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2004 senior project reaps rewards

Summary: Music major Jake Rowan's 2004 senior project, a recording of original music and lyrics, leads to winning the 2006 KDWB Battle of the Bands competition.

(June 27, 2006)-Jake Rowan's senior project, a CD recording of his own musical compositions and lyrics, is reaping him rewards long after his UMM graduation. The project garnered him a successful "passing grade," paved the way to receiving a bachelor of arts in music in 2004, and most recently gained him statewide recognition in Minnesota's competitive music industry. As KDWB's newest Battle of the Bands winner, Rowan and his fellow band members are enjoying the visibility and opportunities afforded by this latest advance in their musical careers.

The first round of the "Dave Makes You Famous" competition

More than 50 bands submitted CD recordings to KDWB's "Dave Makes You Famous" competition. From the entries, Dave Ryan, KDWB morning show host, and fellow staff members chose 10 bands for an online competition that featured one song from each CD. Rowan's "Here's Some Music" was selected.

Rowan remembers well writing that song during his UMM days, and he remembers the teacher and mentor who encouraged him through the process, Jim Carlson, professor of music.

"Doc Carlson was the first person to hear that song, other than me," recalls Rowan. "I chose to attend UMM because it was a school where I could do both music and theatre, and the biggest thing that helped me with my music was Doc. I had 'listening days' with Doc when all we would do is listen to music. Through him, I was exposed to all kinds of music."

The second round online

In "American Idol" fashion, KDWB listeners voted by text message for their favorite of the 10 bands featured online. Based on a very positive response to "Here's Some Music," Rowan's band made the top three and continued on to the final round of competition, a live performance.

The final round live

Sponsored by Famous Dave's restaurants, the live Battle of the Bands competition took place in Calhoun Square in Uptown. The Jake Rowan Band--brother Nathan on guitar, Caz Falen on bass, Alex Young on drums, and Rowan on guitar and lead vocals--won the judges' and the crowd's approval. Said KDWB's Ryan after the competition: "Jake Rowan is just fun to watch...and to listen to. They rock out and slap it up funky style."

Their first-place prize included 50 free recording hours at Troy Hudson's recording studio and the opportunity to perform as the "Dave Makes You Famous" winner on the KDWB stage at St. Paul's Grand Old Day on June 4. The

band was also introduced at the KDWB “Star Party” on May 18.

“This was a great experience,” states Rowan. “Since the Grand Old Day performance, I’ve made many connections and have five additional shows lined up.”

Carlson is very happy about Rowan’s success. “It’s great that Jake Rowan is getting some well-deserved recognition,” states Carlson. “Jake is a phenomenal talent who has an endless source of great musical ideas. He is one of the most inspiring and communicative songwriters that I’ve had the pleasure to work with. He has an incredible gift of having the harmonies in the music enhance the full impact of the words.”

If you’d like to experience Rowan’s music, check out www.jakerowan.com and “give it a quick little listen,” as he says in the “Here’s Some Music” lyrics. His next album, all new original music, should be released next December.

In between recording and performing with his band, Rowan also plays with the Just Friends Big Band, directed by Adam Bestler ’99. “Jazz Band at UMM was awesome,” states Rowan. “If I wouldn’t have had the ‘big band’ experience at UMM, I probably would have missed this great opportunity.”

Rowan is a legacy graduate, the son of Bruce and Sharon Drange Rowan, both 1982 graduates. His grandmother, Mavis Drange, was a staff member of the Office of Student Services in UMM’s early years.

Photo: Jake Rowan (center), Caz Falen (right), and Nathan Eliot (left) performing in the KDWB Battle of the Bands competition in Calhoun Square.

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