

The Bayonets



It may seem like an unusual plan, but singer/songwriter Phil Austen decided to go back to university so he could start a band. He figured that the pop music course at Auckland University would be a likely place to start looking for talented bandmates. And indeed it was. Though they're not all current students, Martin Paris (lead guitar), Joel Bremner (drums) and Paul Robertson (bass) all found their way to Austen through the hallowed corridors of the performing arts school, and formed The Bayonets around 18 months ago.

"I think Phil got on the band-wagon pretty quickly," laughs Paris. "He joined the pop course with the idea of, 'I'm gonna meet people, network and then start a band', whereas I got into it kind'a thinking, 'I wanna improve my guitar skills and songwriting', so I hadn't really thought about it. Then Phil was like, 'Do ya wanna start a band?'"

The foursome (who banter like brothers) wrote some songs, played

some gigs, and eventually found their way into the studio of the prolific Dave Parker (who has also worked with their friends Teacups, Artisan Guns and Bear Cat amongst others) to record their just-released debut EP 'King, Country & Title'.

Though this is Austen's first band, his cohorts have all played in various others (Paris comes with the added qualifications of music in his genes – his mother was a member of the popular '70s vocal group The Yandall Sisters), but as Bremner explains, they felt like they'd seen something that could possibly go further with The Bayonets.

"You kind of get this feeling that there's some kind of x-factor going on here, and you can hear the potential in Phil's voice. And then when these guys came along and they write good melodies and have good ideas, I was like, 'Yeah this is worth pursuing'"

Austen cites Ryan Adams as a particular influence, but they all have wide musical tastes and backgrounds. Their particular version of melodic, indie folk pop is worth searching out – in live or recorded form, one listen and you'll likely be hooked. While they're yet to take their show on the road (though they did perform at Parachute this year), their live performance is tight and captivating, knitting together Austen's strong voice with wistful lyrics, agile riffs from Paris and some intricate patterns from the rhythm section.

"I get inspired by Phil to be honest," Robertson explains. "As a bass player I could listen to his song, and say, 'What can I rip off to pull into it'. But half the time, if it's a good song, he'll just start playing it on the piano or the guitar, and it just inspires me enough to come up with a cool bass line, or ideas for the drums or whatever."

The Bayonets see 'King, Country & Title' as an exciting first step that captured their sound at the time, but they're already itching to record again, and hope to have an album finished before the end of the year.

www.myspace.com/bayonetsmusic

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