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# inside

## connection

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COMPLIMENTARY



**FORMER  
GENESIS  
GUITARIST  
STEVE HACKETT  
LOOKS TO  
THE FUTURE**

**THE HARD-HITTING  
DRUMMING OF  
MARCUS  
RANDOLPH**

**MARY CHAPIN  
CARPENTER  
STAYS TRUE  
TO HERSELF**

**NO ARTISTIC BRAINFREEZE  
DAVE MATTHEWS**

door DMB gig, there is a similar approach, Matthews suggests. "I think we always come to play, and figure that in order to keep the audience we have to blow them away every time.

"When we walk off the stage we might think more about the effect, and some nights are easier than other nights, and some nights it's effortless, and some nights it's like trying to dig a grave with a teaspoon. But all the time it's knowing that you have to really come play like it's the last time you're ever going to play. And I don't know if that comes from just the guys in the band, but I think it's probably not an uncommon way to feel about it."

He does not take the audience's support for granted. "I've become sort of preoccupied while I'm playing for an audience with making sure when they leave that they're even more excited than when they came. Whether or not I managed to do that or not, or we managed to do that or not, is another thing. But at least it's a reasonable thing to attempt and also not to be too scared to get over that fear, because I still have—I think everybody does—a bit of that fear of being trampled. Not literally, but just by the size of things. You've got to keep a perspective."

Keeping it fresh for themselves and the audience while still fulfilling fan expectations is not a perfect balancing act, he implies. Matthews insists he has no idea how that is accomplished. "We love to play and that's what we do. We don't say, 'This is the right way to do it,' or 'This is the wrong way to do it.'"

"I think you sort of know when things are going nowhere, but also you hope you know if things are going somewhere. Aside from that, I don't think I could honestly say that I know how we keep [that balance] that way. We just show up."

Encouraged to speculate on the future of creativity in general, Matthews responds, "I wish I could say there's going to be some fantastic revolution and all the cans will be blown to pieces. But I think that it's safe to say that people will always want to make, at least attempt to make, creative things, whether it's music or art or film, and they'll be people who will attempt to package it in a more profitable way, and try to succeed in one way or another. And then in that way we'll sort of bounce back and forth in bigger and

in less impressive manners."

Someone has one original idea, and then there are 100 imitations, he says. "And of those 101 things, I just always hope that at least I have a good idea and a little less an imitation. Of course, I certainly find inspiration places."

He believes live music will always find a way to survive, and people will always be drawn to it. "I think people do get tired of things being packaged for them. I think people do grow tired of being spoon-fed, and if it's not every generation, it's sort of every couple or every half-generation."

He believes people don't want to be told what is cool, that they want to make discoveries for themselves. "I think in those moments, whether small or in more cross-culture situations, you find people looking," he says.

Festivals like Bonnaroo have assisted that search, he adds. "If you're lucky enough to start a festival like Bonnaroo, people are going. I wish I could go out into a big field and do a bunch of music and not have to worry about whether it's hip, or whether it's got the right clothes, or whether it's loud enough or what cool people are listening to it, but just go and listen and decide for myself."

"Bonnaroo came along and it was right at one of those moments when people were willing to go sit in a traffic jam and lie in the mud and really enjoy it. Because it is a lot of fun to do that. Not that I was planning on giving up my bed in my bus for that trip. But that's only because I'm an old fart. I'd still go camping in the mud, just probably not at Bonnaroo."

[Laughter]

He believes that Bonnaroo has the potential to be an annual presence. "I think, as much for anything, because it's outside of the hype," he explains. "I think one of the reasons that the rave scene and the festival scene in Europe is kind of big is because it's away from all the big sort of entertainment industry crap, and I think that's one of the reasons that somebody like Bonnaroo probably has a chance over here to do really well. Because so much of entertainment, at least [of] our access through the radio and through television, or through retail or anything, it's just so much of it is controlled by very specific interests. So when somebody like Bonnaroo comes along that really is outside of that,

really is departed from any sort of big money interests, then I think that's probably an attraction, too, so people don't feel like they are being led like sheep."

Bonnaroo is its own thing, he says. "It's a wonderful festival. It's kind of young. It's kind of youthful. It's kind of exciting because nobody else is doing it."

Such fests, he believes, are reminding people of how satisfying live music can be in a way that is difficult to get from the radio, MTV, or another outlet. "You just want to go get your head blown off by something that will never happen again [in the same way]."

You want to see something for the first and for the last time, and I think that's a big part of it. "Music, whether live or on record, is a departure for many people from the every day, he says. "It's the place where we can go forget about ourselves."


Matthews is hopeful he and his band have done their part to that end in the recording studio this time. "I think that for us this album sounds more like us, in a way, than any of our records," he says.

"But I can understand how having just listened to our records that you might think it was a real departure for us. For us it feels far more familiar, in a way, and I know that all of us feel very strongly about the record."

For *Stand Up*, the writing process was much quicker and much more spontaneous than it has been in the past, he says. "And so the ideas that probably would have slipped away, unless we had something with them, with sort of a grander overview, didn't."

They worked with producer Mark Batson, whose credits include Eminem, 50 Cent and India.Arie, among others. He is a Grammy-winning producer, jazz pianist and multi-instrumentalist. "A lot of the improvisation or things that might happen onstage, or might happen in a soundcheck, were allowed to make it to the record, so there's a lot of credit to him," Matthews says.

He also gives Batson props in helping him find a new, relaxed "tone" in his vocals.

Matthews acknowledges there is a dark quality to some of the songs on the CD, but he also believes there's a lot of hope to be found in many of them. "These are pretty dark times in many ways, so if we're just singing about bubble gum, or temporary gratification, then our heads truly are up our asses, so I'm glad people think it's a little bit darker." 

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# No Artistic Brainfreeze



by Rex Rutkoski

## Two Big Scoops of Dave Matthews

For a man who loves ice cream, Dave Matthews is being mighty patient. Not so, understandably, his young daughters on this afternoon outing with their world-famous dad. Grace and Stella are already in line at the store for their cones. Dad, no stranger to mixing business with pleasure, has agreed to delay immediate gratification of the Ben and Jerry kind to talk music—his, others' and what is unfolding this summer and beyond.

Matthews, dubbed the biggest rock star in America by *Rolling Stone*, is excited to be working within the context of the Dave Matthews Band again.

It is almost an understatement to say that, through the years, that has been a very powerful creative force, selling 30 million-plus albums and 10 million concert tickets. "We're not really good at long-term plans, so it's amazing we've gotten this far," he quips.

Their new album, *Stand Up*, is their first studio recording together in three years. Matthews had a solo CD, *Some Devil*, in 2003. "I think that I speak for the whole band when I say we're looking more forward to this summer than we have in just a really long time," he says. "We all seem to be in a very good head space right now about the new music and about the direction that it's going. We've been having a lot of fun playing this stuff, [at] the few chances we've had to play it so far."

Matthews theorizes that will continue to translate into live performances that are not predictable. "I guess the new album is going to have its impact, because there's going to be a handful of new songs in the show. But I'm not really 100 percent sure exactly what's going to happen.

"We just go out and play. We're not planning on

dropping off 100,000 balloons. Hopefully we play with as much joy as we can and that'll come across, and hopefully people will be convinced of how much of a good time we're having."

Longtime keyboardist Butch Taylor is supplementing the band's live performances this summer. "As the years pass by, Butch is sort of more and more a member. He's just becoming so much a part of it. It's hard to imagine it without him."

The DMB lineup remains bassist Stefan Lessard, drummer Carter Beauford, violinist Boyd Tinsley and saxophonist LeRoi Moore. Matthews says that everyone is an equal contributor to a great band.

He believes audiences will enjoy the guests they have invited to their touring party. "I think we've chosen a pretty interesting group of bands to take out on the road this summer, and so we're going to hopefully get a chance to at least dabble at some cross-pollination there on the stage," Matthews says.

There is not much advance planning. "Again, I never know what's going to happen. It's usually that afternoon, before the show, that we make the plans, and certainly nothing is set in stone."

He references the example of Trey Anastasio, whose philosophy, he says, seems to be: "You can pretty much guarantee that there's going to be something new every night that's never been seen before. We just don't know what it is until we come up with it. I expect something, but I can't predict what it is yet. We'll play some of the new songs and some of the old songs, and we will play them with the closest to a band [feel] that we can manage.

"I don't know what else to say. I wish I could say something like there will be transformers and I will give birth to an alien monster through my chest and put myself into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame somehow, even if it's not through music." He laughs.

Whether it is playing to a festival audience, such as the June 10 weekend Bonnaroo Fest in Tennessee at which the DMB headlined, or in an indoor or out-

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