

Fans Bid Farewell To Aftershock During The Rock Band's Last Performance

By Bethany Prange
THE INDEPENDENT

In some ways, everyone is a little bit famous in a small town. But there are few who can claim more local fame than the musicians of the most popular local band.

Though their names might not be recognized in towns 500 miles away, the members of a band like Aftershock are certainly legends to music lovers in this community.

Even those who were not fans of their style of music would probably recognize Brian, Bill, Denny and Troy as the four members of a band that has played at homecomings, picnics and area bars for a decade.

On Saturday, Jan. 10, fans of Aftershock bid farewell to the band at their final gig at Bobeck's in Waterloo.

Hours before the band even started to play, fans began filling the tables of the bar and restaurant. By 7 p.m., there were no tables left and standing room was limited.

It was a fitting farewell to a band that has provided the soundtrack to the wild nights of youth for several generations of Monroe Countians.

Aftershock was formed in the fall of 2004 with members Bill Dierker, lead guitar and

vocals; Brian Hoffman, rhythm guitar, keyboards, and vocals; Denny Gum, bass guitar and vocals; and Troy Henke, drums and percussion.

Hoffman, Gum and Henke had been playing together since 1995, primarily in their last band, Route 3. Dierker came to Aftershock from the St. Louis band Better Off Dead.

The guys laugh as they remember when Dierker, a St. Louis native, came from the city to audition for the Monroe County-based band.

"I think I went and met him and he followed me and we got stuck behind a tractor," Hoffman said.

Aftershock made its debut on Dec. 23, 2004 in Waterloo. The foursome had an instant chemistry on stage, and began making the rounds of picnics, homecomings, bars and dances in St. Louis and the Metro East.

Aftershock's repertoire of music included classic rock from the 70s and 80s and hits from the 60s, 90s and the 2000s - a mix that appealed to a broad spectrum of music lovers.

Over the years, Aftershock has had the crowds filling the dance floor to covers of songs like "Feel Like Making Love"



Aftershock's Denny Gum, Brian Hoffman, Troy Henke and Bill Dierker gather on stage prior to their final concert - Jan. 10 at Bobeck's in Waterloo.

by Bad Company, "Good" by Better Than Ezra, "Two Tickets To Paradise" by Eddy Money, and "Mama Let Him Play" by Deucette.

Hoffman, Dierker and Gum sang lead vocals that rivaled original performers like Elvis Presley, The Grateful Dead and Journey.

Hoffman, who had his first gig at a school dance in 1988, said one of his favorite memories was that first night Aftershock played together. That first gig was at the same place as the last one - Bobeck's.

Both nights the crowd was huge, enthusiastic and fun.

"We thought we should finish it here," Hoffman said.

Dierker added, "It's pretty much been the band's home base since the beginning."

Though many fans are crushed Aftershock won't be performing together anymore, Hoffman said the band members are just ready for some time to themselves.

For more than a decade, the four guys have been performing almost every single weekend. That doesn't include their once-a-week practices.

"Two of us have kids and it's just getting harder to find family time," Hoffman said. "We've been doing it for so long

and things have changed as far as the music scene. It seemed like the time might be right."

The guys are quick to point out that they are not "breaking up" over any differences. In fact, the four musicians have always gotten along famously, Hoffman said.

"We never had any disagreements," Hoffman said. "We could be playing for 10 people and having a good time, just the four of us."

Hoffman, 38, and Gum, 41, plan to take some time away from professional music, but Henke, 45, and Dierker, 42, say they want to keep playing.

Henke said he will take a little time off and then probably look for another local band. Dierker is thinking of starting a band back in St. Louis.

The four have made some incredible memories over the years, for themselves and for their fans. For years, the band played at an annual float trip. They were also the popular entertainment at well-attended events like the Waterloo Homecoming and Valmeyer Fourth of July picnic.

Over the years, the fans have entertained the band as much as the band entertained them, Gum said.

"Thank you to everyone for coming out all these years," Hoffman said.



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