

VON CHALANT:

LT band continues to rise

Accomplished band Von Chalant writes music, takes Chicago stage

by Katy Phinick

Think high school band, and the thoughts of scummy garages and screeching amps come to mind. But Von Chalant is not the average high school band, and it definitely does not embody this stereotype. Von Chalant, comprised of five Lyons Township students, has become the face of local music and attracts audiences of all ages and walks of life.

Von Chalant was formed in early 2009 by members of two former bands, This Blue Kingdom and another budding, unnamed band, said Dan Suarez '11, Von Chalant's lead singer.

"This Blue Kingdom was mostly rock, and we wanted to add something new, but because of stylistic differences between band members we decided to begin clean slate," Suarez said.

Leaving This Blue Kingdom behind, Suarez, along with Michael Leszczynski '11 on bass and Brian Quinlan '11 on guitar, picked up Christian Zwit '11 and Nolan Galivan '11 on keyboard and drums, respectively.

"Nolan wanted to jam with both bands, but after he played with us and heard how well we sounded together he was convinced," Leszczynski said. "Christian, on the other hand, had always wanted to be in a band with us. He was like a snake in the grass, just waiting for his time to jump in."

After the group formed, they began practicing material and trying out new sounds together. Von Chalant first played only covers, Quinlan said.

"We mostly played music from other bands that we all

liked and were inspired by," Leszczynski said. "Inspiration came from bands like The Strokes, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Death Cab for Cutie."

But as time went on and the band's talents grew, Von Chalant began writing their own music.

All members of the band contribute somewhat to the process, although Quinlan is responsible for a majority of the original repertoire.

"Our first show was really funny. A bunch of bands, and a bunch of parents," Suarez said.

Since its stage debut, Von Chalant has played dozens of shows and typically plays four to five times a month for audiences+, Suarez said. Von Chalant has stage experiences that vary from block parties to opening for We the Living at a Sept. 16 cystic fibrosis benefit concert at the La Grange Theatre.

If Von Chalant isn't your "average garage band" then you can bet its shows and concerts aren't of that category either. It did not take long for the band to get noticed. In February 2009, Von Chalant played its first gig at a St. John of the Cross fundraiser to benefit the church's youth program.

"We have been pretty lucky," Zwit said. "We have never really had to solicit ourselves as a band. People just ask us to play, and of course we say yes."

This trend landed Von Chalant one of its biggest concert opportunities to date. On Nov. 7 the band took the stage of the Congress Theatre as contributors to The Next Big Thing, a "battle of the bands" style sampling of up and coming bands.

"I got a phone call as I was leaving school one day from this lady in charge of [the event]," Leszczynski said. "She asked if we were interested in playing. We were really excited because it really legitimizes us as a band."



band logo created by Chris Longino

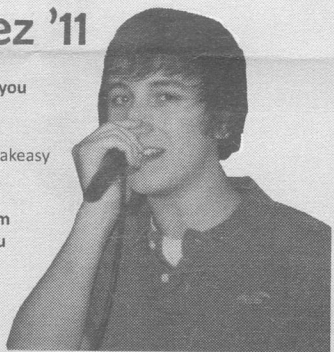
Dan Suarez '11

Q: Where would you go if you had a time machine?

A: The 1920s. I'd own a speakeasy or be a mobster.

Q: What is the most random fact about yourself that you can think of?

A: I cannot run a five minute mile.



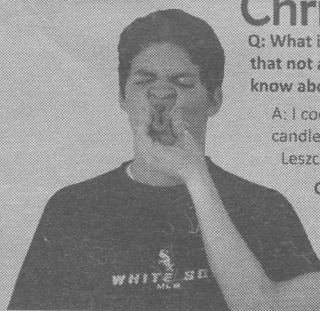
Christian Zwit '11

Q: What is something that not a lot of people know about you?

A: I cook homemade soup for a candlelight dinner I have with Michael Leszczynski every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

Q: What makes you get up in the morning?

A: Literally: my roommate Phil, he makes me coffee. Figuratively: knowing that in the next five hours I get to be around my favorite teacher, Mrs. Newcomb.



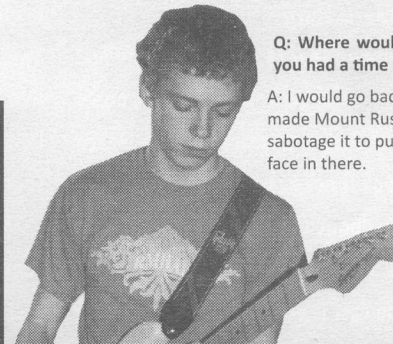
Brian Quinlan '11

Q: What is something not a lot of people know about you?

A: I once passed out at a science fair in third grade when some lady handed me a dead pig heart.

Q: Where would you go if you had a time machine?

A: I would go back when they made Mount Rushmore and sabotage it to put Obama's face in there.



compiled by Alex Cordero

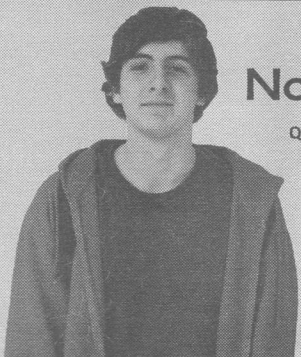
Nolan Galivan '11

Q: What is something that not a lot of people know about you?

A: I know every single line of dialogue in "Shrek."

Q: Where would you go if you had a time machine?

A: 2013, to see if the world actually ended.



Mike Leszczynski '11

Q: What is the first thing you think of when you here these three words: Chupacabra, Jell-O and Umbrella?

A: Hungry Hungry Hippos.

Q: Who was your childhood hero and who would you call a hero of yours now?

A: Childhood: Tom Sawyer. Now: Frank Sinatra.

