



SKYFACTOR

Music festival amps it up for local band

By DEBRA BANERJEE

In seven short years the Pleasantville Music Festival has become a destination for fans of the outdoor music scene. The festival draws some big-name headliners like this year's Marc Cohn ("Walking in Memphis"), but it has also been a boon to local bands as another venue to connect with fans and make new ones. Among the 20 bands on three stages performing this Saturday, July 9, are the band Skyfactor, which had its roots at Scarsdale High School, and internationally known recording artist Patti Rothberg (SHS '91). Skyfactor will perform on the village stage at 3:15 p.m.

Skyfactor is comprised of Jon Rubin (SHS '91) on guitar, Jason Taylor on drums, Bob Ziegler on vocals, and Cliff Rubin on bass (SHS '83). The band, together for six years, writes what it calls "memorable and powerful acoustic-rock songs that grab you from the get-go" with "graceful melodies and edgy dynamics."

"The proportion of music to venues in Westchester was not quite there. It's taken a turn in the right direction." — Jon Rubin, guitarist for Skyfactor

Although they've given up their dreams of rock stardom and have "moved on," said band spokesman Jon Rubin, band members, now all married with kids and day jobs, don't take their music any less seriously, performing once or twice a month.

"We're happy with what we do and how we've been able to keep it going," Rubin told the Inquirer.

Rubin, who lives in Briarcliff and is a producer at MTV network, which he said "keeps me connected to the music world," said Scarsdale High School was a "good breeding ground for groups." Rubin's former band was called Sky Blues. Taylor and Ziegler are Mamaroneck High School graduates (class of 1992).

Ziegler told the Inquirer that he and Rubin met when they were both in other bands and playing a gig in the city. Their bands both broke up on the same night. Mutual friends urged them to get together to jam. When they did get together on Ziegler's rooftop in Manhattan, they clicked "instantaneously," Ziegler said. Part of the inspiration for the name Skyfactor was the rooftop meeting. "From the first day we just started writing songs. The



MARC KESLOW (SHS '91) PHOTO

Skyfactor consists of Jon Rubin (guitar, SHS '91); Jason Taylor (drums); Bob Ziegler (vocals); Cliff Rubin (bass, SHS '83).

Festival Info

Pleasantville Music Festival, sponsored by WXPX 107.1 the Peak, takes place Saturday, July 9 from noon to 8:30 p.m. featuring performances by

More than 50 vendors offer fresh food, crafts and services, and charitable organizations provide information about their causes. Festival-goers (21 and over) can sample locally crafted beer from Captain Lawrence and wine from Pleasantville's Prospero Winery in the garden.

Tickets online at www.pleasantvillemusicfestival.com. Tickets are \$40, seniors/students \$15, children 11 and under accompanied by an adult ticket holder are free. Tickets will be available on the day of the festival at the Hopper Street entrance only. Entry on the day of the festival is through the Hopper Street entrance only.

There is no on-site parking.

Free parking and round-trip bus service between Pace University and the festival site will be provided from 11:30 a.m. through 10 p.m.

ideas just started flowing," Ziegler said.

The Pleasantville Music Festival is a "cool opportunity" for local bands to play, said Rubin, who wanted to remind Inquirer readers that Pleasantville is not far from Scarsdale. Rubin said that opportunities to perform in Westchester have, until recently, been few. "The proportion of music to venues in Westchester was not quite there," he said. "It's taken a turn in the right direction. The way the music industry has changed, bands are competing with the big

boys, MySpace, YouTube. It created a need for more live venues. There's more talent out there in a big way."

Ziegler, who works in marketing for the snack product Pirate's Booty, said the festival gives Skyfactor a chance to reach a new audience.

After the Pleasantville festival, Skyfactor will perform at the annual River Music and Arts Festival in Hastings in September, at the Bitter End in Greenwich Village in October, and has a couple of gigs over the summer.

Skyfactor performs all its own music. Rubin writes the music and vocalist Ziegler, the lyrics. "It's a good split. It's been a good working vibe," Rubin said of their creative partnership. Rubin describes Ziegler's voice as "user-friendly," "soulful" and in the style of Jackson Browne or Ben Harper.

Ziegler said he's been influenced by everyone from the Beatles, to the Allman Brothers, to Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam.

"You hear a little bit of everything in our music," Ziegler said. "It stems from concentrating on melody as well as expressing emotion through lyrics. Music is our passion. We've been doing it a long time and hope to do it for a long time to come. We'll continue to write and play and see where it takes us."

The band just recorded live for an upcoming XM Satellite Radio broadcast from the Living Room in New York City.

Skyfactor's song "OK" was featured on the MTV's hit show "Teen Mom." Rubin explained that the band put out its songs for licensing to TV shows, and hadn't realized "OK" made it on the TV show until "our traffic went through the roof," with 1,000 downloads of the song. "That wasn't happening before that. It's amazing how fast it was, the power of MTV!"

Skyfactor's newest CD "Daydreams" is available on iTunes and Amazon. See www.skyfactor.com.