

Maniacs: Concert To Include Classical Music

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"We look at it as a mirror image of what the symphony is doing," he said. "They're looking for new fans based on the Maniacs, we're looking for new fans based on the symphony."

The first half of the concert will consist of the orchestra playing classical pieces. After intermission, the band will join the orchestra to perform about 10 songs. The schedule includes songs from throughout the group's career, including "These Are Days," "Because the Night," "Rainy Day" and "More Than This."

"We've never performed with a full orchestra," Drew said. "We've played with some string players on (MTV's) *Unplugged*, but never with a real orchestra. So it should be unbelievable."

Ms. Ramsey has experience with classical music. She was trained in viola and violin and while attending the State College at Fredonia, she played in the area's philharmonic orchestra.

"I haven't played classical music in so long," Ms. Ramsey said. "I've been playing pop, rock and folk music for 12 years. It's wonderful to hear all

the different music."

With only two rehearsals with the orchestra, Drew said he is not sure what to expect.

"We have to be careful, because we can't deviate. (When playing) live we'll deviate, so we have to be a little bit more structured than normal," he said.

Drew said he has been practicing some of the songs for 15 years and the band knows them inside-out. But, he still has a few minor worries in the back of his mind.

"It's a little frightening to think about. Usually it's just us - we play to the beat of our own drums," Drew said. "I just don't want to make a mistake. Usually we can laugh it off, but this is a different atmosphere for us. I don't want to embarrass myself in front of these musically trained people. I think we'll do fine. I think it's a little bit more nerve racking."

The first rehearsal was held Thursday afternoon. Ms. Ramsey said it went well.

"I flew in from California, so I'm kind of in this weird state of mind, like 'Is this a dream?'" she said.

"It's going to be a lot of fun. It (rehearsal) went pretty smoothly, considering this was our first time. It adds more

notes, diversifies it a bit. It's pretty neat - turns it into something bigger and different."

No matter how the 10,000 Maniacs perform, this is looked upon generally as an event to further their career.

"Based on the age of the band - they're getting into their 40s - we've come to realize recently that the fans of the band aren't going out to those same smoky clubs they went out to it when they were younger," Woods said.

"We're thinking a lot of our fans have grown up and would rather go to a nicer place, rather than a bar."

"This is giving them an 'in' to the orchestral world," Ms. Manton said. She explained the group now has charts - or scores - that they may take to other philharmonic orchestras in the country.

"It's important because it's interesting to see them in a new light. You can go to a number of clubs, but they never have been seen playing with an orchestra. This is their world premier."

Ms. Ramsey said she is not sure if the concert will open up any doors, but she is enjoying the experience.

"If this works out, hopefully we'll do some more shows with orchestras," she said. "I'm thrilled we even got the chance to play."

Tickets for the concert cost between \$15 and \$39. They may be purchased at www.tickets.com, at any Tickets.com outlet at Tops Friendly Markets or at the Buffalo Philharmonic box office, by calling 885-5000 or (800) 699-3168.

The box office is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets also will be available at the door.