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Submitted
Lost Angel, from left, Doug Perry, Jerry Martin, Greg King, Jon Alfrey and Mark Zellner (not pictured) are just one of the many local bands trying to make it in the music business.

Awaiting their turn

Local musicians biding their time at central Ohio venues hoping to make it big

By DANIEL STROHL
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COLUMBUS—Mark Zellner makes his way into Merry's Melodies on Refugee Road in Columbus on crutches. His left leg is broken and his wife is carrying his guitar case. Jon Alfrey, his bandmate, had arrived at the bar about ten minutes before and comments as Zellner hobbles in, "Now that's dedication."

Zellner and Alfrey are both members of the band Lost Angel, which often plays in and around Marion. Zellner broke his leg at a show last weekend while the band was touring in Dover. Del. Jerry Martin, a guitarist for the band, said Zellner played without a cast the rest of that weekend.

"We just put him in a chair and the show went on," Martin said.

Lost Angel is one of the more successful bands coming out of the Marion music scene even though only one member is actually from Marion. The rest of the members are from Ashland, Mansfield and Bellville.

They have a CD out now, "Destination," and another in the works, and they have sold CDs overseas through the Internet.

The Marion music scene, though small, is supportive, according to Martin. He said his band has played with other groups such as Bryan's Fault, Straightjacket and Riot Act and occasionally his other bands open for them "to get their foot in the door." Other bands from the area are Smuggling Yo-Yos, Aegis Kane, Golgotha, Vile, Myopia, Five People, Night School, Last Chance and Splinter.

"We're all really in it for the same reasons," Martin said.

One of those reasons is the love of their music. All of the members of Lost Angel said they grew up with music in their families. Both Zellner's father and grandfather played in bluegrass and country bands when he was younger.

Alfrey said the feeling of accomplishment he receives is important.

"I'll feel good if I touched just one or two people," Alfrey said. "I like it when they come up after the show and say, 'That really rocked.'"

Cody Smith, drummer for the punk band Spider Fighter, said he plays because he loves music, especially punk music.

"It's really fun to play," Smith said. "It also seems to me that if I put all my effort in it, it'll pay off eventually."

Martin cited places such as Rosie's Roadhouse, 151, Bullwinkle's and Ingle's in Waldo where Lost Angel has played in the past. Lost Angel will play at the Marion Beer Garden during the Popcorn Festival and will open for Steppenwolf at the Marion Coliseum Oct. 23. Martin said plans are being made for the band to open for Fighat and Blue Oyster Cult Nov. 6.

Smith said it is hard for his band to play in Marion because most of the clubs either feature just heavy metal or won't allow the underage members of Spider Fighter to enter.

"We couldn't really make it big (in Marion) because there's no place for original music or for a punk band," Smith said. "We could make it if we relocated, though."

Smith said the members of Spider Fighter, who all come from Marion, usually play once or twice a month at venues in Columbus and Athens or play in Smith's backyard and basement.

Both Martin and Smith said their bands' ultimate goals would be to tour and record without day jobs.

"We're more ready now than ever to pursue that goal, now that it's summer and Ben (Jolliff, the bassist) and Tyson (Smith, the guitarist and vocalist) are out of school," Smith said.

Alfrey echoed the same sentiments, but said a band has to be prepared to quit their day jobs and work full time on touring and recording.

"You have to love music," Alfrey said. "It has to be in you and you can't let anything stand in your way. It's a rough business."

Both bands also have their own web sites, which they say help get the word out about their bands. Lost Angel's site contains reviews from Holland, California, New Mexico, North Carolina and Sweden; samples of some of their music; and opportunities to buy their CD.

"The Internet is doing a lot of stuff for us," Martin said. "It's opening a lot of doors."

Spider Fighter's site contains many of the same features as Lost Angel's, including samples of their songs. Smith said he's not sure how many people are actually listening to his band online, but said, "I'm sure the name is getting out there."

Submitted
The members of Spider Fighter, a local punk band, from left, Ben Jolliff, Ricky Alexander, Cody Smith and Tyson Smith stand in front of Bernie's Distillery in Columbus where they perform from time to time.

Websites

Lost Angel
http://www.lostangel.com

Spider Fighter
http://members.aoom.com/spiderfight/