



Photo courtesy of GMG

Sean Kelly, guitarist and vocalist for the Samples, will perform an acoustic show at Omaha's Ranch Bowl tonight.

Samples singer goes acoustic

By Cliff Hicks
Staff Reporter

While Sean Kelly's name may not click initially, all it takes is a mention of his band to perk any Midwesterner's ears. He's the guitarist and vocalist for the Samples, a band from Boulder, Colo., and his solo tour will hit Omaha's Ranch Bowl, 1600 S. 72nd St., tonight.

Kelly called to talk a little about the show and his solo album, "Light House Rocket." And despite the melancholy countenance he wears on all of his press photos, he couldn't have been a nicer guy to chat with.

"Instead of trying to incorporate some acoustic like we do with the band, it's specifically acoustic," Kelly said. "It's a little more laid-back."

Touring with Kelly is Rob Somers. Somers plays guitars and bass, and he assists on vocals.

"Sean and I started playing guitar in Manchester, Vermont, when we were kids... about 15. We continued to play in bands together through the time we were both in Vermont," Somers said.

"It's great touring with Sean, playing with an old friend. He flies me in from wherever I am. It's always worth it," Somers said.

Although the Samples are still very much together (10 years and counting), Kelly toured solo quite successfully last spring.

"It's fun to let people hear our versions of (Samples') songs, and it's a good opportunity to try out new songs," he said.

A common misconception is that Kelly's solo album will sound like a Samples album, Kelly said.

"What our band does is so different than what I do acoustically," he said. Still, Kelly is the Samples' major songwriter, and some elements of the Samples' sound seep through. One of the songs off "Light House Rocket," "I Remember Dying," was redone by the Samples for the band's new album, "Outpost," which is due out in June

up. Solo jams performed by the Project's three main artists brought the audience to a full-house applause. Andy Narell's steel pan excellence was a crowd favorite. Almost equally impressive were Paquito D'Rivera's enthusiastic saxophone solo and Dave Samuels' finesse on the vibes and marimba.

Accompanying Narell, D'Rivera and Samuels, pianist Dario Eskenazi, bassist Oscar Stagnaro and drummer Mark Walker also exhibited their musical prowess with brilliant execution. The second set of music was espe-

cially powerful. The six-member group split up to allow for three duets, each of which were split into solos.

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SEAN KELLY

Samples guitarist and vocalist

from MCA Records.

At the show, Kelly will play work from his solo album, along with some of his favorite Samples songs and some of Somers' songs.

The Samples' last album, "Autopilot," came out in 1994. "Light House Rocket" was recorded shortly after that. In comparison to the \$50,000 spent on the recording of "Autopilot," "Light House Rocket" was an abrupt change.

"It cost \$700 to make "Light House Rocket" and produce it, and it was a lot of fun that way," Kelly said.

While Kelly claims he has enough material to make two or three more solo albums, he is going to see if any of his songs will work with the Samples first.

But until he does get back with the Samples, Kelly is content to keep playing on his own.

"I'm just doing this because I have some time off. We always have fun at the Ranch Bowl. I think every band does," Kelly said.

At the show, fans are encouraged to bring tape recorders, all except digital audiotape recorders.

"I love bootlegs," Kelly said. "We have to be playing differently knowing people are recording. It makes sure that we're progressing forward."

As well as making their own tapes, concert attendees will have the option of buying low-cost cassettes of newly recorded material.

"It just keeps that grass-roots feeling," Kelly said.

Kelly and Somers aren't the only faces that will be at the show. In addition to the occasional keyboards of Billy Sinatra, Kelly insists that the crew plays a vital part for him.

"The crew is all part of the team," Kelly said. "They become part of the show. I'm used to being around such a big band; it's weird just having Rob's hairy chest looking at me. So Roscoe, our tour manager, comes up on stage."

The tour manager isn't the only one.

"Our stage manager, Brian, he's the salty dog. That night'll be his birthday night. We'll play 'Happy Birthday' for him," Kelly said.

Rounding out the crew is Jay Anderson, who does the sound for not only Kelly's solo shows, but also for the Samples' shows.

"He's been with us for years," Kelly said. "He's really a great guy."

Sherri Jackson, a Denver native who sings and plays both the guitar and the violin, will open the show tonight. She has been compared to a variety of artists, including Traci Chapman, Sheryl Crow and Dave Matthews.

Jackson has opened for a variety of big names, including Joan Osborne, Rusted Root and the Freddy Jones Band. Her debut album, "Moments In Denial," was released late last year.

Kelly said the show would go on, regardless of how many people attended.

"It did sell out in Chicago, but it really depends on what night it is," he said. "Even if it's low-key, we still play our show."

"Acoustically, I like 'em smaller—venue, I mean. I would like a lot of people to show up in a small place."

And although Kelly likes to keep things low-key, his shows won't be laid-back to the point of drowsiness.

"The show has a sense of humor to it. It's not just two sleepy guys playing away. People should come to relax and have a good time," Kelly said.

"I don't know how to entice people any more than say if you want to hear a different angle and a different slant, you can expect the best."

Tickets for tonight's concert are \$6 at the door. The doors will open at 8 p.m., and the show will start at 9.

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Jazz artists heat up Lied Center

By Lane Hickenbottom
Music Critic

It is beautiful to see a group of musicians, who have completely mastered their instruments, play together in harmony.

Such was the case Saturday night when the Caribbean Jazz Project performed a showcase of tropic-style music to an impressed Lied Center audience.

The first set opened with a song that resembled what might be played in a south-of-Florida island elevator. Then the gig started to really pick

up. Solo jams performed by the Project's three main artists brought the audience to a full-house applause.

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