

Switchfoot sits down with The Trumpet

by Dolly Malik

Musicians always have some sort of inspiration behind their works of art, and that behind Switchfoot's new album "Hello Hurricane" is an interesting one. The Trumpet had the opportunity to speak with Chad Butler of the band, who provided insight on the band as well as their new album.

"I had the privilege of working with Help For Humanity for a couple of years and worked in Baton Rouge where I met this woman who had been evacuated from New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, and she had lost her leg. She had the spirit of facing the storm head on, and that was the inspiration to come up with the title of the album," said Butler.

The Trumpet received a review copy of the new album, and the new songs' lyrics follow suit with the rock band's style. They have a new musical flavor, but it is still unmistakably Switchfoot. The title track, "Hello Hurricane," calm, but with powerful lyrics, sets the mood for the rest of the songs on the album. They are all a little different with their own amazing elements, but equally great. The album also includes the upbeat song, "Bullet Soul," and a song people might just find themselves head banging to - "Mess of Me." Nearing the final tracks is the sweet, mellow-sounding, "Sing it Out." The tracks on "Hello Hurricane" expertly leave listeners feeling calm, relaxed and pumped simultaneously.

Junior Jason Marcante said, "Switchfoot's songs are al-

ways so unique and inspirational."

Butler said the band wanted to explore new territories, therefore producing the very electronic album. He said that there is heart behind every song, and he feels that they are songs one would want to die singing. "It's all

different perspective. He says the band name is proof of their San Diego roots.

The band is so into surfing that every year they hold what is known as Switchfoot Bro-am, which is a surfing competition. The competition benefits Stand Up For Kids, a non-profit volunteer organization that helps children who are homeless.

Butler said the best thing about being in the band is the catering. His favorite dessert is carrot cake. He also loves the traveling. He said, "We don't just bring guitars, we bring surfboards too!"

Butler said that the best part is "being able to see the world with your best friends." Chad grew up listening to artists such as Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash who he says are personal, honest writers. His favorite band is U2 and his favorite song is Switchfoot's own "Dare You to Move." He said, "I find the most personal song is often the most universal song."

Chad said some of his favorite shows have not been the ones in front of big audiences on stages, but those he played "in someone's backyard maybe for a birthday party or something." He says, "The success is being together."

A good piece of advice Butler gave is "Enjoy life and don't take it for granted!" Life is short, make the best of it and definitely be sure to check out the CD, because it has deep lyrics with great vocals and music. Check out the CD at www.switchfoot.com.



Switchfoot hosts annual Bro-am, a benefit surf event.

Photo courtesy of Switchfoot

about finding yourself," said Butler.

When it comes to inspiration, Butler said, "Inspiration comes from life and trying to figure it out. I don't claim I have life figured out. The best songwriters are those that aren't afraid to ask questions and figure life out through art."

Switchfoot came together through the surfing and music community in California. They started off playing in local venues separately, but then ended up getting together. In fact, their name, Switchfoot, comes from surfing. Butler said, "It's basically just saying you're switching stance on a board and approaching it from a different perspective." It's like looking at life from a

Variant Gray varies from musical norm

by Riddhi Doshi

This year there are numerous Parkland student bands springing up from everywhere but there is one band that most students particularly enjoy. That band is Variant Gray, which consists of Parkland students Zach Grim, Jake Grim and Will Marshall. A unique asset this band has is that it also has members from other area schools. In other words, at any of their events not only can Parkland students watch classmates perform but they can also meet kids from surrounding schools. The band's line-up is junior guitarist Zach Grim, freshman percussionist Jake Grim, freshman lead vocalist Will Marsha and part time member-senior keyboardist Rocco Ditalia. Their manager is junior Dolly Malik.

When asked about their band's name selection, the band concluded that they wanted to find a name that best described their personalities and their music. When Ditalia thought of the name Variant Gray the members thought the selection was perfect because it varies from the norm or "average gray." Some of the band's biggest hits include the songs "Whatever it Takes", "Falling Rain" and "Get Out." "Whatever it Takes" and

"Falling Rain" were both written by Zach Grim while "Get Out" was written by former member, Greg Zwickl.

Zach Grim said "For me, my writing influences as of lately would have to come from the White Stripes, Green Day, The Who and a few others. My lead guitar work is greatly influenced by Angus Young of AC/DC and Jimi

group's songs, said "Good songs do not come from good times, at least for me." Variant Gray's songs are all about emotions ranging from love to hurt. "Love and lack there of in the world. Without either of those I would not be able to write any of the songs that I do." said Grim

Variant Gray formed in March of 2009. Their first gig was on June 20th, 2009 at Brenda and Jerry's. They played again the weekend of November 13th at a festival in East Stroudsburg. They have been diligently working during recording sessions throughout November in order to record a whole new set of tracks for their fans. They are planning to have even more recording sessions and have high hopes of hitting the road again sometime in late December or early January. Variant Gray is also hoping to produce an album by late winter. The group plans to play at more shows and are collaborating with another Parkland band, All of the Above, in order to do a joint show in the near future.

"Our music is very individual, pure, raw and powerful." said freshman Zwickl. Fans agree that both the band's music and members are outstanding. "They have a unique style defined by their creative retrofitting of modern styled music with influences of classic rock and roll bands of the 60's and 70's." said junior Robert Stiffler. To listen to Variant Gray go to their website: www.variantgray.com.



Variant Gray poses for logo.

Photo courtesy of Variant Gray

Hendrix." Other members of the band said they have been strongly influenced by bands such as Rage Against the Machine, Guns N Roses, Rush, The Police and Sting.

Zach Grim, the writer of most of the



MUSIC UPDATE

The Flaming Lips "Embryonic"

by Ashley Youwakim

Over the course of time, the popular indie band The Flaming Lips have released EPs and albums that adhere to the same type of sentimental-ballad-meets-rock-outline. When the Lips first arrived on the music scene, their sounds were thought of as innovative and edgy. Now over twenty years after their first record release, the music that was once pioneering can be compared to the likes of other popular bands like Modest Mouse, Arcade Fire and the ever-so-popular Beirut. Though very much predictable in this day and age, the band has created a winning formula to say the least.

This year during the coming of October, amongst the changing leaves marked the arrival of another Flaming Lips album. The band's newest addition entitled "Embryonic" has stepped outside the formulaic sounds avid listeners have been accustomed to hearing. Lead singer Wayne Coyne no longer lends his voice to upbeat melodies but is transformed into a weary lyricist reminiscent of a fatalist. The opening song, titled "Convinced of the Hex," sets the stage for the rest of the album with its monotone vocals and spastic guitar melodies.

Unexpectedly, "Embryonic" does not possess any type of ballad, which the band has seemed to perfect, such as past songs like "Do You Realize" or "What is the Light?" Additionally, the band also strays from upbeat melodies that they have flawlessly created in earlier songs like "Yeah Yeah Yeah Song" and the saga "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots Part 1."

From the seven-minute showpiece "Powerless" to the transfixing tune "Scorpio Sword", the band's ongoing use of electronic instruments and computer manipulation is evident even with this refreshing sound. With songs that promise to be hits amongst hipsters and punk rockers alike, "Embryonic" truly hits the target.

"The quality of the songs are unlike any of their past albums. I can only describe it as raw," said senior Sarah Moyer.

From the first song to the last, the album is a breath of fresh air compared to former Lips albums. Foretold in the Lip's past chameleon-like toggles from garage band in the eighties to punk rock misfits in the nineties to the innovators which they are known as today, the reinvented sounds heard in "Embryonic" are no surprise for the oncoming decade. "It [Embryonic] is a candid look at the creative whimsies of a band that has left an indelible mark on music," reviewed Michael Franco, a PopMatters Associate Music Editor.

The album is not something that should be listened to every day. However, on days that require a soundtrack filled with metaphorically meaningful lyrics and jumpy maledictions, "Embryonic" is ideal.