

Musical Montage: Cover band to play hits from country and rock this weekend

By LISA GRADY LARSON

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Toby Keith, Fleetwood Mac, Gary Allen, Eric Clapton and 3 Doors Down all on one stage? Could be a tight fit.

But not for local cover band Most Wanted. They'll squeeze in hits from each of these artists and many more when they wrap up the Summer Concert Series at the Tanner Amphitheater Saturday night.

"We pride ourselves on being as versatile as possible," said Derrek Adams of the group's play list. It's usually about half country and half rock.

And depending on the audience, they sometimes mix in a little jazz, a little disco and some oldies -- anything that makes people want to get up and move.

"If it's not danceable, it doesn't belong on our set list," Adams said.

Fronting the band from the back, lead singer Adams also keeps the beat on the drums -- a unique aspect of Most Wanted that Adams said came out of necessity more than anything.

"I just happened to know all the words," he said. "To me (singing) is not as big a thrill as playing the drums. It's more or less a job that has to be done."

As a cover band, Most Wanted doesn't perform any of their own music -- a style they've been criticized for by other members of the industry. But for Adams, music is a business like anything else and you have to do what makes the money.

Lots of bands say they aren't in it for the money, that they'd play no matter what. But as soon as you take the money away from them, see what happens, Adams said. "I wouldn't have gotten into it if I didn't enjoy playing, but it's an added benefit that we actually get paid for something we enjoy."

Cranking out tunes at clubs, bars and other venues in Nevada, Arizona and Utah, the four members of Most Wanted are booked pretty tight -- traveling most weekends and holding down day jobs in their spare time.

"I'm going all the time," said bass player Phil Moore.

As a science teacher at Hurricane High School, Moore tries to balance his musical interests with teaching. Although it can be a little rough, he prefers it that way.

"I like having both. They're opposite things so I don't get tired of one thing," he said. "I don't think I'd like playing music full time."

In addition to his gigs with Most Wanted, Moore's band involvement includes rocking with other musical groups like the Lawn Darts and Justice.

"I like playing all kinds of music," he said.

All veterans to the music scene, Moore, Adams, Leslie Matheson (fiddle) and Michael Griffin (guitar) have been playing together for close to three years.

Their experience doesn't start with Most Wanted, however.

Everyone has played professionally with various bands, Adams said. Together there is over 100 years experience in this group.

A few years ago, Adams wanted to start something new and went out in search of a band that would mesh well.

"We just melted into something we wanted," he said.

But the name was a little trickier to find.

"We had some of the lamest names of bands coming up," Adams said, laughing. "When you're trying to figure out the name of a band, you picture yourself standing on stage announcing it to everybody. If it comes out sounding dumber than a rock, then you eliminate it right off the bat."

Some of the names that didn't make the cut include Jester, Circus, Sideshow, Blue Darts and Showerheads.



It got a little out of control, Adams said. Soon names were just coming up as jokes.

Finally, Most Wanted stuck.

Since then, in addition to playing covers for dancing crowds, Most Wanted has served as a house band for events like the Kony Country Showdown over the Fourth of July.

Backing up a vocalist is a little more stressful than playing your own show, Adams said. Most the time you're concentrating on material you haven't had much time to rehearse.

But even with the added pressure, the large, enthusiastic crowd makes the Country Showdown one of Moore's favorite gigs.

During a show like that, "we're focused on trying to make them look good," Adams said.

As opposed to this weekend where Most Wanted's job will be to make themselves look good.

Most Wanted will perform 8 p.m. Saturday at the O.C. Tanner Amphitheater, 300 W. Lion Blvd., Springdale. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$5 for youth. For more information contact 652-7994.

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