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JIM MOORE

Friday, July 28, 2006

## Go 2 Guy: Broussard already a local hit



By JIM MOORE  
P-I COLUMNIST

In the baseball world, Ben Broussard is a .300 hitter with occasional power, two reasons why the Mariners acquired him from Cleveland on Wednesday.

On the music scene, Broussard is someone else. Or more accurately, something else.

"He's an absolutely amazingly talented musician," said Scott Schorr of Lazy Bones Recordings, which produced Broussard's debut CD last August.

Schorr said Broussard is "stoked" about coming to Seattle because of its ballpark and music. He's a Pearl Jam fan, and the Lazy Bones Recordings studio is here, on Union between Sixth and Seventh avenues.

They met while recording a CD featuring 12 major-leaguers, "Oh Say Can You Sing," Broussard as aspiring songwriter, Schorr as skeptical producer. Omar Vizquel insisted Schorr should listen to his former Indians teammate. Schorr wasn't interested.

"Everybody's a songwriter," Schorr thought. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, the stuff I get is horrific."

Maybe only to humor Vizquel, Schorr told Broussard, "Yeah, Ben, send your originals."

Before getting them, Schorr said to his wife, "How can I tell a pro baseball player he sucks?"

When the demos arrived, Schorr was shocked.

"I was totally blown away," he said. "It was Ben and his acoustic guitar. There was nothing to hide it. It was just raw stuff. I couldn't believe it. I knew (he was good) within 15 to 20 seconds."

Thursday, Schorr was in his other studio near Diamondhead on Oahu. Lazy Bones Recordings has a philosophy of focusing on the music, not the hype.

"We could care less about the latest trends -- killer songwriting always stands the test of time," according to Lazy Bones' Web site. "If you sound like Britney Spears or Ashlee Simpson, were ever a member of the Mickey Mouse Club, think J-Lo's 'da bomb,' or own a Kelly Clarkson album, please don't call us. We wouldn't like you (and you probably wouldn't like us)."

Lazy Bones does not sign many artists, "but the ones I have are gold mines," Schorr told Music Connection Magazine.

Broussard is an acoustic rocker from Beaumont, Texas, who started

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playing the guitar in junior high and continued at McNeese State.

On the road while some of his teammates watch TV or play video games, Broussard writes songs. It's led to the Lazy Bones deal and the recording of his CD during a week in Kentucky in February of last year.

"I had never done a record in seven days, and it was his first time in the studio," Schorr said.

Asked if that made Broussard a natural, Schorr said, "Absolutely, without any doubt."

His first live show was planned last August at the House of Blues in Cleveland, but Broussard had a game that afternoon at Jacobs Field.

"What time are you going to start tonight?" Schorr asked him before the game.

"I don't know," Broussard said. "The game ends when it ends."

"Dude," Schorr said, "don't go into extra innings."

Naturally it did, but how's this for an ending: Broussard walloped a walk-off homer in the 10th.

In a St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press story two months ago, Broussard said he's reluctant to talk about his music career because if he's slumping, people will blame it on him spending too much time with his hobby.

Broussard's vocals remind Schorr of Jack Johnson and Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder. His music is most apt to be played locally on The Mountain.

I listened to the CD Thursday. To these untrained ears, he sounds like a potential star. If the eighth track, "Deep," doesn't become a mainstream hit, I'd be surprised.

"Hitting the Ground" is a sad song about a friend of Broussard's who became a drug addict.

The ballad "Hold on to Me," can be heard on "Dog the Bounty Hunter" on A&E, and other Broussard songs are featured on "Cheyenne" and "The Real World" on MTV.

"I submit his stuff and don't say he's a baseball player," Schorr said. "They love this guy. Then I tell him he's a baseball player and they can't believe it."

Married and the father of a 1-year-old, Broussard, 29, is humble.

"He doesn't even know how talented he is," said Schorr, who believes Broussard could win a Grammy someday. "I didn't sign him because he was a baseball player. I genuinely signed him as an artist because I believe in him as a musician."

While the Mariners just hope he keeps hitting right-handed pitching as a part-time DH.

**P-I columnist Jim Moore can be reached at 206-448-8013 or [jimmoores@seattlepi.com](mailto:jimmoores@seattlepi.com). His columns appear Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.**

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**Seattle Post-Intelligencer**

101 Elliott Ave. W.  
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