

SCENE

NORTHEAST OHIO ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



Aug 17-23, 1995
Vol. 26 • No. 33
STILL FREE



Dave
Matthews
in a
Class All
Band
Their Own



Dionne Farris
Charts Her Own Course

Plus: Arts Etc., Theater & New Recordings



DON'T MISS THIS PARTY!

SCENE 25th Anniversary

BE THERE EARLY FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A SCENE 25th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT PRIZE PACKAGE

- INCLUDES:
- Front Row Ticket Upgrade
 - Back Stage Meet & Greet With Dionne Farris
 - CDs
 - Tickets To The Hall Of Fame Concert

LAST CHANCE TO GET A COPY OF THE SCENE 25th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE!

P R E S E N T S

L I V E I N C O N C E R T



Dave Matthews Band

with very special guest
DIONNE FARRIS



THIS MONDAY AUG. 21 • 7:30 PM

THE BIGGEST PARTY OF THE SUMMER!

COME EARLY & PARTY WITH US AT THE SCENE ROCK n' PLAY LANE STAGE W/ PARANOID LOVESICK AND 15-60-75 THE NUMBERS BAND

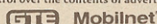
SCENE 25th ANNIVERSARY PRIZE DRAWINGS AND GIVEAWAYS!
BE THERE FOR YOUR CHANCE TO UPGRADE TO FRONT ROW TICKETS.



Purchase your Blossom tickets at ~~THEATER~~ Kaufmann's, Coconuts and Stop N' Shop
CHARGE-BY-PHONE Cleve. (216) 241-5555 / AKRON (216) 945-9400

Plus all applicable service charges. For group sales and Blossom Info, 920-8040. In Cleveland call 566-8184

Blossom Music Center and MCA Concerts is not responsible for and has no control over the contents of advertised performances.



Dave Matthews Band

In A Class All Their Own

by Chris Wick



Carter Beauford, Stefan Lessard, Dave Matthews, Leroi Moore and Boyd Tinsley (from left)

Try describing what an acoustic guitar, violin, saxophone, drums and bass playing together sound like; now add a voice that changes octaves and inflections on almost every line.

It's a trick question, you can't.

Even *Rolling Stone* described the Dave Matthews Band as "almost unclassifiable" when they were highlighted in 1994's "New Faces" article.

Though not a conscious effort, the South African born Matthews believes his culture played a role in the way his band sounds. "I think in whatever you do, your past is going to have an affect on how you view things," says the 28-year-old Matthews. "The result of our music is five personalities. Some of the music that I've written has an African tinge, but you would think the more time I spent away from there the freshness of my experience with African music should go away."

"Sometimes I think our music now has more of that sound from me than the music we did before."

There is a lot more to the admittedly unclassifiable Dave Matthews Band than "What Would You Say" and "Ants Marching."

Surprisingly, people are starting to realize it.

The only attempt to classify them has been calling them an "overnight" success. Unbeknownst to the mass media, the Dave Matthews Band have been working night in and night out since 1991 to get to where they are today.

"The saying 'overnight success' is a thing that 'overnight' went from *not knowing us to knowing us*," Matthews says.

"The media will paint a picture however it's going to paint a picture. As far as the media is concerned, we were an overnight success because we went from nobody knowing us to suddenly popping up in lots of different magazines and TV shows."

The massive exposure they have been getting has done them good. Well, the exposure has done them right.

In less than two years, the Dave Matthews Band went from the darlings of the underground East Coast grass roots scene to having a debut record that is nearing double platinum status, opening for the Grateful Dead and playing with a full orchestra.

"It's definitely 'overnight' something. 'Overnight exposure' or 'Overnight over exposure,'" Matthews says with a laugh.

The band — which includes Matthews (acoustic guitar), Carter Beauford (drums), Stefan Lessard (bass), Boyd Tinsley (violin) and Leroi Moore (saxophone) — started by playing small bars in their hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia.

By 1993 they were packing bars and small clubs up and down the East Coast without the help of any major publicity. The buzz spread solely by word-of-mouth and bootlegs.

In November of 1993, REMEMBER TWO THINGS, an independent live CD was released. A majority of these discs were sold at the shows or out of their office in Charlottesville. (It has sold over 200,000 copies to date.)

Major record labels started to flock to the southern college town to hear this band that was selling so

many CDs on its own.

Five months later, the Dave Matthews Band were signed to RCA and Steve Lillywhite (U2, Rolling Stones) was producing their debut album, UNDER THE TABLE AND DREAMING. Matthews, who keeps close ties to his family, dedicated the album to his older sister, Anne, who passed away a few years ago. Still another song on the new album, "Song That Jane Likes," was dedicated to his other sister.

The band has not forgotten its roots in the midst of its newfound success. Last month, Matthews went home for a night off, but instead of resting, he jumped up on stage to play with a couple local bands.

"There is an element of family," Matthews says. "It's a reality check every time you go home. People are very adoring of us there, so I would guess we are more popular there than anywhere else, but I bet we are also more *unpopular* there than anywhere else."

"I feel at home there, like the people know how long we have been together. They know how long we have worked and how long it has taken us to get to where we are, and hopefully, they know that we're not too obsessed with where we are."

As great as the platinum records, videos on MTV and spots on shows like "Saturday Night Live" and "The Late Show With David Letterman" are, the Dave Matthews Band still thrive on performing live. It's one of the reasons why the Dave Matthews Band were chosen to headline SCENE's 25th Anniversary Concert this Monday, August 21, at Blossom.

"It's all gratifying, but the focus, the thing that keeps us all doing this, is playing live. The other part is not real, the TV part. That stuff is not me."

"The videos are like 10 hours (of my life of one irritated day in Colorado that becomes the picture of what you're identified with.

"For me, what we want to be identified with is playing every night and trying to keep the show fresh." By spotlighting a violin and a saxophone, two instruments mainly used to keep a melody, the band has an unlimited amount of directions in which it can travel on any given night.

"Overall there's a very loose structure to the songs that we do," Matthews says. "Here is the core of the song, we know that, now we can all run with it."

Last February the Dave Matthews Band found it a little more difficult to improvise when they had the Richmond Symphony Orchestra backing them for a charity show benefitting an organization for the homeless.

"When you play with an orchestra, it's a very different thing because it is all written down," Matthews says. "They're on the third line of the third page. If you're on the fourth line of the third page, then there is no way to get home. You're screwed!"

Matthews plans to play with an orchestra again, but he hopes to have more rehearsal time, so the orchestra will be able to follow the band on one of their extended jams.

Though the pigeon-toed Matthews captures most of the attention at the mic, others take an equal share of the spotlight, more Dave Matthews Band than Dave Matthews.

"The way I look at it, we have five lead voices in this band," Matthews says. "I may be the first thing people notice, since I do the singing, but there are times when Leroi's sax is the voice, and times when Boyd's violin is at the front. And in Carter and Stefan, we have something that goes far beyond a simple rhythm section. There are very few times when the audience has just one thing to listen to."

The band's nonstop touring schedule has helped its sound become more mainstream. Since April of '93 they have been constantly touring. They will not finish until Labor Day of this year. Rarely are days off for anything other than

traveling.

Proving their dedication to keep their music fresh, they will go into the studios this fall just long enough to make a new album, and then they'll hit the road again. Matthews says that they have enough material right now to record three new albums.

This should not come as a surprise because, lyrically, Matthews is a budding genius. He can pull an array of emotions from the listener, from upbeat songs about peace and love to the more demonic and eerie songs about drug abuse and life's struggles.

Many nights the band still works out new songs on stage. A couple concert favorites like "Seek Up," "Rhymer And Reason" and "Say Goodbye" have all been through major lyrical metamorphoses since their creation.

"Two Step" is a song that we haven't recorded yet, but we know people dig it. (It was) sort of a struggle for a long time, but just recently it started taking on a new life. It's nice when a song finds itself," Matthews says.

Matthews is very excited about a new, unnamed song the band is working on right now. "It's a ridiculous pop tune," Matthews admits. "It's so pop, but it's fun to play."

The Grateful Dead asked the Dave Matthews Band to open for them for three shows in Las Vegas this past spring.

"None of us had ever been to a Dead show, and so it was our chance to go and see them. We were lucky because the tour they just had was plagued with really difficult times," Matthews recalls.

Matthews felt the crowd was one of the most laid back and attentive audiences. Taking a page from the Dead, the band treated the three one-hour opening slots as if it were one show. "We kind of wrote a three-hour set and played a third of a set each day so we didn't repeat our songs. We didn't want to do the same thing twice, and I figured a lot of the audience was going to be there for all three days."

After they finished playing, Matthews went into the crowd to experience the entire event. "It's an incredible scene, the whole vibe of generations of people. Some people are more devoted, and there are other people who step out of their offices and put on their tie-dyes. It

just seemed overall to be a really cool scene."

The entire band, like many other musicians throughout the world, mourns the loss of Jerry Garcia, one of the greatest guitarists of our time. "Playing with the Grateful Dead earlier this year was one of the most moving experiences we have had as a band," Matthews says. "Our hearts go out to family, friends and fans."

After their stint with the Dead, Matthews doesn't consider himself a hippie. "Maybe I consider myself, I don't know?" Matthews says as he ponders the question. "I don't think I'm a hippie, but I don't think I'm *not* a hippie. There are aspects of the generation of hippies that I agree with, and things that I didn't understand. I don't know what I am."

The singer feels that most people don't know who they really are. In the song "Dancing Nancies," Matthews explains his reasoning.

"Nobody really knows who they are, as far as I'm concerned," Matthews says as he starts to get deep. "What am I as a person? or 'What is it to be a person?' (if being human) is the first thing that you are, and you aren't real clear on what it is to be human, then that's the whole question."

"If you are that thing, if you are a person, what else matters. Does anything else matter? Is that the only thing that was decided at your birth and was everything else open?"

Matthews doesn't believe in fate or destiny. He believes in his own synchronicity. He believes in the concept that there can be communal thoughts, the same idea happening in more than one place. According to Matthews, the world would be a better place if people did not place so much emphasis on who they are.

"In Western society, there is a big emphasis on what we are in our environment. We are adamant about small differences that separate us but really don't separate us as human beings because there are larger things that put us into a bowl together that make us similar and unvaried."

Maybe 20 years from now there will be a category for the Dave Matthews Band's style of music. Until then, people shouldn't try to classify them. Just enjoy them.