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SAMMIES
WINNER

Band of Coyotes (minus bassist Mike Schotter)
PHOTO BY MARIA RATINOVA

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BY MAXFIELD MORRIS

A PACK OF SOLOISTS SHARE THE STAGE IN BAND OF COYOTES

Coyotes are solitary creatures: They often scavenge alone, and they mark their territory with urine. But when they share a common goal, say hunting deer, they'll team up in a sort of "coyote supergroup"—kind of like The Traveling Wilburys, minus Roy Orbison.

Music is Band of Coyotes' deer hunt. The rock group's members met at Old Ironsides open-mics. Singer and keyboardist Mason Durst, guitarist Steven Morkert and vocalist and guitarist Samantha Henson saw each other perform and joined

forces. Drummer Graham Carter and bassist Mike Schotter later joined the pack.

"When you're up there by yourself, you're having to do 100 percent of the work," Durst says. "Now I'm doing 50 percent of the work."

The combined solo acts bring different fire to the table.

"We're alike enough where we can gel," Carter says, "and then we're diverse enough, as far as musical backgrounds, that we can come up with something interesting."

The band has a diverse geographic background, as well; everyone except Schotter recently moved to Sacramento. Henson's from Wisconsin, Durst from Texas, Morkert is an Arizonian and Carter is a Virginian. They've only known each other for about a year, have been in the

band for most of that time and now three of them are living together below a daycare.

"Every morning I'm woken up by children running around," says Durst, who lives with Carter and Schotter. The band used to practice in the living room until the daycare complained—so it rented a rehearsal space away from delicate ears.

The band's there a couple times a week, getting songs ready. They'll play the Raley Field Brewfest in May, and they're preparing nearly five hours of material.

Unlike actual coyotes, Band of Coyotes have opposable thumbs—ones they use to great effect in their music. The tunes are jammy and versatile, like a Swiss army knife in a jar of raspberry preserves or Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson in sleepwear. They're electric and kinetic, vocally powerful and clean. What drives it all?

"At the end of the day, we're all passionate about music; this is what we do in our free time," says Morkert.

"We're serious about making a very good, quality product," Henson says. Schotter agrees: "I mean, when you're in a band, that's kind of one of the things you have to do, is make good music."

Their product is 97.4 percent pure, a collaboration between talented songwriters and musicians, keeping it fun and creating.

As Carter was getting ready to take to the drums, he started to take off his pants. "I promise I have another pair of pants on," he said. He did.

"We all got two sets of pants on," Schotter joked. "It's a band thing."

Perhaps that's where the magic of Band of Coyotes comes from—the extra pair of pants. □

▶▶ See them at
the Raley Field
Brewfest Friday,
May 17.

FEATURING COVERAGE
BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON



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