





Dressed casually, with her hair pinned up and an athletic bag over her shoulder, Cindy Keating, walks into the trendy downtown coffee shop and looks around. We exchange the usual “Glad to meet you” and “You too”. Striking yet somehow disarming, Cindy portrays the paradoxical image of the “rockstar-girl next door”. When she speaks she has the casual tone of someone with nothing to prove. I can tell instantly that this will not be a typical interview.

Having been advanced a copy of Keating’s debut album “Still but Not Stopped” (produced by Phil Anderson and Nick Blagona



(Jeff Martin, The Tea Party, Alexis on Fire, Deep Purple, April Wine, The Police)), I had been listening intently trying to get a feel for the band and their material before I jumped into the interview. From these few days of listening I had tried to form in my mind an idea of the band and what they were about, but that idea seemed to shift with every listen. The thundering rock track “Black & White” starts off the album before settling into a touching emotional journey on “Lead You Home”. By the time the catchy riffs of “Much To Say” lead into a powerful ballad on the fourth track “Fading”, I realized this band is taking the listener on a musical journey. As I continued through the rest of the album, the female vocals seemed unusual, captivating and intriguing to me given the style of music, and this kept me from easily placing this band’s sound into a convenient box.

Melodic and emotionally stirring, listening to “Still but Not Stopped” is not a casual experience. Crossing several mainstream genres, the sound is approachable - with pop-rock melodies and hooky riffs – but listening compels you to think about life and love and all of the big questions. Described often as “Sarah

McLachlan meets Coldplay, Oasis and U2”, Keating’s sound is a unique take on their influencers’ sounds. Piano driven, with anthemic choruses, melodic bass lines, enchanting guitar riffs, catchy drum beats and passion throughout, the music is easy to listen to; both catchy and stirring, yet it clearly is not just another modern-rock clone, or just a “cookie-cutter” pop act.

Easing into the conversation, I open with a typical question about the members of Keating and Cindy’s roll as the front’man’. Cindy becomes more animated - “Just because I’m a girl, we don’t want to be thought of as a ‘girl band’. Our music is for everyone.” She explains that the entire band is never more at home than on stage in front of a lively crowd, surrounded by cords, pedals, amps and way too many instruments to carry, and that despite the emotional weight of their music, Keating is a band whose main agenda is to entertain and to rock. “We just want to leave people feeling like they’ve had a spiritual or emotional experience, instead of just another rock show you’ll forget about in a few days. We’re not trying to be overly intense – its just that as someone once said ‘ you try playing this music without being passionate!”



On lead guitars is Vance Moss. “Vance and I have played together for years. He’s one of the most naturally talented guitar players and musicians I’ve known.” The quiet one who is rarely seen without a smile on his face, his laid back personality is a crucial element to the band’s overall persona. Despite his easy-going nature, Vance’s passion for the job, for his riffs and for the music cannot be understated. “His life is the music and his dedication is intense. Vance and I do all of our music together... If I’m going to be Bono, he’s definitely my ‘Edge”.

Commanding the drum kit for Keating is Vince Noseworthy.



KEATING

"Vince came to our group from a..." she pauses "...different musical taste. Vince is sort of a hard-rocker at heart, The first show he played with us, he had long dreaded hair and looked like a rap rocker more than Keating's drummer!" she laughs. Vince brings an edgy approach to the bands' rhythms and structure. He leads the band toward a harder sound. Vince's complex drumming style ensure that Keating's sound is always multi-layered and substantive – "he pushes our tendency to want to keep the musical style simple".



On bass, Jonny Squires is the obvious charmer of the band, yet his friendliness and mischievous personality only mask his gifted musical mind. Jonny brings a unique and varied set of musical influences to the band - with an emphasis on funk and jazz bass - having been influenced by the likes of Victor Wooten and Marcus Miller. "Jonny is the one who keeps me in check. I think of Jonny as a little brother... sometimes we get after each other like siblings do, but in the end we always have a lot of fun and both respect each other's talent".

As she describes the music, Cindy's passion bubbles up to the surface. "Each song comes from something, or someone in my life. Either what people have told me, or what I wish I could say to them." Lacking the angst of a typical girl-rocker, Cindy is discreet and understated. But when you talk to her or watch her perform, she cannot mask her obvious passion. "There's a difference between being angry, and being frustrated. At times I was frustrated with things that I saw, and so I wrote about it."

What are you hoping to achieve? "Our music is a challenge. It's a question. Its meant to poke and prod." Why can't you sing about summer romance and casual flings? Are you always this intense? She laughs. "No not always. Believe me I'm a regular person! I just think that people settle for too little from life. I can't say that life is an opportunity and an adventure, and then sing poppy fluff

about nothing. Our music is the result of the passion we all have for life."

Walking into the studio to watch them in the process of writing, rehearsing and recording, I sense the anticipation and excitement in the air. The sort of tension you'd expect before a huge gig, not just another rehearsal. When you watch Keating interact, it's clear what Cindy's role in the group is. On-stage and off, she is the emotional and musical focal point, and the spiritual leader of this pack. Cindy projects a calm, confident aura while the band pushes back against each other's diverging ideas, pulling in different directions as any group of creative minds might.

As the band kicks into a full blown rehearsal I am drawn in, and time seems to escape me. The music is tight, enchanting, fully engaging and so comfortable that I feel as if they might be making it up as they go. Having seen Keating's live show I know that it is not until you experience their live show that you really understand what Keating is about. "We absolutely love playing to a crowd. Time flies by. Its like we enter a different place where music is everything there is. It's a spiritual experience and we know the crowd follows us to that place." Vance explains.

Without them saying it, I appreciate that this is a band that is completely dedicated and really believes in what they are doing.

My final question is regarding the title of the album. "Still but Not Stopped", what does it mean? "At the heart of every person is the desire to do something that they really want, to pursue a dream, a calling that is just their own. And everyone has a choice: will you fight through the slow grind when you feel like life is not moving ahead, or toss away your dream to settle back onto a safe path. Just because you appear to be still doesn't mean that you have stopped, even though everyone around you might think you have. It's at that critical moment that we all decide if we are going to throw it away or press on."

By Ryan Hastman

Keating's album "Still but Not Stopped" will be released in stores August 29th, 2006. Watch for the debut hit single "Much To Say" and tour dates to be announced shortly.



KEATING

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