

Vermillion's '20 Bold Ideas' Records Debut EP

By Thomas Hatzebuhler
For the Plain Talk

I spent the better part of a day during the recent academic vacation, better known as spring break, in Scotland. No, not the country to the north of England; rather, the Scotland to which I am referring is the less exotic Scotland of South Dakota.

Despite the fact that Scotland is home to fewer than 900 people, hidden amid a sleepy residential area is an exciting secret: an inconspicuous building and unexpected silence conceals All Poetic Audio, a truly professional recording studio in the middle of proverbial nowhere.

I joined the musicians of Vermillion-based 20 Bold Ideas—Zachary Baltz, Jesse Mohling, Joss Loeb, and Ross Loeb—during their second day in the studio, a less than ideal time to begin the documentary process, and was happily surprised by the positivity and energy I found there. Spending eight hours with the band, even after they've done a 12 hour day of recording previously, one quickly realizes that they are still having fun with the process of making and playing their music.

Upon my arrival, Baltz was plugged in, his trusty cream-colored Epiphone in hand, and was laying down the guitar tracks for one of the band's popular songs, "Power Lines."

Despite having listened to the song performed live innumerable times, the sculpted sound of every riff and guitar solo coming through the studio monitors, accompanied by the brilliant work done by Josh and Ross Loeb on bass and drums, respectively, gave the piece a new and vibrant life, a certain je ne sais quoi, emanating from the combined talents of



Zachary Baltz of the Vermillion-based band, 20 Bold Ideas, left, and Jeremy Schaeffer, owner and audio engineer at All Poetic Audio in Scotland, SD, right, record guitar tracks for the song "Power Lines."
THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Baltz, the Loeb brothers and Jeremy Schaeffer, the audio recording engineer and owner of All Poetic Audio.

"Everyone I had talked to from other bands was familiar with [Schaeffer] and his work and told me he was the best person to record with," explained Baltz. "I was nervous for our first time in studio, but it's what we've been preparing for."

The nervousness that the musicians of 20 Bold Ideas may have felt entering a recording studio for the first time manifested itself as the raw expression of their talents resulting in, as Baltz stated best, "an energetic EP from your favorite Vermillion goofballs, 20 Bold Ideas."

And the energetic sound of the EP is a testament to the undeniable quality of each member's musicianship. Considering that the foursome began the recording process at All Poetic Audio with little knowledge of what to expect, it is truly impressive that the end result sounds and feels as though it has

come from a veteran group of recording artists.

"I really had no idea what to expect going into the recording process," said Mohling. "I didn't know if we would sound terrible or if we would just struggle with the entire process. The whole process was so surreal. I'm still not entirely convinced that we actually recorded anything."

Bassist Josh Loeb shares a similar sentiment about the recording process: "I went in knowing pretty much nothing about the recording process, and I have to say that it was one of the most insanely fun experiences of my life."

The experience of recording their debut EP was also an opportunity for introspection, which is a powerful mental exercise for helping shape the future of 20 Bold Ideas.

"I think it says a lot that we made it to a studio in the first place, and then we've come out the other side having grown more from the experience," explained Baltz of the experience. "Hell or high water, we've accomplished

something musicians dream of doing. Four songs doesn't sound like much, but those four songs have been the heartbeat of four guys in the Vermillion area for quite some time. It's real, and it is possible."

Despite all their accomplishments, and the forthcoming and inevitable excitement about having finished their debut EP, the gentlemen of 20 Bold Ideas have remained humble and loyal to the Vermillion community.

"I feel like we owe thanks to [Schaeffer] for all his work recording us, Thomas and Andrew Johnson for taking pictures and video over the last couple of years, Sam Drapeaux for the t-shirt artwork, and Diane Wirth at the Varsity for always helping us play shows," said Baltz. "Not to mention all the other places and people we've shared stages with. I know the four of us in 20 Bold Ideas put in a lot of work, but I don't think anyone would disagree that we've had a lot of help along the way."



The USD Chamber Singers and director David Holdhusen (front center) taking their final bows of their Spring Tour.
AMBER MARGHEIM/ FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Chamber Tour Ends on High Note

By Amber Margheim
For the Plain Talk

As the golden sunshine from a beautiful day filtered and faded toward evening through the windows of the United Church of Christ, the University of South Dakota Chamber Singers began the final concert of their spring tour. This was more than just a homecoming performance following their European tour, it was a moment in time and the culmination of a four year relationship between the singers and composer Jonny Priano that had begun in that very church.

Six years ago David Holdhusen, Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Choral Music at USD was sitting one summer day at that year's SD-ACDA conference. Don Langlie, owner of Poppler's Music Store came to Holdhusen with some music to review. Holdhusen describes reviewing new music as often "A lot of fading through and finding that gem."

"On that day, Holdhusen recalls "I came across a piece called Vieni Nel Mio Cuore ... and I listened to about 45 seconds and I wrote it down on my list. By the time I got to 5 minutes and 35 seconds (the full length of the song) it was programmed into the tour. It was phenomenal"

"I heard it, I loved it, I programmed it. We sang it."

Later that year the choir produced a recording of Vieni Nel Mio Cuore at the United Church of Christ in Vermillion and posted the video on Youtube. Six months later, Laura Kuschel, who posted the Youtube video, came running up to Holdhusen before rehearsal saying "He (Priano) wrote back to us." Jonny wrote on our Youtube page and he saw our video and he loved it and he wrote this comment and he wants to talk to you and to meet you".

Holdhusen and Priano connected through email. Holdhusen recalls how Priano praised the choir saying "how impressed he was that a choir of that size at that time could sing a piece with all the sustain and how wonderful the harmonies were and just said really kind things".

"After that, he and I stared to communicate a little bit and a year or two later we performed his next published piece" says Holdhusen. Just as with the previous song, the choir performed it and recorded

it. After hearing that recording, Priano contacted Holdhusen and said "I have all these pieces that I don't have published and I just really want it out there. Would you be interested in singing some of them?"

Since then, the Chamber Singers have done something from manuscript from Priano each year, bringing his unpublished works to the masses for four years now. "Every year he sends us something we like that seems better than the year before" remarks Holdhusen.

Last year Priano sent the choir a piece entitled Do Not Fear. "A piece that touched the choir to its very soul" comments Holdhusen.

"I think that they (the choir) to this day and for the rest of their lives will have a little piece of their heart invested in that piece. It was so moving and so deeply inspiring for us."

This year's piece Psalm 23 did more than inspire the group, it moved them to action. Amidst working with Psalm 23, the group began raising funds to meet Priano in person by flying him to South Dakota from Pittsburg.

Holdhusen explains "I shared an email with them that he sent me when he sent me the piece...It was a very emotional email... it made the choir love the piece and the man even more that he would trust us with the piece. That he so deeply cared about it was again inspirational and moving. It wasn't long after that one of the members of the choir asked if we could get him here."

They said "We want to sing this piece for him. We want him to know how much all of his music has meant to us. We want to share this piece that means so much to him."

Priano explained in his email how he had written the piece in response to his grandfather's passing. He described how cathartic and meaningful it was to him. The choir was touched that he would share and trust them with such deeply moving and emotional piece.

On Saturday, March 21, everything came full circle. Tears glistened on many of the singers faces as they sang Priano's Psalm 23 with Priano in attendance at the very church they filmed their initial Youtube video so long ago.

For an Extended Version of this Story visit www.plaintalk.net

GOOD SHOW AND TELL



Rhythm in Red won first place in Class 1A at the Mitchell Show Choir Classic last Saturday. The event was held at the Corn Palace. The group of singers and dancers is directed by Trisha Fisher with John Alpers as combo director.
CYNTHIA JOHNSON BROWN / COURTESY PHOTO

SUPPORT FOR FOUNDATION CRITICAL

The Clay-Union Foundation has offered a \$500 comm. service scholarship to graduating seniors from Vermillion high school the last 4 years. Only one direct donation has been received to support the scholarships in the last 4 years. Local support will determine the future of the scholarships, as other towns have requested the scholarship,

and strong support is one way to ensure future availability. Donations can be mailed to P. O. Box 665, Elk Point, SD 57025, or go online to www.clay-union-foundation.org and click on the convenient paypal option. Call John Gille to learn more about memorial gifts, endowed scholarships and other ways to support the program.

VACF GRANTS

There has been Vermillion Area Commu-

nity Foundation (VACF) updated grant application information. Beginning this year, there are only two grant periods: The second Thursday in April and the second Thursday in October. Grant guidelines can be found at: <http://vermillion.sdcommunityfoundation.org> or applications can be picked up at the VCDC.

WRITE AWAY

High school age & up writers are invited to register for the Vermillion Literary Project (VLP) Lit-

erary Festival & Sorcerer's Apprentice Creative Writing Camp to be held Fri. & Sat., March 27-28 at USD.

No experience with creative writing is necessary. For more information & to register, visit <http://sites.usd.edu/dwp/camp> or email dwp@usd.edu with questions.

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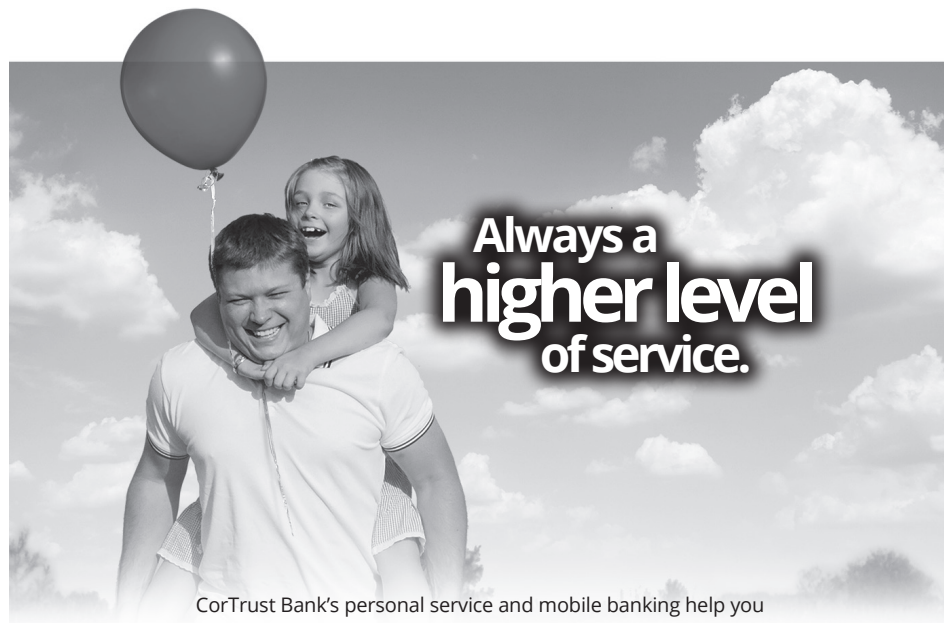
Orthopedic Institute's new Dakota Dunes clinic is located at 317 Dakota Dunes Blvd., Suite G. To schedule an appointment, please call 888-331-5890.



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