



Reno band Split Persona is, from left, Brogan Kelley, Connor Kreamsner, Zander Hoschak and Darren Menning.

COURTESY/SPLIT PERSONA

## Play to win

### Split Persona

#### Finding a band of teens that loves '60s

psychedelic music isn't as common as it used to be. It's one of the reasons that new Reno band Split Persona is so intriguing. The group is also one of several rock bands in town that has a genre-be-damned style, as straightforward rock butts heads with metallic riffage and the more melodic strains of '90s alterno-rock or indie.

It's the group's nods to those late '60s sounds that are the most surprising, but ultimately it's easy to see how the four bandmates absorbed the style. Guitarists Zander Hoschak and Brogan Kelley both answered "upbringing" when asked how they got into '70s and '80s rock, both saying that Mötley Crüe and Van Halen were played around the house by their parents. They also agreed that video game soundtracks were a big deal.

"I wasn't even raised on [rock music], but I'm sure a lot of kids my age got into it when they got *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* with all that Iron Maiden and Goldfinger—then you get hooked," said bassist Darren Menning.

"Video games had a big impact," Hoschak added. "That's where I used to go before I picked up music. I'd come home from school and play *ATV 2* and race dirt bikes and put Mötley Crüe on in the background.

"I first heard the Clash on *Skate 2*," Kelley said.

With the classics blasting away, Hoschak eventually wanted to play in that style. He and Menning were in a ska-punk band called Sell the Sun for several years, but even during that time Hoschak was making demos of the songs that would eventually form the bedrock of Split Persona. When Sell the Sun split last year, Menning recruited Kelley, a high-school

pal, to play lead guitar, while everyone knew drummer Connor Kreamsner from the band Aurora 1621.

Split Persona has started with the usual Reno gigs, favoring the Holland Project since they are all under age 21. (Everyone but Kreamsner is still in high school.)

During these formative months, the band also recorded with longtime Reno engineer Tom Gordon, and those five songs form the basis of the band's self-titled debut EP. Although Hoschak sang lead, wrote the songs, and played guitars and drums on most of the EP, he made it clear that it's truly a band effort.

"Since we formed, we've written five or six songs as a band together," Hoschak said. "Our songwriting process is just to write something really small, and, over the next couple of weeks, build on it until we have a finished product that we very much enjoy."

"A lot of times it comes together by accident," Kelley added. "Zander may already have some lyrics from a long time ago, and then one of us comes up with a part and builds from that."

The EP will be released next week and celebrated with a Holland Project release show. All agreed it's a kind of homecoming for Split Persona, who played their first club show at the venue.

"We handpicked all of the opening acts, and we're either really close with everybody playing or they are inspirations for us, bringing us up," Hoschak said. "It's like we're celebrating with our family, and that's best kind of album release you can do. It's like a birthday party."

"Except the clown doesn't show up," Kreamsner drily added.

"But the clown is us," Hoschak said. □

Split Persona will play the Local Lockdown and Reno Punk Rock Flea Market After Party at 8 p.m. Feb. 8 at Jub Jub's Thirst Parlor, 71 S. Wells Ave., and an EP release show with Loomis Manor and Flamingos in the Tree at 8 p.m. Feb. 15 at The Holland Project, 140 Vesta St. Find out more at [splitpersona.com](http://splitpersona.com).

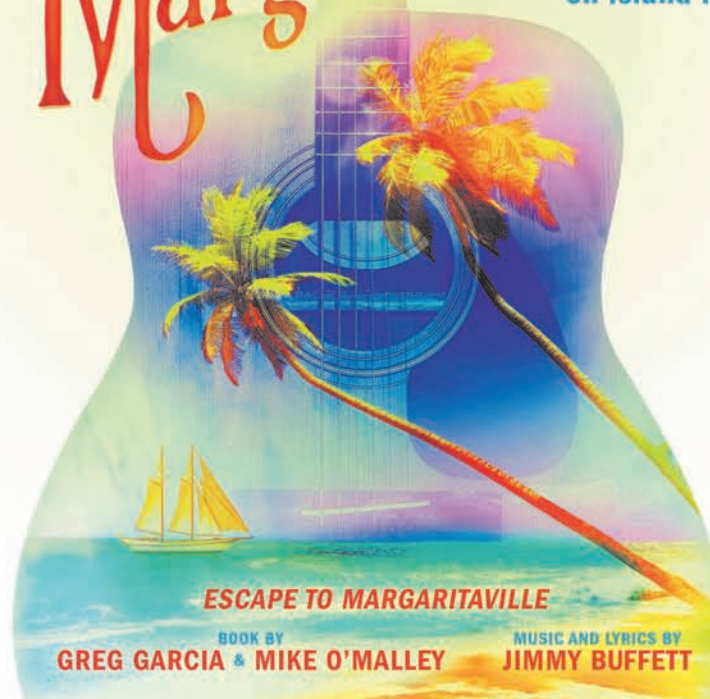
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