

Bound for Greatness?

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Chicago's Bound Stems play cerebral, intricate pop music woven from found sounds, processed keyboards, shout-sing vocals and layered guitars. The young band's 2006 Flameshovel debut, *Appreciation Night*, is as passionate and immediate as it is dizzyingly complex and dense. Brilliant as they are, the Chicago natives are more often spotted rocking a gig at the Double Door than playing a huge festival like Lollapalooza. We spent the day with Bound Stems to get a taste of what it's like to live like rock 'n' roll royalty at Chicago's biggest festival.

9:00 a.m. Apparently, the rock 'n' roll lifestyle does not allow for sleeping in. Lollapalooza organizers gave Bound Stems strict orders to show up at 9 a.m. sharp. But after the band parks its van, organizers give them the green light to go on their way.

Bound Stems kills the next few hours at the Hard Rock Hotel, snagging some free shoes, headphones and Calvin Klein underwear—an experience Janie Porche (vocals, guitar, sampler) describes as “really weird”—at an exclusive Lollapalooza artist only event.

2:15 p.m. The band gets back to the festival grounds. Janie and Bobby Gallivan (vocals, guitar) stop off at the [Spin.com](#) booth for a short interview.

2:30 p.m. The band scores some free denim from Silver Jeans. Bobby asks for size

4 jeans for his fiancée Jen, but is informed that the skinny hipster boys already took all the small women's sizes. Janie opts for a pair of men's jeans to even the score.

2:40 p.m. The band decides to go back to the van to drop off their free stuff. Attempts to flag down one of the artist trolleys fail, so they set off walking across the festival grounds.

2:50 p.m. Bobby and Evan Sult (drums) take a short detour to check out a surprise Satellite Party encore set on the Kidzapalooza stage. "One thing I've learned from this experience is that Perry Farrell has a really good time at Lollapalooza," Bobby opines.

3:00 p.m. They reconvene at the van, a white Dodge Ram 3500 with a busted side door, which they have affectionately dubbed "Bunny" because of its short nose and long tail. The band enjoys some free Bud Lights.

3:15 p.m. Janie tries on her new jeans. Her girlfriend, Molly, stops by. Evan checks out the end of Amy Winehouse's set. A few fans stop to compliment his Barack Obama t-shirt. "My girlfriend Paige made it this morning," he says. He tosses in a plug for the Bound Stems' set. The fans seem impressed.

3:30 p.m. Guitarist Dan Fleury's parents and his wife Laura show up to say hello and wish the band luck. Dan Radzicki's (bass, keys) father, Paul, stops by as well. Bobby and Jen retreat to Bobby's Honda Civic. Dan F. explains that the band got their friends and families backstage by pretending to need extra wristbands for their roadies. In reality, the band does not have a crew.

3:45 p.m. Dan Radzicki (bass, keys) writes out set lists on pages torn from a copy of "The Rise of American Democracy" by Sean Wilentz.

4:00 p.m. Janie finds a baseball bat in the van and proceeds to whack the living hell out of an empty plastic gallon jug.

4:15 p.m. A slightly drunk high school classmate of Dan F., Dan R. and Bobby spots the band and talks to them through the fence. Bobby later says they haven't seen him since they all played high school basketball together.

4:30 p.m. The band begins hauling their equipment toward the BMI stage. The legion of friends and family that has now gathered around the band becomes a makeshift road crew.

4:45 p.m. Rudimentary sound check time. Evan contemplates the view of Lakeshore Drive and the lake behind the stage. The sky seems to promise a downpour, but only a drizzle materializes.

5:15 p.m. Dan R. retrieves a set list from the van. Dan F.'s wife, Laura, snaps a few pictures. Evan grabs a quick snack and a cigarette before taking the stage.

5:30 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. Bound Stems take the BMI stage for a 40-minute set that is chaotic, frenetic and beautiful. Fans and friends dance and sing along in the front rows. The whole band shouts the lyrics into the air over Bobby and Janie's intertwining vocals. Evan rises off his chair as he pounds out the end of "Excellent News Colonel." It doesn't matter that Bound Stems are competing with Yo La Tengo, !!!, and Peter Bjorn and John. For the couple of hundred fans watching that set, Bound Stems is the only thing going.

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