

New Event Group Debuts

Kickoff show to feature Virgin Mary Pistol Grip, Icares, Ten Club

What: Ten Club, Virgin Mary Pistol Grip, Icares

When: 8:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 19

Where: The Slowdown, 729 N. 14th St.

Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$12 day of show

Web: theslowdown.com

By MarQ Manner

Loch 22, a new promotions and event company in Omaha, will launch this Friday, Sept. 19, at the Slowdown. I'll be sharing insight from my interview with them in the future – for now, you can find a lot of information on the group at this event. I know they are going to pull out all the stops, including more than \$1,000 in raffle prizes.

Playing are Pearl Jam tribute band Ten Club, reunited Omaha rock band Icares and the debut of Virgin Mary Pistol Grip. This will also be VMPPG's CD release party. Made up of members of Manna and Supercell, the band features longtime Omaha musicians Jales Hupke in the frontman role for the first time. I met up with Jales this past week to talk about the formation of the band, the songs and their new CD.

MarQ- What is the story behind the new group Virgin Mary Pistol Grip?

Jales - Most of us live in Omaha so it's a lot easier. If we want to practice on a Wednesday or Thursday we can, and plus we just wanted to change the sound up.

MarQ - How did this project get started?

Jales - The drummer and I and Dan got together two years ago and kind of jammed. We just kept getting together and jammed we didn't have any songs. Then we started going back and listening to the rehearsals. We had about six songs done and I wanted another guitarist so I brought in my brother to play guitar. We finished all of the songs and recorded a bunch of them and I thought it needed a little more melody here and there and my buddy is a really good musician and so he plays keys. I gave him the songs and he added a lot to them. So there it goes. This will be our first show.

MarQ - Do you feel like the songs are more personal this time than with Manna?

Jales - I would say it is more personal. I use mostly things that I have been through and things in my life than in our other project. Plus, I was the guitarist before so I didn't have a lot of say on the subject matter. The drummer is really into the the 50's and 60's and he brings that and it kind of helps the songwriting process.

MarQ - So you are putting out a CD during your first show?

Jales - I have always had this vision that if I ever fronted my own band, I wanted to put out an album at our first show. It is annoying when you go see a band and really dig them and they do not have a CD.

MarQ - Where did you record at?

Jales - Sioux Falls with a friend of mind. Manna recorded with him in 2001 and he is really good. It's really hard not to use him and it is good and not expensive. Cathouse Studios.

MarQ - Tell me about some of the songs.

Jales - "Whiskey Flats" will be the first single. These were song lyrics I wrote in 2003, and it has been sitting around until I started my own band. It's about a person going through sh*t looking for a person to be with, that ray of sunshine and finally finding them in the end. Failed relationships and all that. "Car Crash" is the most personal song. I have had two friends in the past five years that have died in drunk driving accidents. Skyscraper has to do with...it's about 911. It's about being in that tower and do you jump out or not? It's about seeing that and how surreal that would be. They are choosing to jump out of that building, they are choosing this death over that death.

MarQ - Where did you get the name Virgin Mary Pistol Grip?

Jales - I was at a graduation in 2005 and a bunch of people were talking about movies and somebody mentioned something about a Clint movie with him using a gun with a virgin mary pistol grip. I always wanted to use that name since then.

MarQ - You are playing the launch event at Slowdown for Loch 22 Productions. Why did you choose that as the place to play your first show?

Jales - When we were thinking about releasing the album we were looking for a place and I am a huge Pearl Jam fan and I wanted Damon and them to play the end of the night so I could talk to people and he was starting this up so we discussed that we should release this album and show what this company can do and help new artists. He said, "Hey, do you want to help out?" And so I have been the street team guy and have been going to talk to people. I have been friends with Damon and we always talked about doing things together so we finally decided let's do it. We kind of share the same goals of making it a music community and we want to use this to bridge that a little bit.

MarQ - Sum up Virgin Mary Pistol Grip.

Jales- It is kind of more, and it is not totally different, than Manna or Supercell, but it is different enough to where there is more melody and dynamics. I am either going for it or I am not. I am not going to half-ass anything.