

# Cavalier: Rhode Island rock stars talk about what brought them together



Cavalier is made up of vocalist/guitarist Austin DiMatteo, vocalist/guitarist Jesus Pirela, bassist Brandon Lian and drummer Nick Lian. Together, they are a really slick alternative rock band giving Nickelback and The Weepies a run for their money. They've actively released new music since 2018, and have deep influences in both classic rock and pop punk, which means that fans of those genres and anything in between will undoubtedly dive head first into their music.

Their breakout tune "Ocean Front Property" is sonically all over the place in the best way (I'm fairly certain it switches genres at least three times). As for the rest of their first EP *Dear Youth* released in 2018, the band plays with slightly heavier mixes, which are blended nicely with melodic and relaxed moments.

Their newest EP, *While I Was Sleeping*, features a much softer approach, tip-toeing much closer to the folk pop genre. It subtly maintains just enough angst in the subtext to keep it staunchly present in the alternative genre, though. I was so impressed with the versatility of this band, paired with the eloquent mix of the studio tracks, intricate harmonies, guitar licks and the strong emotion that comes through it all.

The band recently talked with me about their musical philosophies and lifestyles as musical

collaborators. Beware, some of these answers are amusingly tongue-in-cheek. Clearly the guys in Cavalier have a sense of humor alongside their undeniable artistry.

**Angelina Singer (Motif):** How did you get into music, and how long did it take to form the band? Did you know right off the bat this was something you wanted to pursue?

**Cavalier:** Brandon, Nick and Austin went to high school together and Jesus was a mutual friend. As a band, Cavalier started Halloween night 2017 and didn't take long to get going. Everyone knew from the start it would be special.

**Nick Lian:** Getting interested in music was a group of events coming together at different times in my life. I was first exposed to live music when my parents took Brandon and I to see KISS live. I remember the atmosphere being so captivating, my first true experience at a rock show with all the wild antics that sort of crowd brings. Was also the first time I saw my mom smoke a cigarette (which I still think is pretty badass). Another moment that comes to mind was seeing Austin play "For Whom the Bell Tolls" by Metallica at a talent show when we were going to middle school together. At the time we weren't close friends, but I remember being amazed by his performance and it was an inspiring moment for me, as I had just started learning how to play drums. I also recall when the video game Rock Band came out and I was initially all about playing the guitar, but nobody liked playing the drums so I would fill in where needed. I ended up falling in love with percussion and was exposed to a lot of personally transformative songs from the game's soundtrack. Seeing Brandon play live with his first metal band at local venues in Providence also blew my socks off. All of these, as well as other key events, really sucked me into the vacuum of space that is music.

**AS:** Share a bit about *Dear Youth* and the thematic elements that became the driving force of the EP.

**Cavalier:** *Dear Youth* isn't about much other than us finding ourselves as a band. For a few of us, it was our first experience writing music.

**AS:** What is your songwriting process like (who writes the lyrics, instrumentals, and what usually comes first)?

**Cavalier:** Usually, Austin comes through with a few licks and some lyrics and we'll piece it together bit-by-bit, [then] throw some glitter on top at the end.

**AS:** What are some of the biggest life lessons you've learned from being in a band?

**Cavalier:** Three beers before touching your instrument; if you're straight edge, three kombuchas.

**AS:** What's the craziest thing that's happened to you (on or off stage) as a result of being in a band?

**Cavalier:** Meeting new people along the way is cooler than anything we've done, to be honest. No dressers out of hotel windows in Cavalier... yet.

**AS:** Who are your biggest musical influences? Do you think they affect your sound as a band, or do you try to be completely unique?

**Cavalier:** As a band, all the greats really — Led Zeppelin, Oasis, Metallica. There are so many that shape us as individuals and as a band [that] we'd need a "60 Minutes" segment to address the full scope of the question. But we don't reinvent the wheel with our music, just do it better.

**AS:** Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

**Cavalier:** 5-star hotel suite, Glasgow.

*Stream all of Cavalier's music on Spotify:*

*[open.spotify.com/artist/3EnYEtISQ6v2RlqsZ4JlvL?si=q5ilHTPbTZmNA6n549HfXA](https://open.spotify.com/artist/3EnYEtISQ6v2RlqsZ4JlvL?si=q5ilHTPbTZmNA6n549HfXA); YouTube:*

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