

sound

Next 2 the Tracks

Celebrates pure, unadulterated rock n' roll

by Monica Diaz

Music genres today have gone beyond simple sound labels like rock, blues and funk to expand music boundaries. Now, styles such as indie-rock, post-punk, emo and disco-rock, to name a few, have re-labeled the rock industry, diversifying and fusing sounds from every musical angle. Finally, we are going back to basics. A diamond in the desert has been discovered, and it's breaking down rock genres to the core, reinventing the essence of rock and roll.

Next 2 the Tracks, a quartet of El Paso border boys who live for music and take pride in being from the Southwest, sports a distinctive sound incomparable to any other. "Our sound is melodic rock with a bluesy edge, something unique to El Paso," says guitarist Tony Sanchez. Their music illustrates influences from Led Zeppelin, Black Crows and Guns & Roses.

Featuring Christian Talamantes (vocals), Tony Sanchez (guitar), Jay Trevizo (bass) and Todd Seelau (drums), Next 2 the Tracks began playing in the fall of 2003 and independently produced and released their debut album *Rain* in 2005. It



has had an unexpectedly positive turnout, specifically online, where more than 20,000 users have either bought a track or purchased the entire album. Popular downloads include the album title track "Rain" and "Skin and Steam."

Since their humble, independent beginnings, Next 2 the Tracks has accomplished a great deal, beating out more than 30 bands from all over the world to win the award for Best Pop/Rock Band at the 2005 New York International Music Festival and playing shows at marquee venues, such as Whisky A Go-Go in Los Angeles, the Palms in Las Vegas and others throughout New Mexico and the El Paso area.

Virtual success has sparked much food for thought in the music industry regarding the transformation of music promotion from radio and television to the web. Thanks to the online world and Myspace, Next 2 the Tracks is raising eyebrows not only in the Borderland but in other parts of the world

as well. They have generated a strong fan base from the East Coast to the UK, Germany to Australia, receiving concert invites from all over the map. "It's awesome knowing that our music has reached people all over the globe," says Christian Talamantes. "So I guess music has really changed. Our tour van has been sitting in the driveway for months now, and we are still chatting and getting exposure to people all over the place."

Next 2 the Tracks is currently producing its second album due for release in fall 2007, which features Los Angeles producer/engineer Dave Dominguez, best known for his work with bands Weezer, Stained, Papa Roach and Guns & Roses. Next 2 the Tracks will leverage its bluesy edge by focusing on lyrically expressing problems such as bigotry, racism and border issues.

"It's okay to be from the South," says Talamantes. "We are proud of our home; we are overlooked and want to bring some attention to El Paso

and take the El Paso desert with us wherever we go."

After Storm 2006, these rockers showed their concern and commitment to their community by playing at Margarita's Night Club to help the flood victims. "We understand that there are poor people in other parts of the world," Trevizo says, "but across the Border, there is a lot of poverty too, and we want to focus on helping people right in our community." Next 2 the Tracks is organizing charity work with non-profit organizations, such as ONE and Casas por Cristo. "We just want to make a difference through our music and by giving back to the El Paso area," Trevizo says.

Stay tuned for Next 2 the Tracks' upcoming show dates in Albuquerque, N.M., and San Francisco, Calif. To listen to "Rain" and upcoming EPs (sample tracks), visit www.VH1.com. For downloads, CDs and merchandise, go online to their official website www.next2thetracks.com. 