

Sweet Remains to grace Sisters Folk Festival with harmonies

By Ceili Cornelius
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Sweet Remains is a band made up of three guys who didn't know they needed to be in a band together.

Greg Naughton, one of the three members of the band, spoke with *The Nugget* on the creation of the band, their sound and their autobiographical film. The Sweet Remains will be featured at this year's Sisters Folk Festival.

Known for their strong melodic drive and comparable sounds to bands of the 1960s and '70s such as Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, the Sweet Remains have been a band on the road for over 10 years. Greg Naughton and Rich Price attended college together in Middleburg, Vermont, and went into music together as a hobby. They would sit in at each other's sets around New York performing their own songs. When they decided to go into music together, they realized the benefit of touring as a unit.

"Touring is expensive and lonely, and being together we were able to keep each other company. However, throughout our small music tours, we felt like we were missing that third harmony part," said Naughton.

Several years later, after being separated for a while and going on their own career paths, Naughton and Price found each other once again in New York City through a mutual record agency that was going under. There is where the two met Brian Chartrand. They met for a jam session in a hotel room and instantly recognized the kinship they had, and thought of Chartrand as the third harmony part they had previously been looking for.

At first, the band's name was RGB, standing for the members' first names. However, they thought of the connection the band had as a showing of how much remained in their sound even after two of the members went off on their own.

"We thought of the three of us connecting as a sort of phoenix rising from what remained, and that is where we got the name 'Sweet Remains,'" said Naughton.

Naughton and the two other band members began touring around the East Coast, eventually moving westward to where they are now nationally known. They were all touring with the band amidst their own solo tours as well.

"We still did our own solo recording and work while also recording and writing for the band, and we then played the songs for producer Andy

Zula, and he has since been the producer on all of the band's projects and albums," Naughton said.

Naughton describes the band's music as containing broad strokes of Americana and singer-songwriter rock 'n' roll.

"A big inspiration for our sound was Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young with three-part harmonies, Americana folk, and rock instrumental sound," he said.

This year, an autobiographical film starring the band members, "The Independents" will be airing in select theaters. There will be a special screening at the Sisters Movie House, Wednesday, September 4, at 6:30 p.m. ahead of their performances at the Sisters Folk Festival. The event is free to the public with a suggested donation, with a limit of two tickets per person.

The movie came about after many years of collaboration and talks with the members of the band on if they actually wanted to do something like this. Naughton had previous theater experience, owning a theater company in New York while he was on a break from music.

"In the middle of our tour I began writing this film about the band's unique relationship and their funny experiences, and I felt fascinated by it," he said.

The film tells the story of how the three men were figuring out how to be in a band — and a touring band as well. They went back and forth for a long time on if they wanted to hire actors for the film, or just play themselves. They

opted to just play themselves.

"We went to the extreme stock character version of ourselves and in the movie, we all kind of meet at crisis points in our lives, which is exaggerated slightly," said Naughton.

Rich Price, in the film, was expected by his family to be a super-scholar, which is what he was in school before he met Greg. Greg was in college and a tree-limbing arborist before finding music.

"Brian's character was the most exaggerated, that he was this homeless lost hippie, but he was without a job floating around looking for another music gig in real life when we met him," said Naughton. "Playing ourselves really allowed us to have a safe zone to completely be ourselves while filming."

The band members had a wonderful time doing the film together and have already received praise for the film. As stated on their website: "'The Independents' debuted at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival where the *Hollywood Reporter* hailed it as 'An extremely engaging film... An unconventional and sharply written script which subverts all the clichés of the star-is-born story.'"

Over the summer, the band has been recording new singles every month.

"For the start of every month we release a new single. It has been a nice way for us to break out into the streaming world and interact with our audiences better," said Naughton.

Eventually, all of the singles will be collected into one record. The band has been to



PHOTO PROVIDED


The Sweet Remains — stars of stage and screen.

Oregon a number of times, but never to Sisters.

"We look forward to it very much and I have friends in Bend I am looking forward to getting to see as well," he said.

The Sweet Remains will be playing the Sisters Folk Festival, September 6-8.

Tickets are still available. For more information visit www.sistersfolkfestival.org. They will also host a question-and-answer session at the screening of "The Independents" on Wednesday, September 4 at Sisters Movie House at 6:30 p.m.



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