

Replacements' Stinson ready to bash in Pittsburgh

By Scott Tady
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PITTSBURGH — Tommy Stinson served as the bassist and emotional spark plug for one of alternative rock's most admired bands, The Replacements, before starting an 18-year stretch with Guns N' Roses.

Though it's his two current bands that bring Stinson back to Pittsburgh, first for an intimate Friday show at Get Hip HQ on the city's North Side, and then a Sept. 19 show at Mr. Smalls in Millvale.

"I do have a lot of good memories of Pittsburgh, though they're mostly recent," Stinson said.

He looks to make more memories here starting Friday with a show starring Stinson and fellow guitarist Chip Roberts playing a special acoustic set as a duo dubbed Cowboys in The Campfire.

Tickets are \$20 sold via eventbrite.com for the 7 p.m. show that begins with a guest deejay set by Gregg Kostelich of Pittsburgh punk band The Cynics, signed to the Get Hip record label that's hosting the show in its headquarters on Columbus Avenue, a block from the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild jazz venue.

Not counting a quick New Jersey radio station appearance, this will be the tour's opening night for Cowboys in The Campfire, which finished its 2016 tour at another new live recording studio, Liveburgh, in Pittsburgh's North Hills.

Cowboys in The Campfire will play new songs, solo ones by Stinson and maybe some Replacements tunes along with anything else they improvise on the spot during their nine tour dates on nine consecutive nights.

Stinson won't get long to rest, as he soon gets back on the road with his plugged-in, post-Replacements band Bash + Pop, performing Sept. 19 at the Funhouse, the upstairs lounge at the Mr. Smalls concert site. That show is \$15 in advance via ticketfly.com.

Two local Stinson shows within two months might help take away a bit of the sting from the Replacements canceling the 2015 Stage AE date on the group's 33-city reunion tour. Yeah, Stinson feels bad about that.

"Aw, I know, but Paul (Westerberg, the band's singer) got pneumonia and it was a bad scene," Stinson said. "He got it in Detroit and we had to peel him off the floor. He was sick as a dog, and so they had to jack him up with cortisone to



Tommy Stinson, left, and guitar partner Chip Roberts compose the duo Cowboys in The Campfire, performing Friday in Pittsburgh.

DEVON SIMPSON

finish the tour."

Stinson's songs with Bash + Pop have a Replacements-meets-Rolling Stones raucousness and swagger, particularly "On The Rocks," a song for anyone who's experienced a live-in relationship turned sour.

Bash + Pop memorably performed "On The Rocks" on Stephen Colbert's late-night show in January. True to his reputation for good-natured recklessness, Stinson ended the song by wrestling and rolling around on the floor with Colbert.

"It looked serious though if you look at it again you can see where I'm cracking up," Stinson said. "That was totally off-the-cuff and not scripted. We had told his producer if he wants to unplug us to make it funny, we're cool with that."

Colbert did yank Stinson's guitar from its amp before their wrestling match ensued.

Bash + Pop got a good reaction from that TV appearance. So did

Colbert, who also in that episode finally reverted back to his "Colbert Report" blowhard commentator character.

"His ratings skyrocketed after that," Stinson said. "Juggling acoustic and plugged-in bands comes easily for Stinson."

"It's good in two ways. I love being in a rock band, but some fans will say they can't always hear all the lyrics with a full band, but in a little club where it's more intimate you can," Stinson said.

Cowboys in The Campfire was sparked by a

watercolor painting his bandmate Roberts created, depicting two cowboys at a campfire.

"We started joking we should do a little tour as a duo called Cowboys in The Campfire," Stinson said.

"We're working on some new songs this weekend. We'll probably do two or three of those in Pittsburgh," Stinson said.

Stylistically, Cowboys in The Campfire isn't much different from Bash + Pop. "Maybe it's a little more country minded or rockabilly. Chip brings that," Stinson said. "I bring more

the singer-songwriter part, I guess."

With an esteemed wordsmith like Westerberg at the helm, Stinson didn't get many chances to write lyrics for The Replacements, which along with its more commercially successful rivals R.E.M. spearheaded the early 1980s college-radio movement that morphed into the alternative-rock format.

The Minnesota-bred Replacements' spectacular rise and equally spectacular fall — including being banned from NBC's

"Saturday Night Live" and raising the nightly ire of concertgoers as the warmup act on Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' 1989 tour — is the stuff of legend.

It's all meticulously documented in last year's 436-page Replacements biography "Trouble Boys," which Stinson hasn't read.

"I lived through it. I don't need to read about it," Stinson said, adding that he knows the author and trusts he got the facts straight.

STINSON, PAGE D8

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LATE SHOW WITH STEPHEN COLBERT
Tommy Stinson's Bash + Pop performs live on "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert."

The Replacements' Tommy Stinson headed to Pittsburgh

STINSON, from D7

There's still time to add a new chapter if the Replacements ever do another tour or album. "I never say never," Stinson said, "Though I thought (Westerberg) summed it up best when he said we came and went and did our thing."

Stinson could say the same about his nearly two decades with Guns N' Roses, starting in 1986, and ending when he wasn't included in the famed hard-rock band's 2016 comeback/original members reunion tour.

Stinson was aboard when the Axl Rose-led band finally finished its long awaited and critically praised "Chinese Democracy" album.

Stinson says only favorable things about his GNR tenure.

"It was a good run for which I'm grateful," he said.

"It was meaningful for me not just financially. That kept me going for many years and I met a lot of great people through it, and worked on a lot of very good, creative stuff that hopefully will come out someday," Stinson said. "Some tracks that didn't

"I never say never. Though I thought (Paul Westerberg) summed it up best when he said we came and went and did our thing."

TOMMY STINSON, ON THE REPLACEMENTS RECORDING ANOTHER ALBUM OR GOING ON TOUR

make 'Chinese Democracy' I hope will come out, and some other old songs we did in some sessions."

Hey, to quote from one of his new Bash + Pop songs: "Anything Could Happen."

The 50-year-old Stinson intended that song as a statement on where he's at in his life.

"I'm kind of putting it all out on the table that this is my life, and I just keep rolling along," he said. "I just keep moving through all the twists and turns, the fun stuff and the not-so-fun stuff."

Moon dust valued at \$2 million to \$4 million up for auction

NEW YORK (AP) - Moon dust that Neil Armstrong collected during the first lunar landing was displayed Thursday at a New York auction house — a symbol of America's glory days in space now valued at \$2 million to \$4

million. The late astronaut brought the dust and some tiny rocks back to Earth in an ordinary-looking bag.

It's one of 180 lots linked to space travel that Sotheby's is auctioning off

July 20 to mark the 48th anniversary of the pioneer lunar landing on that date in 1969.

The moon dust is the first sample of Earth's satellite ever collected.

The bag has had a storied existence, a

decades-long trajectory during which it was misidentified and nearly landed in the trash.

About two years ago, it appeared in a seized assets auction staged on behalf of the U.S. Marshals Service.

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CALEB PORTO

Cast members from Center Theatre Players' "The Addams Family" include, from left, Ellen Barrett, Layne Bailey, Jason Swauger, Caleb Porto, Bronte Lucci, Jeff Hall and Ben Stanton.

THEY'RE CREEPY AND THEY'RE KOOKY, MYSTERIOUS AND SPOOKY

Center Theatre Players bringing 'Addams Family' to Rochester

By Samantha Chill
For The Times

ROCHESTER

The Center Theatre Players' summer musical will turn mysterious and spooky, with the presentation of "The Addams Family" starting Thursday at the Rochester Borough Theater.

The production, which enjoyed a Broadway run in 2010 through 2011, features the famed characters from "The Addams Family" cartoon series, about whom several film and television adapta-

tions have been made over the years.

Center Theatre Players director Sandy Reigel said, "It's a really funny show, good for the summer, and we wanted to follow up last year's 'Spamalot' with something that would entertain a wide age range."

"The Addams Family" musical features Gomez (Jason Swauger of Beaver), his wife Morticia (Bronte Lucci of Center Township), daughter Wednesday (Layne Bailey of Wexford), son Pugsley (Ben Stanton of Cran-

berry Township), Uncle Fester (Jeff Hall of Center Township), Grandma (Ellen Barrett of Monaca) and Lurch (Caleb Porto of Center).

Wednesday's future in-laws, the Beinekes, as well as several Addams' ancestors, pepper the plot with life lessons, humor, and a family-friendly twist of the macabre.

Reigel feels the audience will enjoy seeing these familiar characters come to life with tunes such as "When You're an Addams," "Pulled" and "Happy/Sad."

"They'll also enjoy a nice message; the show talks about defining normal. The Addams family is not what we'd consider normal, but as the show progresses, the other 'normal' family involved realizes the Addams are not as weird as people think they are," Reigel said.

Additional cast members include John Burja (Rochester), Mia Petersen (Beaver), Josh Brown (Center), Alex Bowman (Center), Douglas Campbell (Industry), Ashley Crook (Green

THEATER, PAGE D2



Pittsburgh bash

Tommy Stinson of the Replacements (and Guns N' Roses) is headed to Pittsburgh for two shows. First comes a Friday acoustic duo gig in the city's Manchester section hosted by local record label Get Hip. In September, he and his band Bash + Pop will play the Funhouse at Mr. Smalls in Millvale.

See Page D7

Blues festival gets a new look and location

The new-look Pittsburgh Blues and Roots Festival opens at a fresh location after a year's absence with some headliners familiar with the Beaver Valley. Also in this week's Scott Tady column: Pinegrove is a band to put on your radar, a New Brighton rocker gets Warped, and a Chippewa church hosts a chart-topper. See Page D3