

IN YOUR EAR

CHECKING OUT SOUNDS AROUND US

Done right

ECHO AFTER TAKES EXTRA TIME TO PRODUCE FULL-LENGTH ALBUM

BY TERRY DEBOER
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

HOLLAND — Singer-songwriter Drew Hamlet concedes his band's upcoming CD has been long in the making. But modern alternative rockers Echo After should have it in hand in the next few weeks.

"It's been kind of a whirlwind," Hamlet, 27, said from his Jenison home. "We've put a lot of our own money into this and want to make sure it's done right."

"When I Fall Apart" is an indie CD the foursome recorded in Dallas under the direction of producer Eric DeLeGard (Bowling For Soup). The band originally hoped to finish recording in March.

"After we went down there, we decided we needed to do a full-length project and write new stuff," Hamlet said. Band members think the newer songs are their best yet.

The players — including guitarist Cameron Hurd, drummer Jason Zeeff and bassist Scott Walters — returned to Texas in June to finish recording and to complete a photo shoot.

"We have a lot of musical influences, modern to hard rock, indie, classic rock," Hamlet said. "Our (song) verses are sometimes light music with heavy lyrics, or the other way around. But the choruses always have that big modern rock feel."

After the initial postponement, the band was hoping to release the CD in September, then in October. Now the players are aiming for an official release party in December.

Hamlet joined the emerging band more than three years ago while he was a stu-

dent at Cornerstone University working toward a youth ministry degree. He had previous band experience and was a proven lyric writer.

"I may not have been the best singer at the audition. But we had an instant connection through ministry and where we wanted to see the band go," he said.

Echo After (the name refers to a desire to reflect and repeat the Christian message) takes its ministry role seriously. With his youth ministry and communication arts background (his father is a youth pastor), Hamlet and the band can provide music and inspirational messages at youth conferences, retreats and conventions.

Expanding territory

They also place themselves in other settings.

The band has shared the stage with several national artists, performing on the alternative stage at the huge Unity Christian Music Festival and placing either first or second in all five battle of the band contests it entered last year.

It was at one of those "battles" that they met their current management group.

Two of the new songs are most personal to Hamlet. "When I Fall Apart," the title track, tells how everyone falls apart, but God can put together the broken pieces and sees what they can become.

"Draw Near" centers on the importance of pursuing a dream in the face of life's obstacles. Even failure in realizing the dream is preferable to going back to the way things were.

"That was a question in my life," he said of his band-ministry quest.



Looking at December release: Echo After is, from left, Jason Zeeff, Scott Walters, Drew Hamlet and Cameron Hurd.

"When I look at the doors that have been opened, the people who have been touched and how we've grown, there's no way I would go back to the way life was."

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IF YOU GO

Echo After

When: 8:30 p.m. Friday
Where: Lemonjellos, 61 E. Ninth St., Holland
Opening acts: Your Best Friend, Take the City
Admission: \$3 at the door
More info: 928-0699, lemonjellos.com