

Beyond Gravity: A gateway into '90s alternative rock

This RI-based rock band asks bold questions such as: When is it too early to celebrate Halloween? Is October 8 too early? (no). And, should a band sell socks as merch? That's a resounding YES in my opinion!

Beyond Gravity's **Eddy DeMelo** (guitars) and **Dustin Oerman** (vocals and guitars) discuss managing being family men and musicians while blending '90s rock riffs with storytelling lyrics — all of which might make you reach for your flannel shirts.

Eddy DeMelo: Don't say anything that will incriminate you, Dustin!

Mayte Antelo-Ovando (Motif): Oh, that's already recorded, so...

ED: Oh no, what have I done?

Dustin Oerman: Haha!

MAO: To start, let me say I watched your "Between the Notes" show (a *Motif* Podcast) at the Parlour and learned a lot about your band! You mentioned your debut EP release, *The Nature of your Game*, the fact that y'all had been together (alongside bass player **Walter Canavan**, and drummer **Rob White**) about 2 years, and that you were hungry to get in front of crowds since Covid prevented that... so tell me what's happened since April?



Photo by James Lastowski

ED: We've just been doing a lot of writing and rehearsing for the most part. Summers are always tough, because we all have kids and they want to go on vacations (this dad rock band has kids ranging in age from 3 years-old to college-age). So it was just a lot of writing and practicing when we were all in the same state.

DO: And we focused on our video for "Got Nowhere to Go". We're pretty excited how that came out, actually.

MAO: Say a little bit more about the video because I watched it, and I had questions! I'd love to hear what the storyline was in that video.

DO: Well, it's about two friends — kind of hanging out in the beginning. Then one friend gets killed - he gets mugged. But really the song is about friends moving away and kind of losing track of each other — and we thought it would be really impactful if we threw a crazy twist in there, and tried to show the emotion within some of the lyrics. In the end he's got nowhere to go, as he's sitting on a rooftop by himself.

MAO: Since you've now been able to perform and share your EP, what kind of feedback have you gotten?

ED: We've had a great response in the last couple shows we played. We have probably almost another full-length album's worth of songs, either fully written or just about done. We've gotten to play those for some folks, and the response we've received has been good so far, which is pretty encouraging.

DO: We're excited- we probably have about eight or nine songs that we could go to the studio right now and record... everybody seems to be releasing singles lately so we may want to do that.

ED: We have one single that didn't make it in time to the EP, but it's just about done. It's just being mixed. Now, everything's tracked- we had to re-track it and hoped to release it in April but it's still not done.

MAO: Oh yes, the single you mentioned at the Parlour was "Paradise", is that it?

ED: Yeah, you were paying attention!

MAO: Yes, haha, I was. There was something y'all said that I wanted to revisit. You're all married and have children of varying ages. You mentioned that when you love something you stick with it — it being music.

ED: I don't think that's changed in any of us... when you're a little bit older, and you've got kids and careers, you go through seasons where you have more time that you can dedicate to it and others where you wish you could, but you can't. I don't think it's ever for a lack of passion or lack of wanting to do it. I think if anything, it's just that sometimes there are other responsibilities that take precedence.

DO: It's an interesting dynamic, having a family, being married, or being in a relationship, trying to be a homeowner, grow your career — and still have your passion for music on the side — trying to put 100% into it. I find that I go through stages where life can be overwhelming but then all of a sudden, I sit down and I play my guitar — write a new song and I'm like, 'oh, man, I gotta get this to the band!' And then the passion starts all over again. It's funny, my father-in-law had this belief that people kind of lose their artistry or their drive as they get older, maybe the creativity in a way — but I haven't found that... Responsibilities change but when I take the time to sit down and find my creativity, I feel like I still have a lot to say. I think we all try to live life to our fullest as dads with our families, and then still try to put as much as we can into our music.

As the conversation continued Eddy and Dustin highlighted that even when the bandmates are not in a room together, they create new songs, melodies and parts that are then shared among them via text.

ED: Rob (drums) doesn't really sing or write music, but he's great at just coming up with ideas and melodies. He'll just sort of speak or hum it into his phone, and we'll get a voice text and then I'll grab a guitar and work on it. Even when we're not really practicing, it's something we're always thinking about. I think it's an outlet for us — to [write music]. We all have our family and work responsibilities and this is something that we do- really just for us. It's great that people have been encouraging and supportive. But I'll be honest, if everybody heard it and was like, "It's terrible," I'd think, "I'm still having fun, so I'm gonna keep playing it."

MAO: The process of creating something is what drives all of you.

DO: Yeah, I was always a singer-songwriter, originally from Pennsylvania. I moved up here for a small sales job, but really to play at open mic nights because we didn't really have them where I was from in PA. When I had an opportunity to move up to RI, I said, "Why not?" The music scene where I was from in Pennsylvania was very rural: Not many places to play. New England is famous for open mic nights so I would play by myself, but I always found it more enjoyable to write music with others... that aspect of being in a band and writing music together; something about that is just addicting.

ED: And, it helps when there are no real egos in the band either. Nobody's afraid to throw in their two cents.

MAO: I'm sure. So, Dustin, I watched the video for "Got Nowhere to Go" and then saw the Parlour performance and noticed you playing acoustic guitar instead of electric — I loved it!

DO: Oh, awesome. I wrote that song with my acoustic originally, and then brought it to the band. And once again, expanded the idea and made a full-band version.

ED: Up until recently, Dustin didn't even play electric guitar in the band. If there were two guitars, it was my electric and his acoustic and it's only now that we have the dynamic of actually having two electrics in the band, which has been fun.

MAO: Is there anything else you want to share with people that maybe don't know y'all or haven't been able to go to one of your shows?

DO: I think the biggest thing about us is that we like to write music that people can latch on to and find some kind of meaning in and really enjoy listening to; we all grew up in the 90s and early 2000s and play music influenced by that, but with a little bit of a modern twist on it, I'd say.

MAO: Next Show?

DO & ED: PEM's Halloween Rock Party at Fete Music Hall, Oct 8, 2022!

See? It's never too early to celebrate Halloween with rock bands. The Beyond Gravity dudes and dads say so. If you'd like to follow them and see what's next for them go to: beyondgravityband.com or follow @beyond_gravity_band and watch their newest music video: youtu.be/fYn6ANxVctA