

FLYING MACHINES

William Ryan George – vocals, keyboards

John Wlaysewski – guitar, vocals

Evan Joyce – bass

Ken Weisbach – drums

From the streets of New York City to the capitals of the world, Flying Machines are young musicians with chops, passion, originality and charisma. The moment they put their first, self-produced songs up on Yahoo Music, fans responded to a bold new sound. Critics too. The Pittsburgh Examiner lauded a lead vocal with “an uncanny resemblance to Freddie Mercury.” Amplifier Magazine heard “a lead guitar that recalls Eddie Van Halen in an insanelly-fast-yet-still-melodic Fender shred-fest,” and a rhythm section that drives and boils, “moving “from ‘pop’ to ‘heavy’ in the space of a downbeat.”

Comparisons aside, what really caught fans was the originality of songs like “On a Whim,” which beat out 5000 bands to win Converse’s “Get Out of The Garage” music contest in 2009, and became the surrounding music for USA Networks’ #1 program, Psych. It was the most-played song on Yahoo Music’s “Who’s Next” Launchcast radio station for three weeks running, and went to #2 on XM college radio.

And all that happened before Flying Machines released their self-titled debut CD on Meteor 17/EMI, produced by veteran hit-maker, music and media producer Spencer Proffer and Steve Plunkett. The CD quickly garnered unanimous raves: “Musically ambitious...instrumentally dynamic... a style that is all their own...subtle elements of every genre...impressive range... cleverly phrased and well-placed guitar work... music [that] seems to fly and soar with an edge.” Flying Machines fresh debut earned a “Best CD of 2009” nod from Audio Floss, a harbinger venue for unsigned bands, and a cover story on CMJ New Music Monthly.

These are unprecedented achievements for a young American rock band. But as grand as this story sounds, its beginnings are surprisingly humble. Lead vocalist William Ryan George started singing in third grade choir in Fresno, California, and by thirteen was starring in dinner theatre productions and writing songs on a \$300 upright piano his mother bought for him. He emulated Billy Joel, and honed his Freddy Mercury croon while singing in the shower. He moved to New York at eighteen, determined to write songs with a band whose musicianship matched his powerful voice and keen ear for an original melody. When his keyboard was stolen, George was reduced to composing with headphones at Guitar Center, and pressing his ear against unamplified electric bass to work out arrangements. There was no stopping this young dreamer.

George soon landed in a band with guitarist John Wlaysewski from Greenpoint, Queens. Wlaysewski was a Vietnamese orphan. A nun brought baby John to Kennedy Airport, and placed him in the hands of what would become a loving and devoted Polish father and Irish mother. By age 14, Wlaysewski was scanning record bins with an eye for the most “intimidating and scary” cover art, and his rock odyssey began. Once he got his hands on his first electric guitar—a Fender strat—he learned fast, voraciously mastering lessons found in guitar magazines and working his way through a series of metal bands. “Metal is very bad for songwriting,” muses Wlaysewski, one reason that he knew he’d found the right partner the moment he met and heard George sing and play.

They started as a trio, with drummer Ken Weisbach, a multi-instrumentalist who, like George, had a background in musical theatre and a love of Billy Joel. The trio recorded demos and posted them on Yahoo’s music platform. These were the songs Spencer Proffer first heard. Proffer was working with America’s #1 cable channel, USA Network, looking for music that would surround the Network’s hit show Psych’s marketing campaign, aimed at the 18-34 demographic. Proffer wanted a band novel and innovative enough to merit this boost—that is, a band with a future. Out of more than 50 demos, he zeroed in on Flying Machines. “Right there, musicality, passion, and unique songs that just knocked me out,” exclaims Proffer. “I heard vocal chops that reminiscent of the best of Freddie Mercury and guitar playing I hadn’t experienced since I had the good fortune to work with masters like Brian May and BB King.”

Proffer got on a plane to catch the band live at Arlene’s Grocery in Manhattan. He chanced on the debut gig for the band’s fourth member, Evan Joyce, a bass player who had cut his teeth on Jaco, Mingus and Chris Squire, and had recently dropped out of the New School to find the perfect rock band. With George, Wlaysewski and Weisbach, Joyce knew he’d found it. So did Proffer. “After 16 bars, I got it,” he recalled. “They were far more dynamic and exciting live than on the demo.”

Proffer immediately flew the band to LA to capture the band’s fresh sound in the studio. The Converse prize yielded 3 more songs, recorded in New York with Mickey Petralia, and soon the album was finished. Once the reviews began pouring in, Proffer’s belief in Flying Machines was affirmed. “I wasn’t alone anymore.”

As they set out to tour the CD this year, including a headlining slot at South by Southwest, Flying Machines can boast a coveted long term and worldwide marketing and promotion alliance with Fender Musical Instruments. In fact, 2010 finds the band featured in full-page color ads in Rolling Stone Magazine for the new Fender/T-Mobile My Touch G LE phone. Fender instantly recognized Flying Machines's superior artistry, cohesion and bracing capacity to connect with a live audience.

In February, 2010, in Los Angeles, the band recorded its newest song "Citizens of the World" with four legends of international pop music—Khaled (Algeria), King Sunny Adé (Nigeria), Kailash Kher (India), and Cheng Lin (China), produced by Proffer. "Citizens" will be released simultaneously in multiple territories around the world, in six different languages, and in both electric and unplugged renditions—eight versions in all. The LA sessions inaugurate a year of world travel to the collaborators' home countries, all the subject of a coming documentary by acclaimed filmmaker Harry Winer, who has also helmed the video of the "Citizens" global recording project.

The "Citizens of the World" project underscores the uniqueness of Flying Machines. Having absorbed the breadth of American and British rock, including the African, Indian and Arabic flavors of later work by Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon, they were up for the challenge of collaborating with global legends on stage and in the studio. Wlasewski named the song, and says it has special meaning for him as the Asian-born son of a Polish man and an Irish woman in America. "I didn't come all the way from an orphanage in Vietnam to work at a shoe store," he says. "That idea always spurs me forward. And upwards". For these Flying Machines, the sky is truly the limit.

Career Direction:

Meteor 17, attn: Spencer D. Proffer

8730 Sunset Boulevard, #220
West Hollywood, CA 91316
(310) 432-2240

www.meteor17.com

spencer@meteor17.com

