



Six-string shakes

Keyboardist Tim Rice-Oxley (far right) says when the band's guitarist quit, it threw the group "off kilter for a while."

A sound of their own

Keane's not too, uh, keen on Coldplay comparisons

By Ari Bendersky

Whatever you do, don't call them Coldplay.

Keane, who also hails from England, have had to live in the critical shadow of Chris Martin and Co. for sounding similar and using piano as the band's centerpiece.

That aside, the trio has enjoyed a yearlong ride of their lives, exploding in England with the release of the band's debut, "Hopes and Fears," and gaining considerable steam in the U.S. The band is touring with The Zutons, another supercharged British band, and Chicago's own Redwalls, a group set to take off this year.

Metromix caught up with songwriter/keyboardist Tim Rice-Oxley in New York, the day be-

fore the band's "Saturday Night Live" debut.

I heard you in an interview a few weeks ago, and it sounds like it chaps your ass when you get compared to Coldplay.

[Laughs] I do remember doing that interview. We get asked that a lot. It certainly is frustrating for us because you worry that it will mislead people into not listening to us because you have one Coldplay, so why listen to another? Whereas the truth is far from that—anyone who listens to us knows that we're very different.

And you're playing "Saturday Night Live."

It's so surreal and hard to register in ways. We're trying to shrug our shoulders and not take it for granted.

Are you going to ask [show host] Paris Hilton to sing with you?

[Laughs] You never know—she

may not be able to help herself from jumping on stage.

Speaking of being on stage, how did the Redwalls get on tour with you guys?

We heard about this band from Chicago who were just starting out and making a few people sit up and listen. They have a great youthful enthusiasm and zest for playing music and singing together. That's how it should be.

Have audiences taken to them?

Yeah, I think it's going on really well. They're a good kind of old-fashioned rock 'n' roll band, basically. People love that. It's a great way of warming things up at the beginning of the night.

Both Keane and The Zutons were up for Breakout Band at the Brit Awards—has there been any fighting backstage?

[Laughs] No, not at all. They're really nice people. They're a

great live band. They're different from us and have more of a weird style—it's pretty eccentric and exciting. It's another variation in the evening.

Was it difficult at first to write and play music after guitarist Dominic Scott left the band in 2001?

It threw us off kilter for a while, but I think the writing got better in a way. The lack of guitar meant more space and melodies. You could be more concise and could actually pack the meaning into the song instead of the lengthy guitar solos.

Have you started working on new music or have plans to put out another album any time soon?

We've started working on it. I'm trying to write as much as I can. I have an electric piano set up next to me—I'm writing whenever I get a chance. We have accumulated a lot of songs, and now it's just a question of working out whether any of them are good.

Ari Bendersky is a metromix special contributor.

Keane

When: 6:30 p.m. Thursday

Where: Riviera, 4746 N. Racine Ave.

Tickets: \$21

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