

THE VISCERAL VIM OF CAMP COURAGEOUS

by Jamie Manser

With a demo under its belt and a full-length album coming out this month, Camp Courageous is certain to torch Tucson's music scene with the explosive energy of a pyrotechnics show.

The five-piece is comprised of previous Catalina Foothills High School buddies, the majority of whom began playing together about three years ago. When singer Danny Moreno joined last August, Camp Courageous was born.

At their practice space on Pennington Street, 22-year-old Moreno said he had not sung with a band before, "not formally, just messing around."

"I think one night we all got drunk at a party and they started jamming. It was a going away party for our friend and we decided to do a song, and I sang and they were like, 'Man, you can sing.'"

"The hardest thing was to sing that first time, around all the guys, because I don't have the most masculine of voices," Moreno explained.

Although not possessing testosterone-fueled chords, Moreno's vocals are a compelling, irresistible force that is the perfect vehicle for the lyrics and the music. His ability to hit high notes has an ethereal, impassioned quality. The singing lassos the instruments and the words seem to direct the sound. There is a Delphian spookiness and intensity in the songs. David Lynch ought to hire them to write his next movie soundtrack because of Moreno's talent to sing a lullaby that gently drops you into an angst-laden, sleepless night.

CC is excellent at constructing seamless tempo changes that careen around like a Magic Mountain roller coaster ride. The rhythm section - especially with resplendent drummer Brain Martin - drives the band, while guitarists Jon Mancuso and Bobby Saavedra manipulate the strings to alternate between thick and crunchy to melodic and ambient.

Although the music is a collaborative effort, Moreno has been the sole lyricist to date.

"Danny is 15 for 15 in making us happy with lyrics," 22-year-

old bassist Jon D'Auria stated. "That is his instrument."

"He is my favorite lyricist," D'Auria continued. "Its stuff I think more people should write instead of (writing) just about girls or getting drunk."



Camp Courageous

Moreno feels fortunate "to have the freedom to write the songs, to be introspective on it and do my thing."

Saavedra, 21, said the evolution of the songs "comes with each individual's ideas. No one has come in with a full song and there isn't a limit on what we do."

"Lately, we all have given our opinions on each other's stuff," Moreno reflected. "We all contribute to each other's instruments. It's cool because it becomes everybody's song."

Saavedra articulated, "If the chemistry isn't there, we move on and don't beat a dead horse."

"We try to be instinctive on stuff," D'Auria elucidated.

The band's visceral qualities can be chalked up to the fact that they have been best friends from high school, they practice five to six nights a week and gig three to four times a month.

Playing music is their solace.

D'Auria described it as "a ridiculous therapy. We all look forward to it. If you love something and want to be great at it, you have to put in the hours."

The hours they work translates in their stellar live shows and in their upcoming CD, "Circadian Rhythm." The band is tight, talented, dedicated, and humble - not to mention good and rockin'.

What's amazing about these guys is the fact that only Martin has been playing his instrument for longer than five years.

The 21-year-old said he began playing the drums in seventh grade. "I spent a lot of time thinking about drums and percussion rather than on other stuff, and it created a negative effect on school. But now it's a positive effect with the band," Martin said.

Of their influences, the band collectively named Bjork, Radiohead, Mars Volta, Tool, Deftones and Saavedra tossed in Sting. "I love Sting."

"Denali. If you get Sting, I'm throwing in Denali," Moreno countered.

For now, the band is concentrating on writing new songs. They said getting the CD finished was a sense of closure, and now they want to see how they can evolve.

"We feel free to push the envelope with our songwriting," D'Auria said.

Catch Camp Courageous on Saturday October 18 at Plush, 340 E. 6th St., for their CD release party. Manifest opens and you can call the club at 798-1298 for more information. Currently under construction, their web site should go live on the 18th as well. Log on then at www.courageousmusic.com

HALLOWEEN PARTY SAMPLER

By Jessica Monthony

Hang onto your ghoulish panties because Halloween drops on a Friday night this year - henceforth giving you kitty cats no excuses for playing dress-up a day early or a day late! Here is a small sampling of the trickeries around Downtown Tucson for those of you willing to shake some costumed booty.

Che's Lounge (350 N. 4th Ave., 623-2088) Come early and guised to a free show where you can always get reasonably priced drinks. Dope, rip-roaring rockers Spacefish will treat revelers to a special night of Iron Maiden tunes.

Club Asylum (121 E. Congress St., 882-8949) Club Asylum is hosting a Halloween costume contest with major prize giveaways to those with the best get-up. Patrons can expect to enjoy Halloween libations on special while listening to music from the 80s. There will be a \$5.00 cover if dressed up, \$7.00 for the unenthused.

Heart Five (61 E. Congress St., 882-8949) Heart Five is hosting a Halloween costume extravaganza. The club will have costume contests for cash prizes and local gift certificates. Best original costume and sexiest get-ups will be rewarded with \$500. Four of the club's favorite local DJ's will be spinning retro-lounge in the early hours, with progressive house and drum and bass as the night progresses. Doors open at 4:00pm for happy hour and the night's festivities begin at 8:00pm. The cost is \$10 for pre-sale tickets and before 10:00pm. KFMA, 92.1FM, will live remote from the club from 9:00pm to 11:00pm.

Nightmare On Congress Street

Years past saw the street closure as the main feature but this year's event will mirror the successful Club Crawl format. \$10 wristbands (\$15 at the door) will get you into seven venues downtown. The emphasis will be on live music everywhere. Congress Street is fast becoming the live music center of Tucson and this Halloween we plan on celebrating it. The Rialto Theatre will host surf guitar legend Dick Dale, Billy Bacon and the Forbidden Pigs, The Hacienda Brothers, Dan Penn and Cathy Rivers. Hotel Congress (inside and out) will feature The Zsa Zsas, Asylum Street Spankers, The Jons and Flarn Chen. Vaudeville will have a "Costume Greaser Ball" with Al Foul, Whiskey Bitch and The Last Call Brawlers. 7 Black Cats will showcase the devil rock and roll of Molten Leather and Great American Tragedy. More acts & venues scheduled. The fun begins at 8 and all night long it will be a trick or treat pub crawl down Congress Street. The ghosts will be dancing to live music at "Nightmare on Congress Street".

