

Sunrise East set to face off in band competition



By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

After a couple of volatile years, it seems progressive/alternative rock band Sunrise East has finally found its groove.

That's no small feat after enduring a seemingly constant turnover, with members coming and going, quitting and being asked to leave.

"I think me and Bill have demanding personalities," laughed Joseph Lee, who, along with Billy Morton, are the two original members of the four-person band.

Joining them last year was bass player Keavin Moore and drummer Colin Christie.

Having an ever-changing group hasn't been easy. It's forced incoming members to learn on the fly and has pushed all of their talents to the limit.

A few of them even had to take on new roles in an effort to fill in gaps. In one instance, the band's singer was let go not long before a big show, leaving Joseph and Billy in the lurch.

The pair, both guitarists, never intended to sing with the band. But that's exactly what they found themselves doing.

"We had to step up and take the vocals for our own songs," Joseph said.

And they liked the results. In the end, they believe all the changes were necessary to get where they are now.

"It helped us form a strong band," Joseph said.

Billy agreed. "This is exactly the right band mix."

Now having a degree of stability, the bandmates — all 17 years old and students of Bishop Reding Secondary School — have spent the past few months writing songs, performing and enjoying the relative ease they've found among themselves.



ERIC RIEHL / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

READY FOR BATTLE: Sunrise East is Milton's representation in Metroland's Best of the West battle of the bands competition. Voting will start Monday. From left are band members Colin Christie (drums), Keavin Moore (bass), Bill Morton (guitar) and Joe Lee (guitar).

"We're all just along for the ride," Billy said.

Sunrise East has been acclaimed Milton's winner in Metroland's Best of the West battle of the bands, a joint effort by the *Champion*, *Oakville Beaver*, *Burlington Post* and *Flamborough Review*.

The contest was open to bands whose members are between 15 and 25.

Starting Monday, the band will face off

online against the winners from Burlington and Oakville — We Are Bravest and Aspektz, respectively. Flamborough didn't receive any entries.

Readers can view the semi-finalists' YouTube video submissions and vote for their favourites until Friday, Mar. 12 at www.miltoncanadianchampion.com. Click on the Metroland's Best of the West logo midway down the right side of the website.

The band with the most votes will be crowned the winner in mid-March. It will have a chance to play at the Burlington Sound of Music Festival, which runs from June 17 to 20, and will be featured in the participating newspapers.

As a fledgling band just starting to make a name for itself, the opportunity to play at the upcoming music festival would certainly be a welcome one for Sunrise East.

"We just really need to get a fan base going," said Keavin, who joined last April. "It's been kind of a slow start, but we'll build up soon enough."

Keavin said he was familiar with Sunrise East when he was asked to join after the band's bass player left. "I'd seen a couple of their shows and kind of liked their sound," said the long-time guitarist. "They just told me to pick up the bass and I did."

Colin joined last October, just a month-and-a-half before the band's most important show to date in front of label representatives at The Opera House in Toronto.

"I've had to learn quickly," Colin said — not that he's complaining. "The only boundaries you have are the ones you put on yourself."

Sunrise East's sound is a product of its members' diverse musical tastes. Joseph likes listening to Indian classical music, while Billy gravitates toward metal and progressive rock. Keavin is into "avant garde alternative," while Colin is into a bit of everything.

"We've all melded together and formed a sound we think is different," Joseph said. "We worked for a long time finding an original sound."

They write all their own music.

The song they submitted to Best of the West is written by Joseph and entitled Calliope — who in Greek mythology is the muse of heroic poetry and lover of war god Ares.

"Joe's a pretty driving creative force in the band," Billy said.

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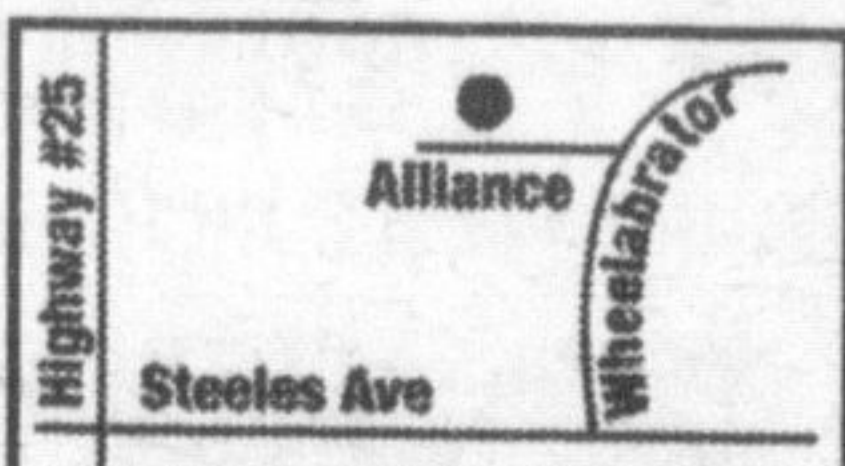
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