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SHARING THE STAGE: Husband and wife duo Seth and Sara Brand set to play Flytrap Brewing on January 12 – ILM's Alternative Weekly Voice

By Shannon Rae Gentry on January 9, 2019

9-11 minutes

In the words of the great Peter Cook as The Impressive Clergyman: “Mawage. Mawage is wot bwings us togeder today.”





ALL IN: Seth and Sara Brand hit the road in 2018 with an EP in tow. Photo courtesy of Sara Brand

It's also what brings husband and wife Seth and Sara Brand's Americana duo together. They'll return to the Port City's Flytrap Brewing on January 12 in support of their EP, "10 out of 10," released in November 2018.

Though their music is a full-time job now, their partnership didn't start off that way. Sure, touring the world and playing music is something Seth—an accomplished guitarist, singer, songwriter, producer, engineer—always wanted. Paired with Sara's dream to traverse the globe, hiking and exploring nature, they were bound to hit the road one day. After getting married in April 2018, Sara offered to become Seth's manager.

"There wasn't much to manage at the time, so I said go for it!" Seth quips. The next day Sara booked a 250-seat theater where they lived in St. Louis, MO. The couple struck a deal: If Sara could book a solid tour to close out 2018, they both would quit their jobs, move to Asheville, NC, to be closer to her family, and start touring full-time.

"Within a few short weeks, she booked over 30 shows all over the country," Seth continues. "So rules is rules ... and I quit my job, along with Sara; we sold everything that wouldn't fit in our two vehicles, headed to North Carolina, and turned our van

into our new home on the road.”

“But, really, setting up the tour wasn’t difficult when your husband creates music that sells itself,” Sara inserts. Her support for Seth comes from a deep-rooted belief in his diverse talents. He started playing guitar at 15 with the hopes of being the next Jimi Hendrix. Eventually, Seth picked up drums and bass, and wrote and recorded his own music before going to college for audio production. He didn’t perform in front of a crowd until he was asked to participate in a singer-songwriter contest at Six Flags St. Louis.

“You could say I was thrown into the fire, and [sang] for the first time ever in front of a bunch of people judging me,” he notes. “Needless to say, I was absolutely hooked and couldn’t wait to do it again.”

“I first saw him playing at a coffee shop I worked in,” Sara remembers, “and once more after that at a party above that same coffee shop. Ever since I heard his gorgeous voice, I have been mesmerized.”

Sara knew she wanted do more than support her husband and book stages—she wanted to share it with him. “I decided I wanted to be able to play with him so it would not only be more fun for me every night, but also it would lend more flexibility to the show,” she details. “So Seth, with a truckload of patience, began to teach me Cajon, which soon turned into a floor tom and snare.”

encore asked the couple to detail their adventures in music

before their show at Flytrap. Below is their extended interview.

encore (e): Seth wears a few different hats. Where does one end and the other begin, or are they ever really separate?

Seth: Tough question, it can really depend on the day or what I have going on. I've worked on a lot of projects for people where my job is to focus more in one or two areas, but a lot of times things can evolve to where I end up doing more than I thought. But I enjoy it all; it is all creative to me in some way and I'm happy to be a part of music in any or all of those ways.

As for my own music, it can be extremely hard to separate the hats. Once I've got a song written and I'm playing it out, I've already been thinking about the production and process I want to use when it comes time to record.

Once I am producing the song, it's hard to juggle all of the different areas, such as being the producer, being the technical engineer in the studio, also trying to stay in a creative mindset to capture a great performance. But I enjoy the challenge—and every project is different and pushes me to new areas to explore.

The hardest part about doing everything by yourself is being able to step back and see everything as one big picture. It's easy to get pulled in too far and focused on one little thing, and before you know it, you are chasing your tail. This is where I can now call on Sara to help me refresh or refocus. It's a lifelong study; I will be learning forever, hopefully

evolving and growing in all areas as I go.

e: Sara, tell us more about the Cajon, what initially drew you to it and the other instruments you picked up last year.

Sarah: Honestly, I have never had the urge to play [the Cajon] until I had the desire to perform alongside my husband.

Actually, as an adult, the only thing musically I have ever truly wanted to be able to do was sing—which is currently a work in progress! The Cajon and I, however, did not seem to get along very well. It's a unique and fun little box of an instrument, but I wasn't able to do beats in the way they needed to be done for the songs. I also knew, after a month of touring, my back would likely be in a rough situation! (I ain't no spring chicken!) Pretty quickly, I switched to the floor tom and snare, which I have much more fun with, [and it] also adds more variety to what I can do in each song.

e: Tell us about a couple of songs from “10 out of 10” you'll play at Flytrap.

Seth: One is called “Chasing Jeff Buckley”—a story about how Sara and I first met. She was watching me perform at a house concert, and after I played, I walked up to her and said, “I like your tattoos.” She has almost 20 total. She told me she liked my voice, and that it was the second best voice she had ever heard right behind Jeff Buckley. So I wrote a song called “Chasing Jeff Buckley.”

One day, I hope to change her mind.

Another is called “Chase Me in the Dark.” This is a fun song about finding someone just as weird and quirky as you are, who totally gets you, and that you can chase around in the dark. It’s a fun song. Actually, Sara helped me write some of the lyrics.

We will be playing songs off of my “Fight or Flight“ record I put out a couple of years ago, and a lot of new material I am currently working on recording. Songs about life, love, heartbreak ... it’s all in there.

e: Is there a larger project to come?

Seth: I probably have about 20 or 30 more originals I’ve written over the past couple of years I am now starting to record. My original plan has been to release a few shorter EPs over the next year, starting with “10 out of 10.”

I have a lot of songs I want to get out, but they don’t all fit on the same record. I thought it would be fun to put out several shorter EPs every few months so I constantly have new music coming out. So watch for those! The next one I hope to put out sometime in the spring. After that, I’m planning to write a bunch of new songs about our journeys on the road, and hopefully do another full-length album at that point. Time will tell.

e: What do you continue to learn from each other, professionally and personally?

Sara: I learn from Seth daily. Professionally, he has taught me

all I know about music, from the basic fundamentals to helping me lose control of trying to be perfect and just feel it—which has been very difficult for me. He has literally taught me everything professionally. I have even been trying to write my own songs while on the road, and he is teaching me how to give them life and what works and what doesn't. He is my constant guru.

Personally, he teaches me to always better myself, how to not let certain things bother me, to take problems and learn and grow, to not take life so seriously, to always challenge yourself even if it's uncomfortable ... because that's how life is best lived. I am the "feeler" in our marriage and he is the practical one. He balances me in every beautiful way.

Seth: Sara teaches me to slow down and appreciate life. . . . If I'm getting too wrapped up in the details about a gig, or how long it will take to get there, or how many stops we can make, she will tell me to pull off the road to look at the alligators in a secluded scary swamp out in the middle of Louisiana. That is one of my favorite memories of this part of the tour. She helps me be the man I was always supposed to be, and I am very thankful for her and her gentle, loving, amazing soul. She is the sweetest girl I've ever known. Coincidentally, I have a new song coming out called the "Sweetest Girl" [laughs].

e: What else is to come?

Sara: Our plan is to keep going with touring for as long as we both want to do it. We have gone all in, and we are living a

dream. So we continue to stay all in until it is either no fun anymore, or we just simply want to do something else. We quit our jobs, sold everything we owned, and moved across the country to do this. For now, we plan to tour all throughout the beginning months and into the summer of 2019, heading out west and hitting some of the northern states as well. It will be a long stretch, but we are excited and looking forward to it. We are talking about expanding and doing some electric guitar work on stage, and having sara start singing with me on a few songs. We plan to just have fun, work hard, and see where it goes. When it's all over for whatever reason, we will have seen so much of the country we can pick where we want to move and put down our roots there. I can't wait to see what the future holds for both of us!

Details:**Seth and Sara Brand****January 12, 8 p.m. • Free****Flytrap Brewing • 319 Walnut St.**sethbrand.com