

BAND BOMBSHELL

SHEDDING LIGHT ON LOCAL
MUSIC, ONE BAND AT A TIME

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Q&A with Ryan Plewacki of Sleep Study

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[August 2012](#)

[July 2012](#)

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Ryan Plewacki (vocals/guitar) of Sleep Study gives us the lowdown on the local music scenes of the country, his love for Des Moines, and why it's bad to pair four guys in one Motel6 room without cleaning it for five days. This Minneapolis-based band will be sharing the stage at [Gas Lamp](#) with [Dustin Smith & The Sunday Silos](#) and [The New Bodies](#) on Monday, October 15th at 9pm. Really, don't miss it.

Band Bombshell: Where did your musical career begin and how?

Ryan Plewacki: All members of [Sleep Study](#) are freelance musicians based out of Minneapolis. Being that the Twin Cities isn't that large of an arena, we had crossed paths from time-to-time, subbing in various projects or doing session work.

In 2011, I (Ryan) was scheduled to go out and work on a record with [Al Kooper](#) in Boston (google if you must). It was really important to me to have some Minneapolis musicians also play on the record. So, my best idea was to put together a temporary band to tour our way out to Boston and back, playing shitty clubs and sleeping in our van. It certainly wasn't an ideal path, but I couldn't figure out another way to do it financially. The members of Sleep Study were the dudes I called.

Shortly after we started rehearsals, my project with Kooper fell through. The four of us had liked what we had done up until that point and decided to make it formal. We chose a name, we bought a van, we started tracking a record, and we flirted with idea of possibly having matching outfits someday.

So now we're here, stuck in it because we fucking love it. It's a different experience for all of us, being that, as freelance musicians, we are used to learning, playing and getting paid. Now we're creating and investing every penny we make back into the project. It's been a major paradigm shift.

BB: If you had to describe your sound in three words that begin with an O, what would they be?

RP: Oh shit, really? *That doesn't count, does it? Ok, here goes...

Original: We do write all of the tunes ourselves, so it would technically be original. But the sound itself isn't something you've never heard before. We're not that kind of "original." I'd call us a garden-variety rock band. I'm dead serious. I think an adequate perspective is important and what we do isn't ground breaking. But what is? When was the last time anything truly original sauntered its way onto the radio or into a club?

Obtainable: I think we're an accessible band. At least, I hope we are. Again, this goes along with being over trying to do something that hasn't been done before. We don't aim for a certain intellect or strive to create a product or environment that may be tough to "get." We love pop music. We make pop music. Everybody is invited.

Objective: Hopefully, the other O's give you a pretty good idea of the personality of the band. We really keep an open mind about everything that we do from songwriting, to cover art, to business decisions, and everything else that goes along with being four individuals who feed into a whole. All four members of this band are drastically different in communication styles and musical backgrounds and sources of inspiration. The key is to take those four, sometimes rivaling, pieces and find what works best for Sleep Study. It can be messy as hell sometimes. But when it all comes together, we know we couldn't reach similar outcomes without one another. But, I mean, we don't hug or anything... Not all the time, at least. I mean, there has been the occasional hug. I assure you that no one has cradled another in his arms... more than once.

BB: Any ridiculous/hilarious/unfortunate tour stories so far?

RP: Oh, I don't know. We do have some advice for anyone heading to the Austin, Texas, area: If you're going to stay at the super cheap Motel6 outside of downtown, bring your own towels. For whatever reason, we couldn't get the housekeepers to clean ours. In fact, after five days staying there over SXSW, we were fairly certain that they never set foot in our room. Here is the math: four guys (and one night with our manager staying with us) in one room for five days after spending 12-14 hours in the hot Texas sun each day WITH NO CLEANING SERVICE. We practically cultivated a new ecosystem in that Motel6.



BB: *Where is your favorite place to play and why?*

RP: *We're really partial to the 7th Street Entry in Minneapolis. Like so many other bands in Minneapolis, we are proud to call that venue "home." There is so much history there and we always have an amazing time. The same can be said for Shubas in Chicago. That's a fantastic place.*

I've played The Gaslamp with other bands and am really looking forward to bringing Sleep Study through. That's a cool gig, man. Everything about that place is rad. That venue has got a great stage with a killer bar, the men's bathroom is very... umm... masculine, the sculpture garden across the street is super fun to wander around after load-in. Des Moines is really fortunate to have such a cool club. I mean that. I'm not kissing any Iowan ass here. I really mean it.

BB: *What's next on the list for you guys?*

RP: *We're doing some sparse Midwest dates to close out the year, but that's about it. The heavy tour support of the record will come in 2013. We're currently working out that plan with our label, booking, and management. I am going to make damn sure we are back in Des Moines as often as possible.*

BB: *Where do you think the best local music scene is?*

RP: *I don't really have a favorite spot. I lived in Brooklyn for a few years and the sheer variety of music in New York is astounding. Instead of having a few options to choose from on any given evening, one can easily come up with well over 10 possible venue destinations per night. If it's a weekend, the best idea is to draw straws.*

The Minneapolis music scene gets a lot of flak, mostly from Minneapolis musicians, which is unfortunate. The media in Minneapolis has done an incredible job of cultivating a local scene that the residents of the Twin Cities are proud of. It's really a cool thing to witness and be a part of.

BB: If you could tour with anyone, who would it be?

RP: Gosh, I can't count the number of bands out there that we would love to globetrot with. There's just so much cool music out there right now and it seems we all come to rehearsal with a new favorite band every week. We're playing with Robyn Hitchcock right before we head to Iowa and wish we could pack in the van and follow him around. We're also incredibly fond of Heartless Bastards and would kill to simply see them perform several nights a week. It would blow our minds if we were sharing bills with a band of that caliber.

BB: Halloween is coming up... Playing an awesome shows that weekend/night?

RP: We had worked up a plan to cover The Beatles *Help!* album from start to finish. But other projects that we had committed to started to get in the way of the proper kind of preparation one should put into covering the most important band in rock history. Unfortunately, we had to abandon it. I'm not sure what the other guys in the band are doing, but I'm handing out candy to kids in my neighborhood with my wife and two pugs.

BB: What advice do you have for fellow local musicians?

RP: The current climate of the music industry is a new and different game. No one knows what he or she is doing. So, I find myself asking that very same question to every musician I come in contact with. Maybe that's the advice there... never stop asking. Other than that, I'm really in no position to offer advice.

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