

"Honestly don't let doubters bring you down. No one will have faith at first, it starts to get at you. Just keep believing and doing what you love which is writing and performing music [for me]. Don't let anyone tell you it's not good enough, if it resonates within you and feels right then screw the haters."

Kamran Tavakolinia
A Gecko Named Terrance



Five freshmen boys work together to create rock and roll music

WRITTEN BY TOMMY SHERK

Five freshman boys circle up in Deegan Poores' cramped basement rigged with amps, wires and various instruments. Jake Ledom's hands mimic Jimi Hendrix's while he cranks out a guitar riff from AC/DC's "Back in Black." Meanwhile, Deegan is yelling over the guitar to Logan Fancolly, teaching him the bass notes to one of their new songs. Mikey McFarlin, brows furrowed and arms flailing, smashing his drums while Guanghao Yu elegantly plays a piece of classical music on the keyboard. All together, it sounds like crap.

Of course it sounds like crap — it's the sound of what goes on in between songs. It's the epitome of the band, Snow Day in May. It's when each one of the boys show their musical curiosity and ability to mentor one another. It's when Ledom is constantly trying new riffs, when Yu jumps around and tries to play different instruments and when Deegan gives helpful tips to the other band members.

The band's name "Snow Day in May" is based off of a freak snowfall in May of last year. The snowfall is like the band, it's unusual-but awesome. Though they practice in a small basement, it doubles as a decent recording studio. They have recorded and are planning on releasing an extended play (EP), soon, with four authentic songs. They are going to be unveiling their new music in a gig on Feb. 20, Coalition's Love146, which is a school-sponsored concert.

In the midst of the loud chaos, singer Yu yells into the mic to quiet everyone down. With a crazy look in his eye, he suggests, "How about 'Paint it Black'?" They smile in agreement.

There is a brief — very brief — moment of silence while they mentally prepare before drummer McFarlin lays down the quick beat. Yu and Deegan, clad in collared shirts and jeans, begin rocking to the fast-paced tempo of the Rolling Stones classic. Ledom, picking fast at his guitar strings, wears his red baseball cap. McFarlin, thumping on the drums, has on a white Rolling Stones T-shirt and is facing Fancolly who's wearing a big sweatshirt hoodie and strumming his bass gui-

tar. Though all of boys are very different, together, when they play music, they rarely miss a note or trail off key.

The formation of the band came about when the boys were in eighth grade. McFarlin and Fancolly were in Deegan's band class and started talking about the idea of a starting their own band. They selected their instruments, which meant they were pretty much ready to go. Yet, they needed another guitarist and singer. Ledom, for his stellar guitar capabilities, was recruited, and Yu, for his keyboard and vocal experience.

"Being in a band is kind of like being on a sports team," Ledom said, "You have a lot of fun and games, practice a lot, but when the time comes to be serious, everyone can really click."

It's time for him to sing. Yu, with not one ounce of embarrassment or shame, belts out the song as hard as Mick Jagger himself would.

"When it comes together and clicks, it's magical," Yu said, "It's like heaven."

At that moment, it all comes together. They've got a coordinated rhythm. Each one of them is half-playing-half-dancing. It's as overwhelmingly loud as a concert. They're used to it.

Rock is something Deegan has always been familiar with. He was exposed to all types of music as a child, especially from one family member in particular. His dad, Shawn Poores, is the drummer in The Zeros, which is an 80's cover band. They play frequently across Kansas City, such as at the Plaza Art Fair, and often invite Deegan up on stage.

"I just [get on stage] because music is basically my life," Deegan said.

Snow Day in May is made up of a hodgepodge of musical experience. McFarlin was in the percussion section of the band; Fancolly played trumpet. Yu had trained as a classical pianist and has been in two choirs since elementary school.

East bands

"Just practice. Get into a routine. What we do is we'll practice three times a week for four hours. So at our show I wasn't nervous or anything because we had played so I could play everything without even thinking. So I would say lots and lost of practice."



Peter Andresen
Fresh the Plaza

Ledom, meanwhile, had only been playing guitar since fifth grade.

Ledom and Yu both find relief when playing music because it helps them deal with their emotions.

"If I'm happy or in a party type of mood I might make a catchy and groovy riff," Ledom said, "and if I start to like a girl, instead of dreaming about her all day, I might make a more slow and intricate riff."

Playing music is their escape.

"Playing in the band is also a way to get away from the world and my worries and just indulge in the music," Yu said.

Not only do they just like playing music, they enjoy putting meaning and their feelings into the music and lyrics. Snow Day in May has multiple original songs that they intend on playing in future concerts.

Shawn has multiple connections with bars and restaurants that offer gigs to Snow Day in May. These bars don't want the band playing late at night, so they open up time slots for earlier in the day. Other than that, Snow Day in May likes to participate in any event they can.

In the summer, Snow Day in May performed a gig at the Crown Center Jiggle Jam. They recorded the concert, and saw not only that they were really tense on stage, they had bad tone and looked really cheesy overall.

Yet, instead of taking this as a career-ending defeat, it spurred them to make practices more intense and work on things like stage presence. Since then, they've "loosened up". Now, through all of these practices, they are smoother on stage. They've "tuned" themselves to the point where they're ready to go back out into the concert world.

Deegan feels that if they strive to get better and stay serious, they'll improve. While they improve, they will try to play more gigs and write and record more original songs. If the band becomes hugely popular, Snow Day in May plans on creating albums and going on tour.

"We started out as a bunch of you young whippersnappers who were trying to have fun," Yu said, "I think we'll try to keep it that way no matter how far we get."



PHOTOS BY MCKENZIE SWANSON