

'Aerodronemania' rocks the Northwest

Eugene-based rock band Aerodrone looks to expand its local horizons while achieving rock 'n' roll stardom

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Local rock band Aerodrone used to joke about becoming the next Aerosmith, and now it looks like it's on its way to stardom. In early January, the group will be traveling to Edmonton, Canada to record an EP with Nocturnal Productions. The band finalized this decision after being contacted by both independent and major recording companies within the last couple of weeks.

The awestruck young rockers attribute their newfound industry attention to a combination of networking and pure luck. Although Aerodrone may act humble, checking out their recordings, it's clear that their music is what truly sets them apart.

Featuring five high-energy songs, Aerodrone's self-titled demo serves up a unique blend of gritty retro rock with a side dish of smooth, synth-driven new wave. The band has a knack for writing catchy hooks that refuse to leave the listener's head.

In "Give Up," the demo's title track, punk-pop takes over as Gary Zon, the band's elusive Russian frontman, reassures his listeners,

"I like people, I'm a really nice guy." To experience this song, imagine jug-jug guitars and the melodic "woah-ohs" of Jimmy Eat World being sung by a key-tar playing Elvis Costello impersonator.

"Don't Speak Up," on the other hand, is a hyperactive pop ditty that demands '80s-style freak dancing. While band guitarist Kevin Patrick stabs at the chorus with choppy, Franz Ferdinand-style guitar riffs, keyboardist Shawn Kilmer pounds out cheesy 8-bit tones that sound like some kid going wild on "Space Invaders" at the local arcade. Even though the bass part is overly simple and the drums sound a little off at times, this is definitely Aerodrone's best song.

Aerodrone rounds out their demo with a low-end dominant piece entitled "Infinite." Unlike most of their repertoire, this song is slower and showcases a dark and atmospheric backdrop of industrial-sounding keyboards. As the movement progresses, more and more levels of instrumentation are added into the mix, building up a wall of sound reminiscent of Nine Inch Nails.

What the demo lacks in mixing



COURTESY

Gary Zon, left, and Kevin Patrick perform live with Aerodrone at a San Diego club in late October. This Eugene-based rock band is finally getting recognition from record companies and not just fans.

and production quality, it makes up for in solid performances.

Over the past year, Aerodrone has gigged these demo songs relentlessly, and begun to carve out a significant fan base with the young people of Eugene.

"Our scene can seem stale at times," said Dane Sundseth of

Minute Morning Magazine, "but Aerodrone is inspiring because they bring about hope of having a music community that consists of more than just jam bands and low-grade punk groups."

Aerodronemania was a phrase coined by the band after some of their fans began to wear homemade

shirts that referred to individual members by name. Among other things, band members have been asked to pose for fan photos and sign various memorabilia.

"When I saw them at the Campbell Club, there was a guy in front of me who appeared to be a relatively

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