



Photo/DAN PELTON

GRANDE FIR, a five-man Orangeville band that is always searching for the distinctive sound, consists of, left to right, Jay Marr, Chris Mullen, Cory McCallum and Stewart Gunn. Missing from the photo is drummer Mitch Hall.

Grande Fir has unique local sound

By DAN PELTON
Staff Reporter

Welcome to Orangeville, a new epicentre of the rock universe. Hey, don't laugh, it could happen. Especially if more local bands are of the same mindset as Grande Fir, an ensemble of five veteran local musicians bent on producing its own unique sound. Grande Fir (French for Big Tree) consists of Jay Marr (guitar and lead vocals), Cory McCallum (mandolin, guitar and vocals), Stewart Gunn (keyboards), Chris Mullen (bass and vocals) and Mitch Hall (drums and percussion).

Why the name? "It has a rustic sound," says Marr. "It makes us sound like rednecks with a bit of class," adds Gunn.

The name is actually appropriate for a band that takes pride in its folk rock roots, but is willing and eager to explore the rest of the musical spectrum.

They have put out two albums, the self-named Grande Fir and Love and the Weather, and they are building an enthusiastic local following.

This reporter only had a chance to listen to Love and the Weather. While it lacks the slick studio sound, due to obvious financial constraints, the album is a compilation of cleverly orchestrated drives.

To best describe the album's first song, Like Lovers, imagine that a group of soccer hooligans has adopted a Lovin' Spoonful tune as its fight

song and is belting it out on the way to the match.

Then there's Love and the Weather, the title track. If you're bent on making comparisons, you could say it's a hybrid of the Band and early Tom Petty.

The truth is that this is a tune composed and performed by Grande Fir, a musical entity unto itself.

With another tune on the album, San Francisco, Grande Fir introduces the listener to what is almost a whole new genre — folk grunge.

The band is true to its Orangeville roots. They would rather play at a local house party than a more lucrative gig in Toronto.

"If you really love what you're doing, money is just gravy," explains McCallum. "We would rather play a house party in Orangeville, where the people are going ape, than play some uninteresting bar in Toronto."

What is interesting up here is the willingness of local music businesses to occasionally transform the stores into 30- to 40-seat venues where local musicians can play their own stuff, hone their craft and foster loyal followings.

Gunn, a classically trained pianist, first hooked up with Marr and McCallum in an eight-piece psychedelic rock band called the Haymakers.

Prior to that, McCallum played with Five Knuckle Chuckle, a punk band, and Marr was with a funk band.

Mullen, who moved to Orangeville three years ago, and began his local tenure with Torn Down Units, a rock 'n roll group.

How, pray tell, can five guys from such diverse musical backgrounds co-exist without getting the occasional urge to beat the living crap out of each other?

In Grande Fir's case, the five musicians are individuals who have both their own tastes and a commitment to the project that is Grande Fir.

"All the guys have their own songs," notes Marr, the band's main songwriter, "and they have songs that they instinctively know are Grande Fir."

Gunn provides a typical example of how each works within the framework. "I don't want to be the songwriter," he says.

"What I'm good at is doing the tinkering after the fact."

As well, the band is constantly keeping a fresh outlook through experimentation. "I was playing bass in a rock band when I got my hands on an upright (bass)," recalls Mullen.

"When I went to (play with Grande Fir), they told me to bring it along."

McCallum, meanwhile, is thinking of ways to add an accordion to Grande Fir's mix. Variety, it seems, is Grande Fir's spice of life.

McCallum sums it up in one sentence: "You can still slip a bit of punk into folk without ruining it."

13 more 'stunt driving' charges in Caledon

Caledon OPP says its officers are continuing "almost on a daily basis" to suspend driver's licences and seize vehicles for those travelling 50

km/h or more above the town's posted speed limits.

Between July 30 and August 11, Caledon OPP officers charged 13 per-

sons with stunt driving, including one Brampton man who was clocked doing 210 in an 80 km/h zone.

A summary of the 13 charges:

- At 6:40 a.m. July 30, James Lepki, 38, of Belwood was charged with driving 131 km/h on Highway 10 near Charleston Sideroad.

- At 6 a.m. July 31, Courtney Houston, 28, of Shelburne, was charged with driving 139 km/h at Highway 10 and The Forks of the Credit Road.

- 20 minutes later, Donald King, 28, of Caledon was charged with driving 130 km/h on Castleberg Sideroad and Mount Pleasant Road in a 60 km/h zone.

- At 12:45 p.m. August 1, Duke Carnegie, 31, of Brampton was charged with driving 117 km/h on Horseshoe Hill Road at The Grange Sideroad in a 60 km/h zone.

- At 9 p.m. that day, Greg Koff, 38, of North York was charged with stunt driving at Highway 10 and Boston Mills Road.

- At 9:30 a.m. August 3, Vijitharan Rajaratnam, 22, of Woodbridge, was charged with Stunt Driving at Highway 10 and Charleston Sideroad.

- At 6 p.m. August 6, Edward Chang, 64, was clocked at 132 km/h at Highway 9 and Mount Hope Rd.

- At 2:30 p.m. August 7, Jerzy Milosiewicz, 47, of Kitchener was charged with driving 133 km/h on Highway 10 at Grange

Sideroad.

- Later that day, Giuseppe Spagnuolo, 55, of Orangeville was clocked at 112 in a 50 zone in Caledon Village.

- At 4:10 p.m. that day, Carolyn Armstrong, 29, of Aurora was clocked at 110 km/h at the same location, and two hours later Bradley Cabral, 18, of Mississauga was charged with going 142 km/h on Highway 10 at Mistywood Drive.

- On August 11, at 10:30 p.m. Andrew de Vesser, 19, of Caledon was charged with stunt driving at Dixie Road and King Street.

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Vision Max P.C.P. Number 27736, active ingredient glyphosate;
Arsenal P.C.P. Number 23713, active ingredient imazapyr;
2,4-D Amine 600 P.C.P. Number 5931, active ingredient dimethylamine salt
The County of Dufferin intends to control weeds and grass along guide rails on rural roadsides under the health or safety exception that affect public works from August 17th to October 31, 2009, weather permitting along all or part of Dufferin County Highways:
For more information, contact Dufferin County Transportation and Public Safety Department at 1-519-941-2775 or DeAngelo Brothers Corporation at 1-866-853-9333