

# Sugar Red Drive: Clean-cut rock

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I attended the Millennium Music Conference on Feb 14 to check out a new and upcoming band, Sugar Red Drive. Here is a breakdown on the newest thing out of Ploughkeepsie, NY.

The first thing you notice about Sugar Red Drive is their sound. Its compellingly melodic and not an audio assault like you will find with some rock bands. They are clean-cut guys, you'd expect to see them walking around the hallways at class before you'd expect to see them on a stage. The music is refreshing, especially in the sense that it is rock the way it is traditionally thought of. They listed Stone Temple Pilots and Alice In Chains as two of their influences, and it definitely shows in their music. The vocals are deep and the melodies driving, there is a clear potential for their music to

grow and become much more on a national level. The best way to get to know their music is to hear it though, so go to [www.myspace.com/sugarreddrive](http://www.myspace.com/sugarreddrive) to check out some of their songs.

The band is comprised of P.J. Gasperini on drums, Jim Knauss on guitar, Archit tripathi covering vocals, and Davey Alexander playing bass. Interestingly enough, Archit is the oldest in the band at only 21. P.J., Jim, and Davey were formerly in a band called Mercury Rising before their lead singer at the time up and left without much warning. They searched myspace for a new lead and found Archit.

S.R.D has good stage presence; one of the things that struck me most was the quality of their sound as compared to their studio work. In many instances you will go to a show already familiar with the bands music, but the live vocals and sound don't add up to your expectations; that is not the case

with S.R.D. Songs they played like "Velvet Leash", "One More Time", and "Red Machine" lived up the standard of quality I had expected from listening to them beforehand.

After their set I got a chance to talk with the guys from the band, the following is an [edited] transcript of the interview. (Video available on Capital Times Facebook page).

Park: So the first thing that comes to mind is Sugar Red Drive, where did that name come from?

Archit: Basically the way we came up with it was we needed a new name, a new band, and thought these days attention spans are getting shorter and shorter so we just decided to get three words that captured what we are about. Sugar, its sweets, high energy; Red because its like a color of passion, a color of energy: drive because we're extremely motivated, we're all very young but very driven.

Park: you guys all collaborate on songs, there's no specific song writer for these songs, how is that working out for you? Is that easier or harder than having one or two people writing songs?

Jim: Its not exactly easier, but the songs turn out better. Four heads are better than one.

Archit: Exactly. We're pretty fortunate because we seem to compliment each other nicely..

Jim: Yeah, I say our song writing is like musical chairs; we're all floating around and then someone will be like "yeah, that's nice."

Park: So who are your specific influences for each of you?

P.J.: For me it would definitely be Alice In Chains, that's the big one. STP (Stone Temple Pilots), Velvet Revolver, all the old stuff, jazz, funk..

Davey: Tool, anything from poppy to metalwork...

Archit: Me personally, a lot of the same stuff as P.J. like Alice In Chains, a lot of the older stuff

like Zeppelin and Black Crows.

Jim: Melodic stuff, U2, collective soul...

Park: Now are you guys still in school or have you graduated?

P.J.: No, we've all just graduated

Archit: I'm still in school. I'm a senior at Vasser college.

Park: You guys are coming out with an album this spring, right?

P.J.: yeah, the tentative date is May 19th and the album will be uploaded onto iTunes within about two weeks so you can buy the record. We're going with "One More Time" for the single.

Park: Ok, so I have one last question for you guys, a serious one... In a fight between all four of you, who would win?

P.J.: Um, probably Davey.

Archit: Yeah, I'm a lover not a fighter.

Park: All right guys, well thanks for your time and we'll keep an eye out for you on MTV.

## A feel-good Oscar ceremony for the recession era

By **JOCELYN NOVECK**  
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Maybe it was the adorable smile on that "Slumdog Millionaire" kid in his pint-sized tuxedo.

Or best director winner Danny Boyle bouncing in silly tribute to Tigger of "Winnie the Pooh."

The grinning, top-hatted dad of best actress winner Kate Winslet, whistling like a champion to get his daughter's attention.

Or an entire crowd standing together in remembrance of Heath Ledger.

This year's Oscar telecast was striking for its many feel-good themes and moments — and perhaps exactly what we needed from a recession-era awards show.

Certainly, it was a notable contrast to last year, when darkness and cynicism ruled the nominated films, capped by best picture winner "No Country for Old Men," about a homicidal sociopath. The collective subject matter was so bleak that host Jon Stewart was inspired to say of "Juno," the one comedy: "Thank goodness for teen pregnancy!"

This year's host, Hugh Jackman, had no such trouble. He presided over a show filled with Cinderella themes both fictional and real-life. And none was more poignant

than that of the night's big winner, "Slumdog Millionaire," with its story of love triumphing over desperate poverty, criminality and pure evil.

Lost on no one at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre, of course, was the Cinderella-like story of the movie itself, which nearly became a victim of the tanking economy and was headed for a direct-to-DVD release before News Corp.'s Fox Searchlight stepped in to distribute it.

And there were the many personal stories of those involved in the film. As the cast stood onstage after winning the best picture award, the cameras focused briefly on a beatifically smiling Azharuddin Mohammed Ismail, 10, one of the children who'd been whisked to the Oscars from a desperately poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Mumbai, where he lives in a lean-to made of plastic tarpaulins and blankets. One can only imagine how the moment must have felt for his friends and family back home.

It fell to Simon Beaufoy, who won for the film's adapted screenplay, to make the link between our troubled times and the film's appeal.

"It's come out at a time when the value of money, which has been raised to this extraordinary height, is suddenly being shown to

be a kind of very shallow thing," Beaufoy said. "The financial markets are crashing around the world, and a film comes out which is ostensibly about being a millionaire. Actually ... it's a film that says there's more important things than money: love, faith and family."

It was a different family — that of the late Heath Ledger — that brought tears to many eyes in the most emotional moment of the ceremony, no less affecting because it was expected: Ledger's posthumous Oscar for his diabolical Joker in "The Dark Knight."

The entire theater rose along with Ledger's relatives to pay tribute to this deeply talented actor who died last year at age 28, of an accidental prescription drug overdose. They heard his father express how much Ledger would have wanted to be there.

"This award tonight would have humbly validated Heath's quiet determination to be truly accepted by all you here tonight, his peers within an industry he so loved," said Kim Ledger, Heath Ledger's father.

The moment was lacking only one thing: A look back at Ledger's stunning work as the Joker. The new format for the acting awards,

with five former winners paying tribute to nominees in short speeches, may have added some touching moments — Shirley MacLaine telling Anne Hathaway that she had a great future was one of them — but it took away the film clips, an omission some found glaring.

"You've got all these wonderful images — so let's see this stuff on screen!" said Jonathan Kuntz, a historian at UCLA's film school. "They could have done a better job selling their films by actually showing them. Not everyone has seen these movies."

Last year, when "No Country for Old Men" won best picture, the telecast was seen by 32 million people, the lowest on record. The 2003 telecast, with "Chicago" as the best picture winner, was seen by 33 million.

But back to the sweet moments, which came in some unexpected places. Certainly there was no Cinderella story in "The Reader," the tale of an unrepentant Nazi guard played by Kate Winslet.

But Winslet's win was touching nonetheless — the popular British actress had been nominated five times previously with no success.

Thanking her parents for their faith in her, she called out, "Dad, whistle or something 'cause then

I'll know where you are." And Roger Winslet whistled back — heartily, for the world to hear.

Unlike the genial Winslet, Sean Penn is known for a somewhat prickly presence. But in keeping with the night, the best actor winner for "Milk" seemed a little, well, softer around the edges, virtually apologizing for some of his trademark brashness.

"I want it to be very clear that I do know how hard I make it to appreciate me, often," Penn said, to laughter. He went on to make a passionate plea for legalization of same-sex marriages.

Penn's portrayal of slain gay rights leader Harvey Milk was striking partly because the character was so much sweeter — and full of smiles — than many he's played before. His performance was so convincing that it gave Penn's friend, Robert DeNiro, one of the night's best comic lines.

But for lines that epitomized the feel-good nature of the 81st Academy Awards, one could do no better than 43-year-old Indian composer A.R. Rahman, who won Oscars for both original soundtrack and original song from "Slumdog Millionaire."

"All my life, I had a choice of hate and love," Rahman said.

"I chose love, and I'm here."