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Published: November 17, 2010

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Local favorites Out of Spite rock this town

By Casey Gillis



Local band Out of Spite got off to a rocky start when they began playing together a few years ago.

Bass player Dave Eubank, who taught himself to play after seeing Nikki Sixx in action during the Mötley Crüe comeback tour, had been jamming with his brother, a drummer, and a guitarist friend for awhile when they decided to add a lead singer to the mix.

Eubank approached his old high school buddy, Robbie Godfrey, and asked him to come out to one of their jam sessions.

After listening, "he said, 'No. Y'all are terrible,'" Eubank remembers, laughing. "That's a true story."

The guys used Godfrey's critique as motivation and continued playing. A year later, they asked him to come back, and this time, he liked what he saw.

"Rob said, 'I think I can work with you guys now,'" Eubank says.

The band's lineup has changed since then.

Eubank's brother and the guitarist both left and were replaced by New Jersey transplant Mike Keane and, in February, guitarist Tommy Cox. Both men have played with other bands around town; Keane used to be the drummer for Sick N Tired, and Cox still performs with Volume 3 and Hard Days Night, a Beatles tribute band.

The new chemistry is working for them; over the summer, Out of Spite won a contest, voted on by the public, to perform at Friday Cheers.

"They play a great variety in their show and play to the crowd and not just for themselves," says Chris McCune, events manager for Lynch's Landing.

"Moving from a club atmosphere to a large festival-type arena can be challenging, but they handled it perfectly. They were just as strong as other seasoned bands that have been with us for years. They owned the stage."

Out of Spite plays a mix of originals and covers, everything from Lynyrd Skynyrd to Marvin Gaye, Charlie Daniels to House of Pain or Zac Brown Band to Metallica.

"We do a medley of 'Devil Went Down to Georgia' with 'Running With the Devil.' It really gets a wide-eyed reaction," says Eubank. "We try to hit everybody's funny bone twice a night."

Other fan favorites include mash-ups of Great White's "Once Bitten Twice Shy" with ZZ Top's "Sharp Dressed Man" and Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama" with "Ice Ice Baby."

"We put on a show. We're not just guys up on stage, playing other people's music," Eubank says. "We attack it like it's our own."

Adds Godfrey: "We're jumping around. We headbang with them. (Eubank) jumps down into the crowd and dances. ... Our philosophy is people have cheaper beer and more comfortable seats at home, so get 'em up and keep 'em moving."

A common misconception is that, because of its name, Out of Spite is strictly a hard rock or heavy metal band.

But, Eubank says, their name actually comes from an episode of "Seinfeld," which finds Jerry trying to return a coat to a department store "for spite" because he didn't like the salesman.

The guys bring that same sense of humor to their interactions with each other. During a recent rehearsal, the laughter was constant as they reminisced about how they all came together.

"We constantly make fun of each other, like brothers would," Eubank says. "We're really good friends, and we have a good time together. I think that's really important."

Each member also brings his own influences to Out of Spite's set list.

Eubank, a former teacher who works for Frito Lay, is partial to '80s hair bands, like Mötley Crüe and Poison, while Keane, an Areva employee, prefers '90s hard rock and metal. Think Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains and Tool.

Cox, the group's quietest member and the only one who makes a living performing and teaching music, does most of his talking through his guitar, regularly attacking riffs from what Godfrey calls '80s "guitar gods." He's also a fan of other guitarists like Stevie Ray Vaughan and Randy Rhoads.

"I love hearing him play what other bands won't ever dare to do," he says. "He's arguably the best guitar player in the area."

For his part, Godfrey, who works at Lancaster Galleries and counts Van Halen, Aerosmith and Metallica as influences, usually is tasked with writing Out of Spite's originals; one of their favorites is "Monday Morning Strong," a tune McCune says is radio worthy.

"What's really cool," Godfrey says, "is hearing the audience singing your lyrics back to you."

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