

Life on the road is 'semi-charmed' for Third Eye Blind

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For Kevin Cadogan and his Third Eye Blind bandmates, music plus touring equals life right now.

Guitarist Cadogan, vocalist Stephan Jenkins, bassist Arion Salazar and drummer Brad Hargreaves started out as a band about five years ago before gaining national recognition in 1997 with the hit single "Semi-Charmed Life."

Now they have been on the road for 19 straight months, Cadogan said. With the development of the MTV Campus Invasion Tour, which Third Eye Blind is headlining, it does not look like all that touring will be coming to an end anytime soon.

In a phone interview from California last week, Cadogan said touring keeps the band members busy, but they love it.

"You look at different scenery every day and you meet different people. Your life is just constantly changing and evolving," Cadogan said.

"I'm just sort of always in wonder and amazement at what's happening."

The band originated in San Francisco and the members just happened to meet each other at various times.

"We all found out about each other and formed a band," Cadogan said. "There's no, like, cool rock mythology (behind the band's formation). It was just your basic weeding out the weakest and getting the best."

"It's like Darwinism as it applies to music," he said. Cadogan himself became involved in music at the young age of 14, when he would watch his older sister's band as they practiced.

"Most of the time they would just sit and talk and drink, but then they would occasionally jam, and it looked like fun," he said.

The band began auditioning guitarists and Cadogan would play songs in between the auditions. The band left the audition tape rolling, and when the members went back to listen to the auditions, they were impressed by Cadogan's abilities and brought him on board.

The rest, as they say, is history.

In high school, Cadogan became more involved in music and decided he wanted to eventually "make it" as a musician.

"I had a friend who thought of himself as somewhat of a 'promoter,' so he would throw these big concert things and we would play," he said.

"I thought that I was going to make it by the time I was 19, of course . . . that didn't happen."

However, by the time Cadogan was 26, he had achieved his goal. Third Eye Blind achieved radio success with its debut single, "Semi-Charmed Life" and the band began touring with supergroups U2 and the Rolling Stones.

"We were lucky because we had, like, U2 giving us

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COURTESY PHOTO

Third Eye Blind is headlining the 'MTV Campus Invasion Tour' and they're loving every minute of it.

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advice," Cadogan said. "And Bono was like, 'Kevin, listen to me now . . . don't buy a house until you do the live album . . .'"

But it hasn't always been the bustle and fun of stardom and touring for the 28-year-old Cadogan, who said he has "paid his dues" through what he called "bad jobs," including a stint as a live-in security guard at a federally-funded retirement home followed by a job as a processor who informed people that their husbands or wives were divorcing them.

Additionally, the everyday life of a struggling musician was a challenge for Cadogan.

"I worked through the anxieties and depressions of trying to be a musician. Then I met these guys," he said.

Obviously, Cadogan is much more fond of his new job.

"I get to bring joy to people's lives (through music)," he said. "(And) I feel more secure. I don't have to worry about money so much."

Getting to this point involved multiple steps, and once the band was formed, it was time to come up with a name and write some songs.

The band's name was coined by Jenkins and does not refer to "a d-k thing" like many people speculate it to mean, Cadogan said.

"It's just a little ironic play on words, I think that's what he (Jenkins) had in mind, referencing a third eye, the spiritual eye, being blind. I think he thought that was

humorous or something."

Cadogan joked that perhaps the group would have caught on faster within the music scene if the band had a one-word name.

"It takes a long time, when you have three words in your name, to get the same familiarity," he said. "I like the single words — I like 'Blur,' 'Oasis.' They're sort of like 'Boom!' The public can catch on to it quickly.

"Or maybe I just have a bad memory — maybe three words is too much for me," he said, laughing.

Cadogan's experience with the band has been interesting and enjoyable thus far. Along with frontman Jenkins, Cadogan co-wrote several songs on the group's self-titled, multi-platinum-selling debut album.

Jenkins writes all the lyrics for the group's songs, while Cadogan wrote the actual music for 10 of the 14 songs on the album, including two of his favorites, "God of Wine" and "Graduate."

"Stephan says that's ('Graduate') a reference to male prostitution," Cadogan said. "I don't know what the hell he's talking about. I'm not sure I want to know."

The song "Narcolepsy," which is another Jenkins/Cadogan collaboration, relates the story of a medical condition Cadogan suffered from.

"('Narcolepsy') was written about this condition called post-sleep paralysis, which I was having for awhile. I wouldn't be able to wake up, but I'd be kind of conscious. There'd be this paralyzing, awful feeling like I was going to

die. Really, really scary," he said.

Cadogan said he felt like he was "alone in the world" with his sleep disorder until he was watching the "Dr. Dean Edell Show," and a woman called in and described symptoms similar to those Cadogan was experiencing.

Cadogan said Edell advised the caller to see a doctor, as the symptoms were possibly a sign of narcolepsy, a disorder that includes such problems as sudden sleep attacks and sleep paralysis.

Although it was determined he did not have narcolepsy, Cadogan said, "We just called the song 'Narcolepsy' because 'Post-Sleep Paralysis' is a much longer title."

Cadogan said like "Narcolepsy," Third Eye Blind songs have a common scheme. "It all ends up being good fun in the end, even if we do have dark themes.

"It's like a scary ride, you know? We let you in and give you all the dry ice and the things that pop out at you, but then it's safe in the end," he said.

Although he enjoys making music, Cadogan does not particularly enjoy making the videos to accompany music.

"Our videos just feed the critics' criticism that (the band) was prefabricated, phony-baloney stuff," he said. "There's all these models running around wiggling in front of the camera; the beautiful, sexually ambiguous people — that's so hip nowadays — all dressed up in the right clothes and dancing. It's just fake, you know? And I hate it. I can't stand it.

"I just want to have a video where there's the four of us doing

something . . . being a part of the narrative. People always talk about there being a narrative, but there's no narrative in this video (for the single 'Jumper'). I'll give someone a \$100 if they can tell me the narrative in this video . . . and you can print that," he said.

Third Eye Blind is now on the road with Eve 6 on the MTV Campus Invasion Tour, which kicked off Oct. 24 at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

"I just hope it's not 'Road Rules,' Third Eye Blind-style: Let's catch Kevin when he's just waking up! I could just see it — 'Arion, that's my shirt, man! What are you doing with my shirt?' and there's a big camera, like, 'Let's get this! Let's get this!'" Cadogan said.

A large part of the message of the tour focuses on increasing students' knowledge of the AIDS virus, and Cadogan said, "I'm all for AIDS awareness and education . . . it gets me more psyched up for (the tour)."

The Campus Invasion tour will last through approximately late November, and then, according to the band's official web site (<http://www.thirdeyebblind.net>), it's back to the studio to begin recording its second album.

But with the tour continuing, Cadogan is taking an "it ain't over 'til it's over" attitude.

"Until it's all over, I'm not really analyzing it that much," he said.

Third Eye Blind and Eve 6 will visit Rose Arena at 8 p.m. Nov. 13 as part of the Campus Invasion Tour. Ticket information can be obtained by calling the Central Box Office at 774-3000.