

# Artist Profile

Immaculate Fools, appearing with Ronnie Wood at the Palace November 18

The Immaculate Fools, a British band combining punk-style sound with insightful, socially-conscious lyrics, are fast gaining attention for their style and sound as well as their position as the "warm-up" band for Rolling Stone member Ronnie Wood's solo tour. Both share the same record label, Continuum Records, and both are preparing to visit L.A. next week for a show at The Palace on November 18.

Formed in 1984 by brothers Kevin and Paul Weatherill, Immaculate Fools combine the sounds of lead singer/guitarist Kevin Weatherill, bass player Paul Weatherill, guitarist Brian Bett, drummer Paul Skidmore and violin/guitar/mandolin player Barry Wickens for a sort of "punk meets Celtic folk" sound. Since 1988, they've been building a following playing small venues and the college circuit. Although they are frequently compared to The Clash, The Pogues and The Psychedelic Furs, singer Kevin Weatherill says his main influences are The Water Boys and World Party. The other comparisons probably relate more to their style of expression and their penchant for expressing tension than to their actual music.

Immaculate Fools sound is raw and frenzied, capturing Weatherill's deepest, darkest feelings. "I'm into, sort of, primal scream. I do a lot of primal stuff on stage—screaming at the end of songs,

over from the violin. They kind of work solos out together."

His lyrics suggest that Weatherill is a man who cares about the future of this planet, and his music and his performances reflect what he's all about. Presently, Immaculate Fools are promoting their new album, *The Toy Shop*, which features the single "Stand Down." The song reproaches Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein for the mass killings he's promoted. Weatherill says it feels good to express himself through his songs. "I don't mind telling people how I feel. I think we'd get along much better if we did speak our minds more. I believe music is an extension of what you actually are, how you feel about things in general. I don't think it's something else, outside of our lives. It's just a continuation of my life and I put into my music everything worthwhile that happens to me, to make it more vibrant, more real."

On their last tour, Weatherill says they played at colleges and clubs on the East Coast, trying to get exposure for themselves with little promotion from their record company. Although they received rave reviews, Weatherill says it was a very difficult time. "If you could live through that tour, you made the band. It was quite tough for us. We were living on the bus. We had a psychopathic bus driver and all kinds of things were going wrong...he was always running

they've only been too glad to do it. "Even though it's kind of 'big time,' the band and crew, they're incredibly nice people. It's not, 'We are the main band—you are the support band.' They're not like that at all. They're actually being very nice to us and very supportive as well, which is great. It really helps." However, Weatherill says audiences that come to see the famous Rolling Stone member still regard them with some suspicion. "We don't expect a completely smooth ride. We are playing with someone big that they've come to see. But I find if you reason with them, they're fine."

On a recent tour date, Weatherill got to test that theory out. "We had some trouble in New York. There were a few sort of 'lunks' waiting in the front for Ronnie Wood, and it's like, 'Who are you?'" For the most part, Weatherill says the audiences in America are treating them well. "Most of the time, people come up to us afterward and say, 'Well, we came to see Ronnie Wood, but we're really pleased we caught you first because we liked it very much. We're going to buy your record,' etc., etc."

Opening for Wood, Immaculate Fools lend a rough, bluesy, folksy but definitely energetic note to the show. Wood's style is pure, classic Stones with the powerful vocal backing of Bernard

Fowler to offset Wood's scratchy, hoarse vocals. Wood's slide guitar is present on most of the material from *Slide On This*, his new solo album. This is Wood's first solo effort since 1974, before joining the Stones and after leaving the Faces.

Wood has with him an all-star cast of players including Chuck Leavell (Allman Brothers) on keyboards, Ian McLagan (Faces) on Hammond piano, Johnny Lee Schell on rhythm guitar, Shaun Solomon (Tackhead) on bass and Wayne Sheehy (Hinterland) on drums. His shows are exciting visually, as well as from the standpoint of curiosity: Can

Ronnie Wood really sing? What is this background player like as a main act?

Despite some vocal-thrashing from being inexperienced as the "key vocalist," Wood is reported to be doing just fine and holding his own. See for yourself when he "slides into" The Palace on November 18th with Immaculate Fools.

Pat Kramer



Kevin Weatherill, foreground, of Immaculate Fools

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