

Like a 'high school reunion'

Local bands, Maple Union, Yours for Mine and Shapiro open for heavyweight mewwithoutYou

Story by Brooke Bates / brooke@rocktownmail.com ■ Courtesy photos

The local musicians that make up Maple Union, Yours for Mine and Shapiro aren't strangers. They share the same town, the same friends and the same talents.

But they've never shared a stage.

Finally, on Nov. 29, they'll all perform together at Guzman's, opening for post-hardcore indie rockers mewwithoutYou.

MewwithoutYou is touring with Brand New and Thrice, but the tour wasn't booked on the 29th. Ray Worth, of Harrisonburg's Worthless Booking, snagged the Philly band and signed the openers. MewwithoutYou will rejoin Brand New and Thrice the following night for a sold-out show at The NorVa.

Farewell to the Union

The show has a special significance for Josh Henderson and Jeremy Forehand, the core members of Maple Union. Due to increasingly busy personal lives, the show on Nov. 29 will be their last, Henderson said.

With Forehand's new job and wife and Henderson's new house — not to mention their lack of a permanent bassist — playing and recording is becoming frustrating, Henderson said.

Maple Union hasn't really toured since last December, and they were just "going to let it fizzle out," Henderson said. "I didn't want to set up our own last show in a basement."

So Chad Altenberger, Yours for Mine's guitarist who has also been playing with Maple Union for a couple years, came to them with an offer for Nov. 29.

"He knew we'd be open to someone else setting it up," Henderson said. "We wanted to go out with a good show, a good crowd and good



bands [who are] friends of ours." Yours for Mine bassist Stephen Minnick is stepping in to fill out Maple Union's line-up for the final show.

Sharing the stage

Bands at a show usually affect each other's sets, said Yours for Mine vocalist and guitarist Jonathan Woods. He describes his band as eclectic, with sounds ranging from hardcore to alt-rock to lighter experimental rock. Sharing the roster with an aggressive band like mewwithoutYou will sway Yours for Mine toward their heavier songs, Woods said.

Shapiro drummer John Granofsky agreed. Because Shapiro attracts a range of listeners, he said,



Yours for Mine (left top) and Shapiro (left bottom) will be rocking their hometown when they open for mewwithoutYou. ABOVE: mewwithoutYou is making an extra stop off their main tour to appear at Guzman's in Harrisonburg.

their sound should strike a chord with a few mewwithoutYou fans too.

The crowd will also affect how Shapiro and Maple Union play, they said. "An energetic fan-base," like mewwithoutYou's, "pumps up the rest of the bands," Henderson said.

All three bands have played with bigger names before, so they won't be "super-nervous," according to Woods. Yours for Mine has played with John Reuben, Maple Union played with Underoath and Shapiro played with Straylight Run.

But they all seem stoked to share the stage with one of their favorites.

"It's a band's dream to play with bands we're excited about ... and personally enjoy," said Shapiro guitarist Nathan Granofsky.

The show

mewwithoutYou, Shapiro, Yours for Mine, Maple Union are playing at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 29 at Guzman's.

Tickets are \$10 at www.worthlessbooking.com

Bassist Carl Shapiro agreed. "I think I'm more excited about seeing mewwithoutYou than I am about playing," he said. "We love playing in Harrisonburg, and we love mewwithoutYou. We've been listening to them for years."

Henderson said Maple Union is just as excited. He remembers when he first saw them at Cornerstone Music Festival in 2002. "They were wearing sweaters and it was like 95 degrees outside," he recalls. "But they blew us away." He considers mewwithoutYou's "Brother, Sister," one of last year's best albums.

Woods is also fired up about the headliner. "MewwithoutYou has a lot under their belt," he said. "It's a privilege to play with them."

But in a way, he said, he's more excited to see his friends in Maple Union and Shapiro. "I wouldn't call it a family thing," he said. "It's more like a high school reunion."

Energy expected

MewwithoutYou shows are characteristically dynamic, and front man Aaron Weiss is known for smashing flowers onstage spastically. Their performances are all about the experience, according to guitarist Michael Weiss. "We don't plan our shows one way or the other," he said. "We just want to do something

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people will be affected by and blessed by. Music exists for that reason, and it's up to musicians to make it happen."

Woods expects the local bands to add even more intensity to the show. "There will be a whole lot of energy, and I don't say that about many shows," Woods said.

While mewithoutYou will be the

big draw, the local bands agreed, the union of local friends and fellow musicians will have its own appeal. "[Yours for Mine], Maple Union and Shapiro are some of the few bands in Harrisonburg still playing," Altenberger said. "It's cool that we're all three playing together."

Worth is reluctant to predict the turnout for the 850-capacity venue, but ticket sales are going well. "I've never done this much presale this

far ahead," he said two weeks before show time. "I sold 14 tickets just today."

But in the end, the dollar bills and the headcounts aren't important. The bands agreed that it comes down to the friends, the fans and, of course, the music.

"I want to feel satisfied at the end of the show," Henderson said. "I want to walk off stage knowing I rocked it as hard as I could rock it."