

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Singer's breakfast gives food for thought

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

It's amazing the value of a good breakfast.

Thoughts of the parallels between the psychotic and psychedelic experience and reincarnation of a soul exposed to the truth entered Glen Phillips' mind over his morning bowl of cornflakes.

Phillips, lead singer for Toad the Wet Sprocket, took these thoughts and put them into "Reincarnation Song," the last track on Toad's new album, "Dulcinea."

"It's pretty whimsical," Phillips said during a telephone interview from New Mexico. "It's just about the poor little souls who can't hack it."

The Santa Barbara, Calif., natives — bassist/keyboardist Dean Dinning, drummer Randy Guss, vocalist/guitarist Todd Nichols and Phillips — will perform in Memorial Hall Wednesday night in Kansas City, Kan.

Phillips said Toad's new album expressed "feeling kind of stuck or out of it" in a positive way.

"You know when you wake up and feel 'I have to do all these things I've been planning to do for a year,' or you could sit on the porch and have a cigarette and do the dishes later."

He said Toad's choice was sitting on the porch with the cigarette.

"It's that kind of a feeling," he said. "Putting everything in the future all the time and never living in the moment."

"Dulcinea" (which means "beautiful one") came from the name of a character in Cervantes' "Don Quixote" — a woman imagined by Quixote to be beautiful and pure who really is a kitchen wench.

"It was the idea of creating inspiration when nothing is offering itself to you. It's an allegory for faith in God," Phillips said. "It's when you can take something that does not look great and make it great."

Toad has a tradition of doing this. Their name came from Monty Python's "Contractual Obliga-



Courtesy of Columbia Records

Toad the Wet Sprocket, a band from Santa Barbara, Calif., will play tonight at Memorial Hall in Kansas City, Kan. The band's members are, from left: Todd Nichols, Randy Guss, Dean Dinning and Glen Phillips.

tions" album, which ranked the worst band names ever. Toad the Wet Sprocket was at the top, or bottom, of the listing.

Phillips and his bandmates took "the worst band name ever" and made it great.

"I guess there was a really bad '70s heavy metal band in north England who used it too," he said.

Toad the Wet Sprocket plugged in when the four high school buddies made their first album for \$650 in a cramped living room in Santa Barbara.

The band went on to release "Pale" in 1988 and "Fear" in 1991 and sign with Columbia Records. In the past nine years, Phillips said he and the band had progressed from their melancholy "Bread and Circus" days.

Phillips was 17 years old when he wrote the lyrics for the band's first album. Now in his late 20s, things have changed.

"I talk sometimes about teenage depression as a particular kind of drug. 'Hey, I'm alive, and I can feel really depressed,'" he said. "... It's a long-time concept of being

very deeply concerned and tortured about things, and that came out in the songs."

Phillips is still capable of writing melancholy songs, he said, but he has a different outlook now that led to "Dulcinea's" more rock-oriented format.

As a band, Toad also has grown from its tadpole days.

"We've learned to give each other space for different tastes to come together in the music," Phillips said.

Spending every day with the same four people can tire anyone out, Phillips said. His analysis defined Toad as a case where the parts were greater than the whole.

Even though musicians work together in a band, Phillips said the creativity rested within the individual musicians.

"It's always four people working on something with four different opinions."

Even now, Phillips said, he doesn't really know what makes Toad tick.

"We got together on a whim, and hopefully that's what's kept it

Quik Facts

Show: Toad the Wet Sprocket

At: Memorial Hall, Kansas City, Kan.

Time: 8:00 p.m. Wednesday

Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$17.50 on day of show; available through Ticketmaster

promos and signing autographs.

He said he was looking for a way to keep Toad together, while not letting it destroy his life.

"Everything built up around rock music is supposed to be nomadic. You know 'sex, drugs and rock and roll,'" he said. "You could do it indefinitely if you had no personal life and spent your time drinking, snorting and screwing to keep from realizing how lonely you are."

For rock music as a whole, Phillips wants to see an end to making musicians a commodity. Toad's sardonic video for "Something's Always Wrong" puts the band on a home-shopping network where scapegoats and unconditional love are for sale.

"In the video, we played a game and at the end we're sold out," he said, "and I think it's a game that's hurt music."

Toad the Wet Sprocket will perform at Kansas City's Memorial Hall at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$17.50 the day of show and are available through Ticketmaster.

together and kept it working," he said. "We got involved chasing after the carrot on the string thing. Everything just kind of happened to us."

Now, Phillips said, he would like to take some time off and go home to his wife Laurel, settle down to homemade pasta and have a few children.

For Phillips, the only thing that makes touring worthwhile is playing for an hour-and-a-half to two hours, not waiting around doing

MUSIC REVIEWS

"I Love Everybody" Lyle Lovett MCA Records Grade: B

In the past year, Lyle Lovett has gone from an obscure country crooner to the weird guy with the hair who married Julia Roberts. On his new release, "I Love Everybody," Lovett makes clear that his talent transcends his hype.

It is not that difficult to see "I Love Everybody" as a collection of sonnets for his muse. Like Shakespeare's immortalized sonnets, Lovett's are short meditations on every aspect of love, from longing to lust.

"Everybody" is stripped of the full orchestral ensembles that dominated his previous releases. Instead, the disc's focus is on Lovett's voice. Songs like "Penguins" and "Old Friend" confirm Lovett as one of the most original voices in music.

"Skinny Legs," "Fat Babies" and "The Fat Girl" all touch on Lovett's fascination with physical beauty. Though the message of "beauty doesn't matter" may be hard to

comprehend after taking a look at Julia Roberts, he makes each lyric totally believable.

Lovett's constant hopping from genre to genre makes categorizing his music an impossibility. With "Everybody," Lovett wants to be a lounge crooner and a barren country singer at the same time. Unfortunately, some of the songs have the annoying twangish sound that defines the worst in country music.

Mellow, intimate and relaxed, "I Love Everybody" is the type of disc that you would buy for a girl or guy that you're blindly in love with.

— Sean McCarthy

"No Need to Argue" The Cranberries Island Records Grade: A

It's only been a year since the Cranberries exploded onto the alternative music scene with their debut album, "No Need to Argue," and they have already released their sophomore effort.

Their new album, "No Need to

Argue," picks up right where "Everybody" left off and promises to permanently establish the Cranberries as one of the great alternative bands.

The opening track is "Ode to My Family," a wonderful song that deals with family relationships. It is followed by "I Can't Be With You" and "Twenty One," which are also excellent songs. The Cranberries really don't try anything new with these opening songs; instead, they stick to the formula that made their last album such a success.

"Zombie" is the next song and the first single released from the album. At first, this song seems somewhat forced and pretentious.

After a few listens, however, it really starts to grow on the listener. "Zombie" is also the hardest song probably ever produced by the band, as the guitars are heavily distorted. Beautiful grunge music — what a concept.

The remaining nine songs on the disc show some experimentation by the band and include the song "The Icicle Melts," which

seems to be trying to deal with abortion while still remaining vague.

The true appeal to the Cranberries is singer Dolores O'Riordan. Her voice is simply amazing. I would buy an album of just her singing, with no instruments.

If you liked "Everybody," you will definitely want "No Need to Argue." It's an awesome album by a truly talented band.

— William Harms

"Question the Answers" The Mighty Mighty Bosstones Polygram Records Grade: A-

The boys in plaid are back, and this time the Mighty Mighty Bosstones have some questions for your answers.

Their unique brand of blending never-die ska and slam-your-head thrash is alive and kicking hard on their latest release, "Question the Answers."

They've got another dozen songs that make the listener want to do the Ben Carr knee-pump dance.

The album starts off with "Kinder Words," a heavier song that advocates a more benevolent approach to life.

Most of the songs are pretty hard-core with the exception of a couple of mellower tunes, "Sad Silence" and "Toxic Toast." "SS" is a message to kids getting caught up in gangs and drugs, and "TT" is a get wild, party song.

"A Dollar and a Dream" is a great tune that goes through a Jekyll and Hyde. The "dollar" portion of the song is scream-it-out thrash, and the "dream" half is almost a whispered melody. It demonstrates the diversity of this unusual band and shows that it can play almost anything.

There's a great mix of songs with social statements and songs that say get messed up and forget everybody else's problems.

The Bosstones are always on a perpetual tour, but if you can't wait for them to get here, get a copy of this album. It should tide you over.

— Joel Strauch