



SAGE

SPICING UP HEXFEST

Say goodbye to the munchies, because Sage is cooking up something nice and sweet for Hex Hollow Music's annual weekend-long festival.

Like a well-cared-for herb garden, jam band Sage has seen its fan base grow and grow in the past few years, thanks to good music, good friends, and a few annual performances at Hex Hollow Music's musical celebration, Hexfest.

Sage started bringing the funk about three years ago. Drummer Gabe Rohmann and the rest of the gang — Tim Nayfield, guitar; Dave "Tree" Ryden, bass; Marc Gallo, also on guitar — are all friends who hail from the New Hope, PA area. (Quick band fact: The group's favorite gig is John & Peter's Place, where the guys from Ween are known to hang whenever they're in town.)

Drummer Rohmann is a reformed speed metallor who once played in a band called Darkness. Now that he's on the other end of the musical spectrum, with Sage, Rohmann brings reggae-like beats together with funky, rock rhythms that would probably appeal more to your average Phish fan than your typical death metal junkie. Since you might be wondering, and we were too, "Sage can mean a lot of things," Rohmann said. "I think that a lot of [Nayfield's] lyrics are simple advice for living. It goes along with the whole proverbial sage advice."

Most bands are lucky if they can get once CD to sell successfully, especially if it's their debut album. Keeping that in mind, Sage has done something most would file in the "unthinkable" category — the band released a self-titled double disc debut (that's two CDs for the price of one, genius) in April, which features 18 original songs. "It's been doing really well," Rohmann said of album sales so far. "We wanted to capture our live sound; the reaction has been really cool."

This is actually the group's second attempt at making a studio album, since the first one got a little screwed up mid-recording. "It's kind of a long story, but we recorded [the first album] on Pro Tools and we lost the entire thing," Rohmann said. Undeterred, Sage started from scratch.

The band got a bunch of friends

together for a party at the studio, and set out to record the two set show that became the group's debut. "We chose the best songs, and there were so many good ones, that we had to make it a double disc," Rohmann said. "Mixing was definitely a long and hard process, but the energy gets through." (To listen and order Sage's music, go to www.sageband.com.) You can expect to hear many of the songs featured on the debut at this year's Hexfest show. If you've never been, then what the heck is Hexfest, anyway?

Well, it isn't about witches or putting spells on people (although that was a good guess). Hexfest is a yearly musical get-together put on by Steve Walker of Hex Hollow Music, a music shop located in Barto, PA. It's basically a festival lover's paradise — free camping, free shuttle bus parking, and more music than you can shake a stick at.

In addition to performances by headliners The Recipe and Michael Glabicki of Rusted Root fame, this year's fest will host several local performers (like Sage) as well as a guitar workshop and an open mic session on Saturday morning for seasoned and novice performers alike to strut their musical stuff.

During an annual get-together similar to Hexfest's summer camp-out theme, Sage would throw its own festival (called Jam at the Grove), before festivals were super popular and happening somewhere just about every weekend in the summer. This year, "we couldn't really find a free weekend where we wouldn't be a lot of competition for our show, so we basically trashed it," Rohmann said.

But festivals will remain a tradition for the group, regardless of whether they're in charge or not. "It's a yearly thing for us," Rohmann said of Hex Hollow's event. "It's like a family vibe there. Everyone's so friendly. And camping out is always fun."

To find out what the show times are all weekend and where you can order tickets (and it's not from Ticketmaster, thankfully), see Hex Hollow Music's website after the Huh? on this page.

INFO



What?
Hexfest featuring Michael Glabicki of Rusted Root and The Recipe

Where?
Just off Route 100 in Barto, PA

When?
Friday, July 25 to Sunday, July 27

How much?
\$50/\$65, includes two nights of camping and free (yay!) shuttle parking

Huh?
610.845.2787 or www.hexhollowmusic.com

Hours: M-F 11-7 • Sat. 12-5
e-mail: planetearth544@hotmail.com

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Ortwein, Monica. "Spicing Up HexFest." *Pulse Weekly*, 23 Jul. 2003: A6.

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