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Rival Sons from left: Michael Miley, Jay Buchanan, Dave Beste and Scott Holiday. MATT WIGNALL

Lead singer Jay Buchanan tells us why being in a rock band isn't about the girls, money or attention for him.



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Rival Sons' bluesy, pure rock 'n' roll sound has broad appeal, with fans ranging from hard-core rockers to hipster kids sick of listening to The Black Keys on repeat. But lead singer Jay Buchanan says he doesn't play for any of the hundreds of fans in the audience.

"I play for the band," an intense affair. There's so much energy swirling around onstage or in the studio. You have to serve the song first, and because that is so consuming, the audience is an afterthought."

Lightning in a bottle

The foursome is currently on tour promoting their album "Great Western Valkyrie," which came out last summer. "It was a difficult record to make because we did it at such an intense, frantic pace," says Buchanan.

The band purposely didn't write any of the songs until they were all in the studio together. "We go in there with nothing and then create a force," he explains.

"We capture that energy, an honest snapshot of that moment. That immediacy and energy is really a keystone for Rival Sons."

Wanting a reaction

To Buchanan, being a musician means being a storyteller. "People have always told stories through song, and the melody is a way for people to remember every detail — it's the candy coating of the message," he says. He scoffs a bit at artists who try to take away from that.

Learning to compromise

Buchanan started his music career as a solo artist, playing with Rival Sons on the side but went all in about seven years ago. "I've never allowed myself to compromise so much, ever," he says of being in a band. "But there's something so beautiful in collaboration. I would have missed out on so many beautiful, creative moments."

Rival Sons in concert

Tonight, 7 p.m. Irving Plaza 17 Irving Pl. 212-777-6800 www.irvingplaza.com

Authenticity remains the most important aspect to the singer. "When I'm making music or listening to music, I'm really just trying to find the truth," he says. "I'm just trying to find something that's going to make me feel something I didn't feel before."



