

Music Previews

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Forgotten Favorites Rocky Mountain cover band

Local Music



The family that plays together has been common in country and gospel music, rarer in rock and unusual in our city. Milwaukee's Rocky Mountain Beaver Pond consists of brothers Mike and Marc Callies (guitar and drums, respectively) and their dad, playing bass under the stage name of Papa Beaver. Ties of friendship bind the family to Brendan Shea (guitar) and Mick Pavlovich (keyboards).

"For the most part it works, but we have our moments," says Mike Callies. "One of the hardest things is telling my dad *no*." Apparently Papa Beaver, a veteran musician who played with Milwaukee's popular Rocket 88, hasn't been putting his foot down on the all-across-themap set list of the band formed by his sons on a lark nearly six years ago. Rocky Mountain Beaver Pond can lurch from AC/DC to Sam Cooke without a segue, and flow from the Beastie Boys into Jimmy Buffett. They are a cover band and proud of their diverse repertoire.

"If we were going to perform original songs, it would be as a different band," Shea says. "What we're doing works. We have a solid audience and I wouldn't want to wreck it. The vision of this band is to entertain people with the songs you forgot you loved, the other song on the Van Morrison record— not 'Brown Eyed Girl.'"

Rocky Mountain has five lead singers (Shea: "It's like five distinct bands") and each is willing to toss his favorite songs into the mix. "Our keyboard player is a huge Billy Joel fan," Shea says, explaining how the unlikely "Scenes From an Italian Restaurant" ended up in their song list. "We play it with distorted guitars and turn it into a rock song that's fun for everyone to play." "We're not afraid to try anything," Callies jumps in. "If it's not working, we'll dump it. The people who come out to see us see a band that's having a good time. It's completely genuine. We tend to choose songs that the other bands in town don't tackle."

Rocky Mountain Beaver Pond has played Summerfest and other summer festivals while keeping up a steady schedule of club dates and private parties. If they aren't as well known as The Toys or The LoveMonkeys, maybe it's because they don't gig as tirelessly as the competition. One member works second shift and all have professional and family obligations.

"Almost nothing is off-limits to us," Shea says. "We have a lot of fun on stage, as much fun with the crowd as the crowd has with us. The audience is our sixth member."

Rocky Mountain Beaver Pond performs Nov. 26 at the Milwaukee Ale House.