

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Head Chemists have all the elements

Despite working together over long distances, these Elon students bring a new sound to campus

Virginia Galvez
A&E Editor

"Meeting in London is where it all started," said John David Parsons. Parsons, who makes up half of student band Head Chemists, credits an Elon study abroad program to the joining of two musical minds. Parsons met up with now graduated Ben Prichard in London the fall of 2004 where they started combining musical talents, bringing them eventually to the future release of their first album "Bittersweet Melody." The album release party will be held at the Acorn on Friday 13 at 6pm as a charity event for Project Pericles.

While the two of them lay down some of their tracks using guitar chord progressions combined with a drum beat, what makes their album interesting is the actual way in which they produced it. "We write our songs with guitars first and start playing around," said Parsons. "When a chord progression sticks we record it. And then we will import it into the program and then we just start adding the instruments—bass pattern, drum loop, small effects to trick out the sound."

Using a computer program called Reason 3.0 by Propellerhead Software, Parsons and Prichard are able to use real-life hardware devices that are combined on this computer simulation. While all the devices have been around for several

decades, it is a fairly new development to have them all condensed into one program without taking up any "real-life" space or costing thousands of dollars to own.

"We like to confuse people, we like to use instruments on the computer that sound like real life but also real instruments that may sound like a computer made them," said Parsons. Using these different elements has truly opened doors for the direction in which "Bittersweet Melody" could have gone. Take the track "Legacy" for example. Parsons and Prichard took JFK's inaugural address and made him "rap" to the backing of a hip-hop beat, synthesizers and bagpipes.

"We wanted to do a tribute to JFK and the beginning background melody was the Danny Boy melody...its kind of always been used in funerals," said Parsons. "Plus we both like JFK quite a bit and he had some good things to say about how the world should be." While has hints of hip hop, symphonic elements as well as basic acoustic guitar tracks, "Bittersweet Melody" can reach a vast array of listeners.

"If we have a catchy melody we want people to sing it over and over in their mind but we want the message to make them do something beneficial," said Parsons. "We don't have a lot of real political songs but we always had it in the back of our minds that we wanted to write songs



Graphic courtesy of David Parsons

that impacted people."

After the initial meeting in London, Parsons and Prichard selected the top 17 songs to make it onto their first album. As they have recorded nearly 70 onto Parson's computer, there are thoughts of more albums in the future. Working with producer John Loy in Chapel Hill, Parsons credits him for helping with the selection for "Bittersweet Melody" and for guiding them regarding production in the professional world.

Prichard, who communicated with Parsons from Hawaii during part of the CD production process,

will be returning to Elon for the CD release party. Starting around 6 p.m. on Friday May 13th, Parsons and Prichard will be selling "Bittersweet Melody" for \$12. They also plan on having a screening of the new documentary by Project Pericles and \$2 from every CD sale will go towards the organization. For more information about the Head Chemists, check out their website at <http://www.Headchemists.com> which will be fully up and running by the release party.

Contact Virginia Galvez at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

In the Bubble

Tonight 5/5
Elon Dancers Spring Concert
7:30 p.m.
McCrary Theatre
Tickets needed: \$12 or free with ID

Friday 5/6
Elon Dancers Spring Concert

Twisted Measure Spring Concert
8 p.m.
Whitley Auditorium
\$5

Saturday 5/7
Elon Dancers Spring Concert

Twisted Measure Spring Concert
5 p.m.
Whitley Auditorium
\$5

Gavin DeGraw
8 p.m.
Alumni Gym
\$10 with Elon ID

Tuesday 5/10
Elon University Wind Ensemble Performance
7:30 p.m.
McCrary Theatre

Sweet Signatures Spring Concert
9 p.m.
Whitley Auditorium
\$3



In Concert

Sunday 5/8
Gavin DeGraw
Doors open at 6 p.m.
Show at 7 p.m.
Ziggy's- Winston-Salem
\$20

Wednesday 5/11
Narallis
Turn
Doors open at 8 p.m.
Show at 9 p.m.
Ziggy's- Winston-Salem
\$5

Friday 5/20
Sam Bush
Doors open at 8 p.m.
Show at 9 p.m.
Ziggy's- Winston-Salem
\$20

Saturday 5/29
The Faint
Bright Eyes
Doors open at 6 p.m.
Show at 7 p.m.
\$22 in advance