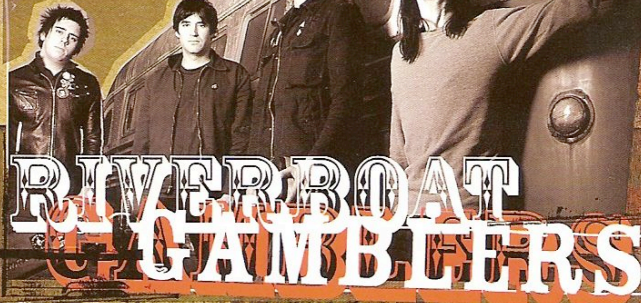


ON



BY NADINE CHEUNG

Band: Riverboat Gamblers
The Players: Mike Wiebe (vocals), Fadi El-Assad (guitar), Ian McDougal (guitar), Pat Lillard (bass), Mark Baker (drums).

Hometown: Denton, Texas.
Sound: The Ramones meet Social Distortion and party with Green Day.

New Album: *To The Confusion Of Our Enemies* (Volcom Ent.)
Their live show is like: Winning a ticket to the rock 'n' roll Cirque du Soleil.

On their band name...
Mike Wiebe: We liked it

because it sounded like the furthest thing from emo at the time. All the bands back then were named something like Leaves Falling And The Sky or some such nonsense.

On their influences...
MW: Wu-Tang Clan and Rocket from the Crypt. Pretty much anything good. I know that's a lame answer, but I steal ideas from places you wouldn't believe.

On what inspires them...
MW: Underdogs. I feel sort of cheesy saying that, but I'm

059

sound

inspired by] people who overcome what they are "supposed" to do and achieve good lives for themselves. I feel like I'm speaking in clichés, but [I'm inspired by] anyone who keeps it real.

Fadi El-Assad: I can say without an ounce of sarcasm that two things compel people in this world: sex and money.

On pursuing music full-time...
MW: I've done acting, and I enjoy that. I've also done writing and I like that as well, but music was always so immediate. I guess I decided to pursue it full-time a few years ago. Actually, I don't think I ever decided. All of a sudden I realized I was and had been pursuing it full-time for awhile.

FE: I think it pursued us. I can't recall a time when we sat down and articulated a plan to "go pro." I suppose we stumbled into this line of work from a lack of interest in anything else. For better or worse, this is our life.

On the meaning of success...
FE: Success is when I don't wake up in a cold sweat every time the rent check is due.

MW: It means something different every year. I bet if I was making rent and bills and a little extra and staying busy doing music and was really happy with what I was doing, I would feel somewhat successful.

On touring...
FE: Touring helps you build equity in something called "street cred," which you can cash in and later use as bargaining leverage with record labels. We've got loads of it, but unfortunately it seems these days street cred is somewhat of a vestige organ similar to the human tailbone, a remnant of a different era. But, all things aside, I think it's in our blood. We are meant to be on the road. I've been touring since I was 17 years old, and I don't see a change anywhere in the near future.

MW: I think it's how people get the full picture of the band. We are performers, not just studio guys, and you have to go where the people are. Plus, seeing live bands has been such a huge part of my life. If I can give a piece of that to someone, that would be really amazing.

On their fondest touring memory...
FE: I can't go into details, but

they generally revolve around alcohol, pills and some form of human waste.

On juggling relationships and being in a band...
FE: You don't. It's usually one or the other. If a decision isn't made, one of the two is going to suffer.
MW: It is tough. Lots of phone time. Lots of trust. That and missing pets are easily the hardest things about touring.

On where they hope to be in five years...

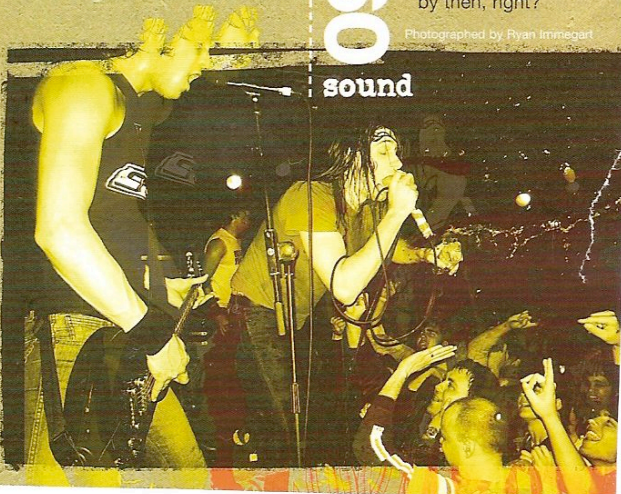
FE: Five years? I don't even know what I'm going to eat for breakfast tomorrow. I can't see that far into the future. Hopefully not the unemployment line.

MW: Relaxing in my own house with my cat and loved ones would be great. Maybe getting ready for a show with some of my friends' bands, eating Chick-fil-A and playing PlayStation 9. It should be out by then, right?

060

sound

Photographed by Ryan Iminegar



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