

Arts & Entertainment

Rising local band releasing CD at Hot Rods



Photo courtesy of GORDIE BALL

Members of Dead Celebrity have performed at a number of GTA hot spots like the Opera House and Horseshoe Tavern.

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

The members of rising band Dead Celebrity know that dreams don't come without a price. You've got to put in the time, effort and — as independent bands everywhere know all too well — the money.

But the alternative, not working toward their goal, isn't really an option for the four young men, who are single minded in at least one respect — they want to succeed in the music business, and are willing to do what it takes.

Their latest CD, which the band is preparing to launch at a show tomorrow, cost them \$20,000 — all out of their own pockets, said lead vocalist Joe Manchisi.

"Some bands are amazing but they don't have the drive (to succeed)," explained Mr. Manchisi, who also plays guitar.

That certainly doesn't describe this Milton band, whose members all have day jobs and yet have found the time to perform more than 300 shows to date at venues like the Opera House and the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto, as well as at numerous college and university clubs.

Some of their shows have drawn more than 1,000 people.

Tomorrow, the band will hold a CD release party/concert for its new album, The Bloody Romantics, at Hot Rods, 121 Chisholm Dr., with doors opening at 8:30 p.m. Admission to the event, which is for ages 19 and older, costs \$6.

The stakes are high. Band members have the heavy task of impressing several label executives — including a major name — and agencies they say will be in attendance.

But any nerves they feel are solely the excited kind, said guitar player and vocalist John Brouwer. "It's the most exciting news I've heard in years," he said.

Two other bands, Clockwork and a failureforeveryseason, will also perform.

Within the past eight years, the band members in Dead Celebrity — all in their mid-twenties — have gone from being

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JEFF BROUWER

four best friends learning instruments and 'jamming' together to four best friends getting ready to release their third CD and touring with such well-known groups as The Salads, Scratching Post and the Watchmen.

"We were just jamming, and then started playing shows and we said, 'Let's take this seriously and try to be rock stars,'" said drummer Jeff Brouwer.

In 2004, Dead Celebrity was voted one of the Top 10 Bands in Ontario by Molson Canadian Rocks.

A mix of rock, punk and pop is how the band describes their sound. They write all their own songs, which often start as a melody or set of lyrics from Mr. Manchisi's pen.

Their just-released album is a thing of pride for the band.

"It has the potential to be under a big label," Mr. Manchisi said. "We spent the time and spent the money."

The Bloody Romantics' producer, Justin Koop, also recorded albums for Finger 11 and Billy Talent.

There's little the band members don't know about each other, Mr. Manchisi said, since they've been together for so long.

"We know each other inside and out, musically and as a band," he said, adding they've never had to deal with changing band members like many groups do.

Playing in the evenings and on weekends on top of working normal jobs leads to busy lives for the band members.

But they're not complaining.

"We all want the same thing," Jeff said.

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