

Mighty Short Bus's first stop: Club Tavern

by ELIZABETH D. THOMPSON

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Mighty Short Bus will rev up and kick off its latest tour at Club Tavern on Saturday, January 20, 10:30 p.m.

A band whose diverse fan base includes the college-age crowd and even some baby boomers, the men of MSB have both talent and ambition. Last year, they landed 138 tour dates, including top name local festivals like Summerfest and Capitol City Harleyfest to name a few, and are now venturing onto an international stage via Myspace, YouTube, and in the near future, iTunes.

In person, they are practical, polite, and knowledgeable about moving toward success one step at a time. Lead singer and day-time manager Frank Busch, who also plays guitar and co-writes songs, says they're mainly concentrating on four states right now - Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. The group, which started gelling in 2003, plays in Chicago at least once a month and wants to do even more festivals and college campuses this year.

Their lead juggernaut is a new album, produced by Lucas Jorgensen and recorded at Eclectic Audio Studios on Madison's West Side. *Rogue Nation* took more than eight months to record, in part because the band was playing three to four dates a week at times during its conception. Rather than a political statement concerning U.S. foreign policy, *Rogue*

Nation, signifies the group's own "warlike mentality" in getting their name out on everyone's lips, say Busch and Nic Adamany, lead guitarist and songwriter. They describe Mighty Short Bus regards itself as a fiercely independent entity. Last year, says Busch, they booked and promoted ninety percent of their own gigs.

The music on *Rogue Nation* has a swing in the pocket feel. Listeners and critics have tried to label them a southern rock band and the track "Run for the Hills" - currently getting airplay on 1055 - does have a country-feel, say Busch and Adamany. But the album defies categorical stereotyping, and they consider themselves a mid-western rather than southern band.

Mighty Short Bus's lyrics have the familiar troubadour themes of love not working out, "bittersweet longing," and "things that are good but you know you can't have them," shares Busch.

Add to that, traveling, and the real life experiences of Mighty Short Bus's own musicians being together on the road.

All five men - including Josh Smith on keyboards/back-up vocals, Ben Stitzen on drums and Rob Junceau on bass - consider themselves lucky to be doing what they love and working with each other. All grew up in musical families and had fathers who were musicians. All have different arrangements for getting by. Rob Junceau has taught bass for close to ten years - or 10,000 lesson hours as he terms it. One of his students is Jacob Hurley, whose band The Beauts



Photo contributed

Mighty Short Bus will begin a packed 2007 schedule with a show at Club Tavern in Middleton this Saturday.

opens for MSB this Saturday. He teaches three days a week at Good 'N Loud and has his own studio as well.

Junceau, whose beard and haircut make him look like he would fit right in with Lynard Skynard, says one of his favorite parts of being with the band is heckling the audience back through the microphone.

Junceau is featured on many of MSB's YouTube clips playing his bass (www.mightyshortbus.com or www.myspace.com/themsb will get

you to the links). "There are a lot of new things on the Internet that we're trying to take advantage of," says Busch. "It's a great medium for people to see and hear music from all over."

YouTube and Myspace are transforming the music business and marketplace in remarkable ways, Busch continues. On Myspace, Busch estimates there are three million bands alone and over one hundred million individuals to network with: "You

can just click and talk to them. It's a good promotion and networking tool."

Mighty Short Bus is also in negotiations with a Minneapolis company to establish an international presence online - hoping to make some songs available on iTunes in a few weeks.

Rogue Nation is available for sale at the Exclusive Company and through MSB's website. It's also sold after the group's concerts where band members say they're happy to autograph the album for anyone.

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