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Chris Clay | Mar 09, 2012 - 2:38 PM | Report a Typo or Correction

Cover album for the Troubs

The latest album by Mississauga band The Troubs started off as a challenge between the band's two members, Rik Emmett and Dave Dunlop.

The two were kicking around ideas to help flesh out their set list and were considering what cover songs they'd like to perform live. Talk quickly turned to what songs would be interesting to play, considering the band is essentially just two men and two acoustic guitars.

"It became a bit of a game, making the list," said Emmett. "Then we looked at it as being a challenge to come up with some songs that would be unexpected (coming from us)."

The band's nine-track album, *reCOVERy Room 9*, was just recently released. It's an album entirely of covers, from The Police's *Message in a Bottle* to Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* and Bill Joel's *Always a Woman*.

One of Emmett's favourite songs on the album is *The Galaxy Song*. It's written by Monty Python's Eric Idle and fans of the seminal comedy troupe will remember it from the movie *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life*.

It's an irreverent and fun song, and Emmett pushed hard to have it included on the album.

"I had to sell Dave on it because he originally didn't want to do it at all," said Emmett. "I told him to just trust me and that it's going to be fun. It turned out great and the solo Dave plays on it is just brilliant."

One of the joys of recording an album of covers, said Emmett, is it's a way to break down people's conceptions of the style of musician he is.

"It let me step so far out of what people think is Rik Emmett's comfort zone," he said. "People didn't expect that and I think that's very cool."

The guitarist understands when you start covering other artists music, such as Don Henley (*The Boys of Summer*) and The Beatles (*Have a Little Faith in Me*), some people aren't going to like it. But, for the most part, people are receptive to different takes on popular songs, he said.

Emmett, who rose to prominence with the band Triumph, and Dunlop, from the rock act Full Nine, first had a chance to play together at the National Summer Guitar Workshop in 1990. They've released several studio albums since the band's inception, including their self-titled 2006 debut. In 2007, they released an album recorded live at Hugh's Room the previous December while the 10-track *Push & Pull* dropped in 2009.

The band won Album of the Year and Group/Duo Of The Year at the 2007 Canadian Smooth Jazz Awards.

Copies of the album are available for purchase through rikemmett.com.

He's also been working with Michael Shotton on a new album called *Marco's Secret Songbook*. It's a concept album that's semi-autobiographical following a young man who leaves home to venture out into the world to experience life.

The album, which has 15 songs and includes some spoken word narration, is viewed by Emmett as somewhat of a legacy project. With little electric guitar, and mostly acoustic, plus plenty of orchestral instrumentation, Emmett holds a special place in his heart for the project.

"I think it's a good representation of the musician I've been all along," said Emmett. "It certainly has a legacy quality to it. This is how I've always been (as a musician) and this is what I'm leaving behind."

Emmett is encouraging fans to keep an eye on his website for more details on when the album is going to be released.

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