

MUSIC

Minus the Bear

Lollapalooza act from Seattle talks about the lure of playing clubs

STORY BY **JINELLE SHENGULETTE**
Special to Metromix

For the members of Seattle indie rock outfit Minus the Bear, this summer means playing the biggest festivals in the world while touring in support of the group's latest release, *Omni*.

Along with events in Europe, the band is excited to play Lollapalooza on the same stage as fellow Seattleites and grunge legends Soundgarden.

And, although big gigs are exciting, Minus the Bear prefers smaller, more intimate shows, like the one it will headline at The Club at Water Street on Monday, July 5.

"Club shows are when we're in our element," explains keyboardist Alex Rose. "You get a soundcheck, you show up in the afternoon, set everything up just right, you have lights — it's easier. And you're playing to your fans who paid to see you."

We spoke with Rose — just after he finished the first leg of the *Omni* Tour — about how he joined the band, being mistaken for a famous metal frontman and more.

You're the newest member of Minus the Bear. How many years have you been with the band?

I started touring in the beginning of 2006, so I guess it's been a little over

four years. I was their live sound guy before that, and I did a tiny bit of engineering on (Minus the Bear's) *Menos el Oso* ... Right place, right time for me, I guess [laughs].

***Omni*, which came out last month, was a long time in the making. Tell me a little about how this record came together.**

We went through the whole recording process without a label (after leaving Suicide Squeeze), so we kind of just made a record that we were excited by. It was a little scary not knowing when or how or with whom it was going to be released. But we shopped it around and found (Dangerbird), who was excited by it and didn't want to make any changes.

What was it like working with producer Joe Chiccarelli on *Omni*, who's worked with bands like The White Stripes and My Morning Jacket?

It was interesting; he pushed us and he definitely dove into the sound. We all played together in one room, and if one thing was perfect and another thing wasn't, we'd all play our parts again. So we got a very live band feel on it.

Why was it important to get the live feel on this record?

Well, this band has kind of always been about the live show ... (In the past) there was a certain energy that

MINUS THE BEAR

WHERE: The Club at Water Street, 204 N. Water St.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Monday, July 5

COST: \$19; \$22 the day of show

MORE INFO: www.ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000

was in the live show that wasn't in the records. And I don't even know if we captured it this time, but I think we wanted to get closer to that at least.

Was it harder to record while playing together, as opposed to each laying down separate tracks?

It's a challenge, for sure ... I kind of improvised so it was a little harder because I would like how I played on one take, but it would be totally different than how I played on the next take. So if I learned anything, it was to be a little more prepared and to get my parts down ahead of time.

One last question, Alex Rose: Do you ever get mistaken for Axl Rose?

[Laughs] People always do a double take with my name. But Slash has never come up to me and thought I was his former bandmate. Which kind of is too bad, I would really want to play with Slash at some point. Why not? He's Slash! ♦

David Belisle

Minus the Bear is, from left, Dave Knudson, Cory Murchy, Jake Snider, Erin Tate and Alex Rose.

