

Record News COMMUNITY

Local band determined to break world record

By STACEY ROY

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Are you ready to rock around the...globe?

Smiths Falls band, The Last Supper will be challenging themselves and the world record for the most countries toured by a music group this year as they embark on a multi-year tour of 100 nations.

Their first show in their attempt to be listed among the world record holders will be in late May or early June this summer. At this point the project, which will have been a year in the making, will take flight taking three local musicians on the ride of their lives.

"We've always been up to a challenge," said Dan Shwetz, band vocalist.

Currently, the record for most countries toured is somewhere in the mid-70s.

The band is made up of Shwetz, Peter Walker (guitar) and David Baines whose faces, it is hoped will become well known in the next three years since film crews will be documenting their journey to the world record and airing it as a reality TV series 'Band Without Borders'.

Shwetz said the idea came from his wife, Amber and will be a genuine look at one band's efforts to make it in the music business. "We want to keep it really gritty and keep it real," Shwetz added. "That's what we've always been. We've struggled, but we've always gotten by."

The band is currently in negotiations with international broadcasting companies as part of the process of getting the show on the air. The musicians hope the first season will air next year and will evolve as they continue on tour.

Since December 2007



Dan Shwetz (front) and band member Peter Walker are shown in studio making one of their many The Last Supper records. This summer the Smiths Falls band will attempt a three-year journey to break the world record for live shows by playing 100 around the world. The effort will be filmed and aired as a reality television series.

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when the band cemented its goal of achieving this world record, it has been working non-stop to book gigs and plot out the logistics of the biggest project its members have ever undertaken.

The Last Supper got its start in 1996 at The University of Western

Ontario when a group of friends set out to make some music and travel the world.

"The band has basically been touring over a decade," Shwetz said.

During this time they have landed on the stage of establishments and events in 12 countries throughout North America, Europe and the Middle East under their own label - Vamp Records. This experience of planning and organizing will assist them as they endeavour to triple their average tour schedule each year.

"The plan is this summer to knock off 10 countries," Shwetz explains.

Then in the fall and winter The Last Supper will top this up with an additional 25 shows before it takes a break at the end of 2007.

Thus far the band has confirmed shows in six to

seven countries including Holland, Senegal, South Africa, Romania and Estonia. Their Estonia show will be the first time this area of the world has welcomed international talent. Having the opportunity to be part of bringing The Last Supper's modern rock sound to places like Estonia is really at the heart of the Band Without Borders show. "The show's not just about us, it's about exposing interesting people," the vocalist said.

Some of the band's most memorable experiences on the road have been the unique opportunities the musicians have had to meet people. During one of their frequent visits to Egypt band members were honoured to jam with Nubians in a mud hut. Through their travels and hopefully through the airing of Band Without Borders the Smiths

Falls group hopes to convey the reality of how people are, in essence, the same all over the world.

"Some kid in Cairo who listens to Metallica and ACDC is like a kid in Smiths Falls who listens to Metallica and ACDC," Shwetz said.

World awareness is only one aspect of the message that this reality series hopes to impress on its audience. From the early beginnings of the concept, The Last Supper has felt it important to reach out and touch a greater issue than their struggles to burst onto the music scene.

"I'd like to bring awareness to something," Shwetz said. "We're trying to make this sort of like a music ambassadorship."

After much discussion the band has selected the environment as their global issue of choice. In recognition of the environmental impact that a rock concert can have on the earth (energy, waste, etc), The Last Supper is now seeking out ways to make their 100 country tour as carbon neutral as possible.

"Bottom line we all live on the planet," Shwetz said.

He hopes by the band making a conscious choice to use environmentally friendly clothes, energy, and products that their audience will consider the options that are open to them in their lives. In an effort to reduce their environmental footprint, the band is looking at camping at some of their bookings.

"It'll be fun too," Shwetz said.

Having the opportunity to sit down and jam with their fans in a casual environment has been the beginnings of some of the band's fondest memories. The chance to travel third world countries and see how happy people are in some of the most difficult of situations are the types of experiences they hope to capture on film.

"That's really changed us," Shwetz said.

With this in mind, the band is focusing on booking unique events around the world. Through this project Shwetz hopes to see parts of Australia, Russia and Asia in the next few years.

Though the idea for this series is only a few months old, The Last Supper has already got footage at their disposal.

In 1998 the band decid-

ed to begin filming their overseas tours and plans to use the footage as a way to flash back into their development.

The preparation into Band Without Borders has been intense. Assisting the members is an international team of a handful of industry professionals who hail from the United Kingdom, Holland and Denmark. In fact, next week the Denmark representative will be arriving in Smiths Falls to work with the band on this project.

The tour is already being developed by approaching the top 10 festivals in Europe. Due to logistics, The Band Without Borders tour will likely be made up of 40 per cent events and festivals and 60 per cent club bookings.

During this multi-year initiative, The Last Supper hopes fellow Smiths Falls musician, Mike Perkins will join them on the road when he can. Perkins has joined the band on stage in the past and shares the band's vision.

Crafting the Band Without Borders series has been a real test to the band's philosophy of living life to the fullest by embracing challenge and adventure when it presents itself.

"Why not do it," Shwetz added of the project. "If nothing else it will be an adventure."

The project is part of The Last Supper's continued efforts to burst into the main stream music industry. This task has become increasingly challenging as the music industry shifts back from a CD focus to live concerts.

"The music industry really isn't doing very well right now in terms of records," Shwetz observes.

The band's varied experience in overseas tours will help them make this shift, as well as launch Band Without Borders.

"We're using all our contacts of everything we've ever done," Shwetz said.

In the face of preparing for this massive undertaking, The Last Supper is also in the recording studio producing a new album. Assisting the band in these efforts is local Smiths Falls resident, Tim Greencorn of Little Chicago Studios in Ottawa.

Those wishing to know more about the band are encouraged to log onto the website www.lastsupper.ca or www.myspace.com/the-lastsupperworld.

A website for Band Without Borders is in the design phase and will be launched soon as www.bandwithoutborders.com.

For a sneak peek of the sound behind Band Without Borders, join the local band for its upcoming Smiths Falls concert this Friday, Feb. 29 at The Lee Tavern.

The show begins at 9:30 p.m. and will feature Evelyn Cradle as the opening act.

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