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CITY AND DISTRICT

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Itinerant rock band aims for world record, reality television show

Posted By [Ronald Zajac](#), Staff Writer

Posted 17 hours ago

A local indie rock band is dreaming big - and far.

The Last Supper, a Smiths Falls-based group that has been playing together for more than a decade, is trying to set the world record for the most countries toured by a music group.

The band hopes to hit 100 countries in three years in a project it is calling Band Without Borders - also the title of a reality TV show it is pitching based on the experience.

"We just thought it was a nice high number," lead singer Dan Shwetz said in a telephone interview.

"Rock and roll music is indeed a common language throughout the world."

The band hopes to set out on its journey this summer and has already booked dates in 10 countries, mostly in Europe but also Turkey, Egypt and South Africa, said Shwetz.

They hope to hit as many large music festivals as they can and do a lot of camping, keeping the whole thing "carbon-neutral," he said. The philosophy since they got serious about the project has been: "If we're doing it on a moped, then we're doing it."

Shwetz, 35, met his bandmates while at the University of Western Ontario. The group has lived in California and Toronto before moving back to this area six years ago.

The core of The Last Supper is the trio of Shwetz, lead guitarist Peter Walker and David Baines, who plays percussion but whose main job is on the management side. Together they run their own indie label, Vamp Records. Also on board are drummer Frankie Biggs and bassist Scot Herndon. (Randy Orr, of the local duo Healy and Orr, has also played with the group off and on.)

The Last Supper has put out four albums and Shwetz describes its sound as classic rock.

The band is already used to global travel.

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In 1999, it took on the challenge of shipping its tour bus across the Atlantic, touring Europe and winding its way to Egypt to be at the pyramids for the millennium, an experience the members caught on film, said Shwetz.

"(We) just wanted to do something different for the millennium."

Over the years, it has made enough contacts overseas to get three European partners for Band Without Borders, said Shwetz.

The group is negotiating with "major" international broadcast networks for the project, he said, adding the network people like the indie, bar-band angle.

And while the show will follow band members around in a Big Brother-type format, Shwetz wants a lot of it to be "unscripted" interviews with young music fans in the various countries the group visits.

The goal, said Shwetz, is to produce three seasons, starting with a tour this coming summer and fall and the following winter, with a first season airing in the summer of 2009.

While they're dreaming of making millions, the trio must still find more mundane ways of paying for the trip in the here and now.

During the summer, they operate a landscaping business, Stone Builders Landscaping, and this will be the first summer they're out playing, not digging.

They are also looking for sponsorship deals and hope they have enough of a fan base in the countries they've toured before to make a bit more cash.

Spanning the globe and the airwaves is an ambitious project, but Shwetz said that as they prepare for their launch, they are meeting with interest overseas and the momentum is growing.

"People said there's no way we could ship our bus to Europe and go to the pyramids, but we did it," he said.

In the meantime, people can catch The Last Supper much closer to home than Egypt. The group is playing at the Lee Tavern in Smiths Falls on Friday night.

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