on a tour across the United States and are trying to plan a show in State College in the near future.

The group is also working on a new album in Pittsburgh; there is no set release date. The Marauders are on the Web at www.themarauderspa.com.



Photo by John Tanish

From left, Chris Lawson, Abe Weber and Ben Dumm make up the Marauders, a rockabilly band that started in Ebensburg, Pa. The group plans a State College show in the near future.

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