

Rock band to kick off celebratory tour

By Stephanie Goga

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Stephen Kellogg & the Sixers are turning 5 years old, and they'll be blowing out the candles in State College tonight.

The band, comprised of members Stephen Kellogg, Keith "Kit" Karlson and Brian "Boots" Factor will make its first stop for the "Celebrating Five Years" tour at 8 p.m. tonight at Chronic Town, 224 W. College Ave.

"One of the reasons we chose Chronic Town was that we had a good crowd last time," Factor said. "We were looking for a place to get off on the right foot. State College is a great town. You guys have got it going on over there."

The trio got its start when all of the members attended the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Although they graduated at different times, they were still living in the area after graduation, Factor said. The members all knew each other and had played together at times during college, he added.

Factor said he wasn't thinking about the future of the band at its creation.

"I didn't really have any conceived notions," Factor said. "We were all just so happy to quit our jobs that we were so unfulfilled with. I was working at a failing record label, Kit was working at a coffee shop, Stephen had been doing solo shows but was also selling tickets at a venue. And I just thought, I want to be playing music instead of working at this failing label."

This led to the formation of a full-time band in fall 2003, when the band had its first full tour, Factor said.

"Since then it's been adventure," he said.

The Sixers have been through some changes over the years, with lead guitarists Kyle Riabko and Chris Soucy each taking their turns touring with the band. For this tour, it's the original trio of Kellogg, Karlson and Factor.

Factor said with the trio arrangement, all of the members have to step up to fill in the sound. Factor is playing the banjo in some songs, for instance.

"We're all pushing our boundaries musically, and I think it's working," he said.

Zach Penrod (sophomore-mechanical engi-

If you go

What: Stephen Kellogg & the Sixers concert

When: 8 tonight

Where: Chronic Town, 224 W. College Ave.

Details: Tickets can be purchased at Chronic Town and are \$17

neering), who was introduced to the Sixers' music through a friend, plans to attend tonight's show.

"It's awesome that they're starting here," he said. "They seem to really like playing here."

Jesse Ruegg, manager of Chronic Town, said that when the Sixers came to State College in April, the show sold out.

"That was one of the better shows we've done thus far," he said. "I was really surprised, but it really is a testament to Stephen Kellogg's talent. And it's one of those bands that really resonates with a college age crowd."

The Sixers' tunes have been labeled as rock and alt-country, but Penrod described it as different and difficult to label.

Ruegg said he sensed a "roots rock" feeling in the Sixers' music.

"They're one of those bands that are still playing actual rock 'n roll, not just singing over prerecorded music," he said. "There's not enough of that in the music industry today."

Ruegg said he has been receiving ticket pre-sale orders from all over the state, evidence of a strong fan base.

"The fans really seem to be hardcore," he said.

The Sixers, often seen with a supporting act, will offer a full solo show at tonight's performance. Factor said this set-up happens sometimes depending on the size of the venue and other logistical reasons. But, he said, the different set-up won't affect the excitement of a normal Sixers show.

"Anything goes," he said. "You paid for a ticket, and you're getting us. You're not getting us in a small room or a big room. If Kit decides to dance and he knocks over a light, so be it."



Courtesy of Laura Pease

Stephen Kellogg, Keith "Kit" Karlson and Brian Boots will be performing at Chronic Town tonight.

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