



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

This Patch of Sky puts Eugene on the post-rock map

The members of Eugene post-rock band **This Patch of Sky** are just a bunch of romantics. “For a bunch of tattooed, bearded guys, we make pretty music,” guitarist Joshua Carlton jokes with *EW*.

The band returns to the stage Aug. 22 at WOW Hall, alongside Hyding Jekyll, Children and Seattle’s Rishloo. But the reach of This Patch of Sky goes far beyond our fair valley; after picking up New York-based management, the band has scored several high profile licensing opportunities for its brand of post-rock.

Their music has been used in Ford Mustang commercials and the group — also including Kit Day (guitar), Nate Trowbridge (drums), Ryan Rosenberg (bass), Joel Erickson (synth) and Alex Abrams (cello) — provided the soundtrack to the recent documentary about British comedian Russell Brand, *Brand: A Second Coming*. Now the band is working out details to play popular European post-rock music fest *dunk!festival*.

To understand post-rock, it’s perhaps best to first consider classical music of the Baroque period. With an emphasis on the ornamental and complex, parallels could be drawn between Baroque and heavy metal music.

Post-rock is somewhat like classical music of the Romantic period; almost always instrumental, post-rock is more free-form than metal: dynamic, subject to emotional peaks and valleys, expressive and subtle.

This Patch of Sky cellist Alex Abrams says post-rock uses “rock instruments in a symphonic setting,” and “cinematic rock” is another phrase the band uses to describe their sound.

“Our music goes really large,” says bassist and keyboard player Erickson.

“We like to navigate emotional states,” Carlton adds. “We want to keep it vague, open to interpretation” with an “end-of-the-world feeling, while keeping it simple.”

On their self-titled 2014 release, mournful cello introduces the sparsely titled “Prelude,” leading into “Time Destroys Everything, But Our Foundation Remains,” where distorted guitars swell and roar over drummer Trowbridge’s cascading drum work, like a grieving husband at the gravesite of his beloved wife.

The musicians in This Patch of Sky range from self-taught to the classically trained Abrams. “I came from the metal world,” Trowbridge says. The band formed in 2010. Day says the musicians work well together because “we’re such good friends. The music is cohesive.”

Carlton says This Patch of Sky seeks to keep its creative process organic. “That’s where our best work happens,” he explains.

Bands like Mogwai, Sigur Rós and Explosions in the Sky established the post-rock sound through conventional touring and record releases. This Patch of Sky has built a loyal international following almost entirely through social media. In fact, they might be one of Eugene’s most famous bands, despite rarely playing live.

“We’re picky about shows,” Day says, noting that when the band does play live locally or elsewhere, the shows almost always sell out.

“There aren’t a lot of post-rock bands,” Erickson says, but he feels people are becoming more comfortable with instrumental music, largely due to the explosion of EDM (electronic dance music).

“EDM is opening up the door to [having] no singer,” Erickson says. “People listen to instrumental music but don’t realize it.”

To overcome the reluctance of some audiences to accept a rock band with no conventional front person, This Patch of Sky has rearranged where the various members stand on stage, putting Day in the middle because “he’s so good looking,” Erickson jokes.

Instead of touring heavily, This Patch of Sky focuses on film scoring and soundtrack work. “Scoring and licensing is a big part for us,” Day explains. “We are really attracted to music for film.”

Despite finding international success, This Patch of Sky intends to stay in Eugene. “We like to represent Eugene,” Day says, adding, “in five to 10 years you’re going to see an explosion of arts in Eugene.”

“In the end I’m still in the band,” Abrams says, “and pay into the band because I love it.” Erickson says connecting with audience members, whether through live performance or online, is reward enough. “That’s everything for us,” Erickson says. ■

This Patch of Sky plays with Rishloo, Hyding Jekyll and Children 8 pm Saturday, Aug. 22, at WOW Hall; \$8 adv., \$10 door. All ages.

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