

Local indie band The Evening Shades rocks it!

BY MIKELL NIELSEN

Feeling some serious hometown pride, passionate fans of The Evening Shades celebrated at the band's recent CD release party in Medford. With standing room only, the band took to the stage like seasoned rock stars. Bandmates include two of Applegate Valley's own, Matthew Tayvis (bass, keys) and Justen Nielsen (drums), as well as Mark Thales (vocals) and Sam Kovic (guitar) from Medford. The Evening Shades are the winners of the Rising Stars 2015 music competition. The band's recently released CD is titled *Alright*.

Though the band is busy performing shows and writing new music for their sophomore album (2016 scheduled release), Matthew and Justen gave us a personal look into their history, their future, and why they are a band to be remembered.

How was The Evening Shades formed?

Matthew: "I met Mark playing a solo show at a brewery in 2012. I knew right away he was talented and into the same style of music I like. We searched for years to find the right guitarist and drummer and finally accomplished that with the addition of super talents Sam and Justen."

When did you know you were a musician?

Matthew: "I've always loved the piano. I started playing when I was four and doing live performances when I was 12. My parents didn't know what to do; I was spending hours playing before I could even talk right. I didn't know at that age how it would evolve."

What does Justen bring to the band?

Matthew: "Justen is a human metronome—exactly what every great band needs. He's a super-talented drummer and always makes every moment a good one. He finds the humor in everything, no matter the occasion."

Tell me about your musical background.

Justen: "I grew up listening to rock,

classical music and old standards, but when I started playing drums I mainly played metal and punk. After high school I attended the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, where I learned to play different genres of music—everything from jazz to Latin to pop.

What does Matt bring to the band?

Justen: "He brings his bass guitar and keyboard, his picks, usually a beer [laughs]. Seriously, Matt has a great sense of creativity and loves an epic song. He has a large part in creating our songs that feel really huge."

What is your opinion about the music scene in southern Oregon?

Justen: "It's sadly underrated. There are many talented musicians and a wide variety of music here."

Being a professional musician can be a challenge on many levels. What keeps you motivated?

Justen: "I don't experience head games or have insecurities about music like when I played high school and college soccer. It's something I completely enjoy and feel confident and happy about. It's really inspiring to hear what people think of our music and see how it affects them. They teach us things about our songs that we don't know ourselves. That's pretty motivating."

Your CD release party was a huge success. Where do you go from here?

Matthew: "We'll continue to play shows in this area. The demand seems to be getting greater every year. We sent our CD overseas and to different music blogs and reviewers hoping for more exposure. The album has been featured on several blogs and even *Fireworks* magazine. We may be touring Europe sometime next year. That would be amazing."

Which song on *Alright* do you see becoming a hit single?

Justen: Everyone seems to enjoy "Any Louder." It's the song we end our shows with because it's such a huge experience."



Indie band The Evening Shades, from left to right: Matthew Tayvis—bass, keys and vocals; Sam Kovic—guitar and vocals; Mark Thales—lead vocals and guitar; Justen Nielsen—drums. Photo: mikelllouis photography.

What makes The Evening Shades a band to remember?

Matthew: "We have a sound that appeals to all age groups—from 10 to 70 you'll be tapping your feet or full-out dancing to our melodic tunes. Our sound is easily embraceable and familiar, yet totally unique. We have different musical influences and all love writing music. When you put it all together you get The Evening Shades—a sound that hopefully will be more and more embraced for years to come!"

Tell me something personal that might surprise your fans.

Justen: "I used to be in a gothic

industrial band that opened for Peter Murphy at Stan Lee's Comikaze in Los Angeles. And I had a 12-inch green and black mohawk."

Matthew: "I might stop wearing a hat some day." (It has been anonymously reported that Matthew has never been seen sans hat.)

The Evening Shades generously offers its talents to nonprofit organizations. Their album *Alright* is available for download on iTunes. For more information, visit www.theeveningshades.com or email theeveningshades@gmail.com.

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STOLEN MOMENTS

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The Stolen Moments trio, from left to right: Dan Fellman on guitar, Conny Lindley on guitar and vocals, and Walter Lindley on bass and vocals. Photo: Courtesy of Stolen Moments.

connection with people in a universal, emotional way," Dan says. "I think we all seek connection, and there is something magical about how music can make that happen, however fleetingly."

Maybe it's because of that sense of connection that Stolen Moments is generous in playing for nonprofit organizations. "We're glad to do it," Walter says, "if it's a good cause and a fun gig and if we're playing music we enjoy for people who appreciate it." But when they volunteer their music for nonprofit events, he suggests that the musicians who travel should get paid at least \$50, and Dan says a glass of wine wouldn't hurt, either.

Listening to the sweet sounds of Stolen Moments' music makes one think the band members just pick up their instruments and the music flows out, but Conny reminds us that playing in a band requires a lot of practice and attention to memorizing lyrics and chords, everything

it takes for each member of the band to learn a song so that, individually and collectively, they really "own" it. She has spent a lot of time learning Brazilian Portuguese lyrics and French songs.

And then there's that moment when they get on stage and, as Conny puts it, "the music is flowing through us and, at its best, is almost mystical."

Walter and Dan express much the same thing—Walter when he says, "What I love about playing in an ensemble is getting in *the zone*—that place where the music seems to play itself, is rhythmically in the pocket, and every note sounds good"; and Dan when he says, "There's something very satisfying about synchronizing and resonating in harmony with other beings. It's like what crickets must feel when they chirp at the same frequency on a summer's evening."

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