

MUSICAL SENSATION THE NADAS ROAD TO SUCCESS

By Sarah Trudeau

If Jason Walsmith could describe his band, The Nadas, in one word, it would be stubborn. Although the music industry has changed dramatically since the group formed a band in 1993, The Nadas have adapted and refused to give up on the struggle that is a musician's life today.

"We just have kept hitting our head against the wall for years to try to break through it and we just keep moving the wall," said Walsmith about the band's struggle to be noticed.

The band started when Walsmith and his fellow singer/songwriter Mike Butterworth decided to form a no name band that had no songs, or shows. Their music was made up entirely of songs off of a mix tape an ex-girlfriend had made for Walsmith. "Every song we played was off that tape," said Walsmith. When he took a trip to Africa in the summer of '94, Butterworth decided to find a few people to play with while he was gone. When Walsmith got back, they had acquired a drummer and a bass player.

Now that Walsmith and Butterworth's band was really becoming a band, they needed a name. They agreed that the name should be something that means something, but ended up naming the band after a word that means nothing, nada. The next step for the band was to tour starting in Ft. Collins, Col., a town that Walsmith describes as very similar to where the band started, Ames.

“You could go to the same bar, walk out and get basically the same euro, it was weird.”

The Nadas' big break came in 2001 when writer for Playboy Magazine, Allison Lundgren, decided to write a piece about a great band that people were unaware of. A former employee of the daily and current MTV news editor, Cory Moss, pointed Lundgren in the direction of the Nadas. After spending 5 days on the road with them, her article titled, “The Best College Band You’ve Never Heard Of,” was published in the October issue of Playboy. The next day, the Nadas saw the effect the article had on their awareness. Major labels were calling them, people were flying in to see the band play at People’s in Ames, and the a bidding war began to take place over which label would get to sign the band. At the height of all of this excitement, the terrorist attack of September 11th took place and it all went away.

“I believe that was our break and that was just kind of a bad time,” Walsmith said about the unfortunate timing of events.

Since then they have continued to make music and tour around the country. “We just keep writing songs, making records, and playing shows,” said Walsmith. The technological changes that have occurred in the music industry have created both opportunity and challenge for The Nadas. While the ability to be so connected to their fans has been beneficial, the struggle to gain exposure has gotten more difficult because it’s much harder now for people to sift through the talent and find them.

“Everyone’s just trying to find a way to be relevant and interesting,” said Walsmith.

They have tried to market as much as possible, especially on the Internet, however it hasn’t proved to always be successful. In fact, even an ad put up in Times Square for the bands record label, Authentic Records, didn’t improve their sales at all.

“People only buy the record if they really want to support the artist,” said Walsmith about the downfall in record sales since iTunes and peer-to-peer music sharing has hit the scene. “I want people to pass our music around as much as possible, I’m just hoping that a certain percentage of those people realize that by buying records it helps us. “

The Nadas are currently working on their latest record that they’re calling Almanac. It will be a collaboration of songs that they have written, recorded, and released one month at a time for one year and each song can be heard on Capital 106.3 as it’s released each month.