



Sam Gorden/Index

Hot Fuzz members Daniel Gillette, left, Kaleb Sackett, middle, and Ben McElroy, right, practice Monday at Gillette's house. The band's full sound features a distortion pedal and dance undertones.

Hot Fuzz adds flavor to local music scene

BY LAUREN KELLETT
Staff Reporter

Last year in an Ophelia Parrish practice room, junior Daniel Gillette heard sophomore Kaleb Sackett jamming on the drums. He took the opportunity to ask him if he would be interested in playing drums for Franklin Street Singers, in which Gillette played guitar, an offer that would eventually lead to the creation of their band, Hot Fuzz.

Gillette, Sackett and keyboardist junior Ben McElroy strive to create a distinct sound and establish themselves in the Kirksville community.

McElroy had been playing with Gillette as his accompanist since they met freshman year.

Gillette said after about six months of playing with a different drummer with the band name The Rocky Mountain Ranch Boys, Gillette asked Sackett to join the band.

Gillette said they wanted a drummer with a higher commitment level, and because they had gotten to know Sackett and his skills through Franklin Street, he was the first drummer to come to mind. With a new member came a new name — Hot Fuzz.

"We knew we needed a better name at some point, and I use this distortion pedal that's a fuzz factory, so it has a lot to do with the sound of our music," said Gillette. "And there's a movie we like a lot called Hot Fuzz."

Gillette said the band's music often is compared to The Black Keys. During the summer, while the band was taking a short hiatus due to Sackett being in Texas, Gillette and McElroy thought a lot about where to go with the band's sound.

"We've tried lately to incorporate different aspects to get more of an original sound, adding a bit of a dance undertone," he said. "We really want to have something we can move to and dance to, so of our newer selection of songs that's more of the sound."

Gillette said an important part of the band's sound is its lack of a bassist, which McElroy compensates for with the keyboard. He said being a three piece band with a full sound sets them apart.

Gillette said they try to reflect their sound in the music they write. When songwriting, Gillette said he and McElroy will get an idea and show it to each other, then build it up. Once they have something, they play it through



Submitted Photo

Daniel Gillette, left, Kaleb Sackett, bottom left, and Ben McElroy, right, pose for band photos on The Square. Hot Fuzz has worked to establish themselves in Kirksville and create a full bodied sound with only three instruments.

for Sackett and let him fill in the rest. Sackett said from there, he reviews it a couple times, trying different things, and then figures out a beat.

"There's just something so spontaneous about all of the processes in everything we do," said McElroy. "We'll get notices for gigs a week in advance and write songs in a day. It seems so off the cuff that it's really special, really organic and it's just nice. It's a cool feeling to be part of some sort of musical something that can do things so quickly."

Hot Fuzz has yet to play out of the Kirksville area, but McElroy said they are becoming known around Truman State. They have played at the DuKum, the Mall for Truman Week and The Aquadome, with a tentative show Oct. 4 at Wrongdaddy's, he said. He said their favorite show to date was the show on the Mall.

"The crowd was getting really into

it and people were coming up and talking to us afterwards, so we were just really riding on all that energy," said Gillette. "Ben and I were saying that it kind of just makes you want to drop out and go for the music. Shows that go really well like that one make you want to pursue it, but I think we're still just a little too realistic for that."

Gillette said there's always the dream of getting famous, but right now performing is more for fun. He said if they got a lucky break, then they'd consider it, but for now they just enjoy being a part of Kirksville's music scene.

"At the end of the day, I think we're honestly just playing to make everyone else here at Truman be able to be a part of this awesome live music experience on campus," said McElroy. "I think we and every band around here are just trying our best to play good shows."

Professor emphasizes scholarship

History professor studies her Asian-American heritage to encourage scholarship among her students

BY DAVID HUTCHINSON
Staff Reporter

History professor Huping Ling was 16 when she began teaching literature during the 1966 Cultural Revolution to her classmates at her high school in Taiyuan, the capital city of the Shanxi province in China.

Since then, Ling has continued to teach and challenge herself to be the best role model she can be.

Ling did not consciously decide to become a teacher. Her decision was influenced by the laws of supply and demand as the revolution created a shortage of college graduates.

"The Cultural Revolution made everything chaotic, turned everything upside down," Ling said. "That created unusual opportunities for people like me."

Ling arrived in the United States during 1985 and began working toward a graduate degree in American history. Eleven books and more than 100 published articles later, Ling has become a dedicated scholar at Truman State and in the field of Asian-American studies.

Ling's abundant research is fueled not only by her desire to produce quality work, but also by her firm belief that being a good teacher necessitates being a good scholar, she said.

Ling said that while both of her parents were teachers, as a child she did not want to become one, even though she pretended to be a teacher when she played with her friends.

After graduating first in her class from Shanxi University during 1982, Ling said she was assigned to be an assistant history professor. Although she spent three years teaching history in China, it was in the United States that her research flourished, she said.

Ling became an assistant history professor at Truman during 1991. She was a recipient of the Ford Foundation award during 1999 for her second book, "Jinshan Yao: A History of Chinese American Women."

Ling said by focusing on one area of study, the lives and history of Asian-Americans, she was able to carve out her own academic niche. During 2006, Ling was awarded the Allen Faculty Fellowship and during 2008 she became the executive editor of the peer-reviewed "Journal of Asian-American Studies."

Ling said she thinks being a good teacher requires more than just lecturing to students. Professors are training students to be scholars, which means professors should demonstrate scholarship, she said. Researching and writing helps professors think creatively and critically, which adds an interesting dynamic to the classroom environment, she said.

"University teaching is different from high school teaching," she said. "You don't just feed [students] the facts. You want to teach them the way of learning, thinking and writing. If you don't publish as a professor, don't write critically and creatively, how can you train a student to have a critical mind, critical thinking and to write critically?"

History professor Torbjorn Wandel, who has been a faculty member since 1999, echoed Ling's comment.

"An active research agenda in one's field is a necessary condition for teaching in that field and for teaching students how to do research in that field," Wandel said.

Ling carries her commitment to scholarship even in her survey courses which are primarily filled with non-history majors. Ling generally selects a high-performing student each year from her classes to become her research assistant who helps gather primary source material for her to analyze.

Senior Greg Schuman, a biology major, enrolled in Ling's East Asian Civilization course during the spring semester of his freshman year, and ended up with a scholarship job as Ling's research assistant. Schuman said after working with Ling for a year, he understands why she is a prolific writer. He said at the beginning of the year Ling had already determined what she needed from him.

"When I get there at the beginning for the semester she's planned out what she needs from me for the next couple of months," Schuman said. "She knows what she needs to get done, and she does it."

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