

localmusicbeat

Band gives fans a 'Romantics' lesson

Punk rockers Mayday Parade went from stalking the Warped Tour to being on it

Call it a Cinderella story for the punk-rock generation. A band of newbies (they had only been playing together 6 months) decides to stalk punk rock's most high-profile event of the year: **The Vans Warped Tour**. They get a van, print out thousands of CDs and follow the tour from stop to stop. Each day, they pace up and down the lines of kids outside the festival, selling CDs, exchanging MySpace.com addresses and making new friends.



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Sounds like a lot of work, right?

"It's unbelievable how hard it was to follow the tour across the country, but it's all worth it," said lead singer **Derek Sanders**. "We've always had the attitude that it's not just going to happen, you have to make it happen."

The Tallahassee, Fla., band, called **Mayday Parade**, definitely took its fate into its own hands. And it worked. The group raked up thousands of new fans and sold more than 10,000 of its hand-pressed EPs. The result was inking with Fearless Records (**Sugarcult**, **Plain White T's**) late last year.

Here's where the Cinderella part kicks in: Now that the guys are on a major punk label, they were actually booked for the Warped Tour earlier this summer.

Sanders says playing the tour was a



Fearless Records

A bunch of punks: Florida punk-rock band Mayday Parade heads north to headline a show tonight at Mac's Bar. Sound the Alarm, Olympia and Side Street Getaway are also on the bill.

dream come true.

"We had all gone to the Warped Tour for years, followed it around last year, and this year actually being a part of it was so awesome," Sanders said.

The band's current full-length was produced by **Zack Odom** and **Kenneth Mount (Cartel)**, and tracks were mixed by **Mark Needham (My Chemical Romance)**. Titled "A Lesson in Romantics," Sanders says the songs are about being in a relationship while you're on the road, and the different hardships that come with that.

With tunes about romance, it's no surprise the band's MySpace page is

packed with comments from teen-boppers crushing on band members.

And it doesn't hurt that the guys are pretty cute, too.

Sanders accepts all the female attention as part of the genre.

"The kind of music that we play is kind of the new boy band stuff," Sanders said. "When you look at **Fall Out Boy** and **The All-American Rejects**, they all have the No. 1 videos on TRL, and all the 14-year-old girls are in love with them. It's just the style of music kids are into these days, that poppy punk-rock."

On the subject of MySpace, I

couldn't help but notice the hoards of MySpace fans (more than 76,000) on the band's page.

"We owe so much of our success to MySpace," Sanders said. "The first thing we ever did as a band was record two songs and put them up on MySpace. They just took off fast, and it wasn't long before we were getting 1,000 plays a day."

When Mayday Parade — including Sanders, bass player **Jeremy Lenzo**, guitarist **Alex Garcia**, guitarist **Brooks Betts** and drummer **Jake Bundrick** — plays Mac's Bar tonight, the cozy setting will be vastly different from the outdoor stages the band has played on the Warped Tour.

But Sanders enjoys that.

"I love playing club shows because it seems more intimate and the kids are right there in front of you," Sanders said.

Sanders says not to be shy about coming up to the band after the show.

"We're really big on meeting people and hanging out," Sanders said. "We're bummed if at the end show, everyone just leaves. We like meeting people and seeing what it's like in their town."

Also on the bill tonight is **Sound the Alarm**, an emo-rock outfit out of Bangor, Pa., with poppy tracks that fall somewhere between **Taking Back Sunday** and **The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus**.

Show details: Mayday Parade, Sound the Alarm, Olympia, Side Street Getaway, doors 6 p.m. today, Mac's Bar, 2700 E. Michigan Ave., 484-6795; tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door.

Anne Erickson's column appears Thursdays in *What's On*. Have a band or a concert to promote? Contact her at aerickson@lsj.com.