

MAKING IT BIG

By Stephanie Riggs

Mohr: Yes, we owe all of our success to DJ Keefer and KBCO. We really appreciate him.

Riggs: Todd, do you write all of your own music?

Mohr: Yes.

Riggs: Where do you get your inspiration?

Mohr: Other composers, writers, poetry and whatever else is involved in the business of music and lyrics.

Riggs: Who is playing on your iPod?

Mohr: Fela Kuti. He was a Nigerian multi-instrumentalist musician and composer, a human rights activist and political maverick.

Before they were big, they apparently were bad. Just ask Rob Squires' mom: "After their concerts at Red Rocks, I go into their room and tell them not to let the fame go to their heads, because I remember when they were so bad."

Colleen Squires should know – she raised Big Head Todd & the Monsters bassist Rob Squires in Bear Valley. She set the record straight recently, watching from the control room as the band recorded its new song, Beautiful, live in KBCO's Studio C with DJ Keefer. Squires said she and her husband would take long walks to get away from the horrible noise.

Her son, who's also a vocalist, practiced with his buddies for hours. She was in the best shape of her life that first year they decided to start a band, she said. She also makes it clear she will not miss a concert and couldn't be prouder of how far they have come.

Almost 25 years ago, her son Rob, Todd Park Mohr on guitar and vocals and Brian Nevin on drums started their band, which was first called Intruder. The trio went to Columbine High School together. Mohr attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins before transferring to University of Colorado to join Nevin and Squires. They toured all over the United States in a van affectionately called "The Colonel," which logged more than 400,000 miles.

They signed with Giant Records in 1993 and recorded Sister Sweetly. The album went platinum and spawned three singles that made the rock charts: Bittersweet, Broken Hearted Savior and Circle. Household names and rock stars were born.

KBCO DJ Keefer knows music better than most, and he believes these guys made it big because they have the songs. In fact, they have the most appearances on KBCO's Studio C. Stephanie Riggs talked to the band for ColoradoView.



Left to right: Brian Nevin, Jeremy Laughton, Stephanie Riggs, Todd Park Mohr, Rob Squires

Riggs: So how did you guys come up with the name "Big Head Todd and the Monsters"?

Mohr: Just a crazy dream.

Riggs: I heard that you (Mohr) have an IQ that is off the charts, which explains the "big head," but I can't figure out the "monsters" part.

All of them: Well, look at us! (laughs)

Riggs: Was I even close?

Mohr: Absolutely. We are going with that one, guys!

Riggs: My little boy wants me to ask you if your moms made you take piano lessons.

All of them: Yes! (laughs)

Nevin: (drums) Just know as soon as your son picks up another instrument the piano is over, so encourage him to take lessons as long as you can.

Riggs: You all went to Columbine High School, so where did you practice?

Nevin: You always practice at the drummer's house, because the equipment is a pain to move around. So be warned: If your son decides to be a drummer, practice will be at your house!

Riggs: Good to know. Do you guys ever get tired of playing the same songs over and over after almost 25 years?

Mohr: I complain all the time, but I lose.

Nevin: We left a hit out the other night and we heard about it. Fans were yelling at us. It's not pretty.

Squires: Our fans pay our salaries, so we play their favorite songs.

Riggs: Your new album is Rock Steady and your new song is Beautiful. What was your inspiration?

Mohr: It's a soul, Caribbean record that rocks, but we went out of our way to take the rock out of it. Our records are all over the map; we have always been a rock band. But it's been a fantasy of mine to write a soul record that is lighter and funnier, so this stream of songs fell upon us and we went in that direction. I hope the fans like it. ☺

Stephanie Riggs is a veteran, awarding-winning journalist who hosts Denver's Movers and Shakers on VISTA TV, a local lifestyle TV show on Comcast's Channel 19. It airs Monday through Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 9:30 a.m. You can watch online at www.vistatvdenver.com. She also hosts a call-in radio show Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. on KLTT, 670 AM, or go to <http://670kltt.com> and listen online.