

MeanStreet

[WARPED] MUST-SEE BANDS

Amber Pacific

SEATTLE'S BEST

Fans come first for this Evergreen State quartet

By Melissa Bobbitt

So many bands claim to be "all about the fans," but the second the house lights come up on stage, too many musicians dart back to their cushy buses without so much as waving goodbye to adoring audiences.

Thank goodness for Amber Pacific's sincerity.

"If we could — if the clubs would let us — we'd say, 'Hey, everybody, hang out as long as you guys want and let's all spend time and get to know each other on a normal level,'" says Matt Young, lead singer for the charismatic, Seattle-based quartet. "Everybody who wants a picture gets a picture. Everybody who wants an autograph gets an autograph. Everybody who wants to ask a question. It's fair game."

A prime purveyor of the Warped Tour's purpose of bringing bands and fans together, the guys will be sweating it out for their fourth stint on the summer punk circuit to promote their newest offering, *Truth in Sincerity*.

"*Truth in Sincerity* was brought up by our bassist, Greg [Strong]," Young explains. "[It] is our keeping true to what we did on [the band's 2005 Hopeless Records release] *The Possibility and the Promise*. We're going to be loyal to our fans, we're going to be loyal in our music. People who believed in us in the beginning are the people we're going to make sure we do a record for, and we don't change our sound dramatically."

Sticking mostly to a formula of uplifting rock and blazing riffs from primary songwriter Will Nutter, Amber Pacific also wades in goateous waters. Drummer Dango, who previously sat behind the kit for NOFX

and Strung Out, pounds out jaw-dropping beats with a prowess rarely found in the punk-pop realm — "Summer (In B)" especially packs a wallop. Their Warped comrade, Mike Herrera of MxPx, makes a cameo on the blistering "Runaway." The Northwestern lads also enlisted the Seattle Symphony Orchestra to accompany them on a few tracks, to give a more lush sound to the soaring melodies Nutter penned. Young also admirably speaks of how his bandmate wrote all the string parts himself.

The singer attributes the 5-year-old group's ascending status to their years in the Warped Tour trenches, starting in 2004.

"It was our first tour ever, so we had no idea what we were doing," he says with a laugh. "We had so much fun! ... Every single member of the band stood at our tent from 11 o'clock [in the morning] to 10 o'clock at night and asked people to listen to our CD and tried to meet fans and make fans and didn't play. If we could do an acoustic set, we'd try to do an acoustic set at our tent. We didn't have a PA [but] we found a lot of success that way."

This lifestyle might seem grueling to some, but Young and his mates feel blessed.

"Being in a band and touring the country — to call it a job is almost insulting," the frontman says. "We are so lucky and so fortunate to be doing this at this point in our lives. We 'work' like an hour-and-a-half, and normal people probably work eight hours and drive an hour in traffic. You mean to tell me we're supposed to be fired?"

ON THE WEB: amberpacific.com



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