

## Fame hasn't gone to their heads (or their hearts)

JIM BATES / THE SEATTLE TIMES

*The Head and the Heart*, shown playing at the Paramount Theatre in Seattle on Sept., 22, 2010, will perform two sold-out shows this weekend.

BY JOANNA HOROWITZ  
*Special to The Seattle Times*

Since they don't have any time for looking back, let's do it for them.

In one year, Seattle folk-pop band The Head and the Heart locked in its lineup, started recording a demo, realized the demo should actually be a full CD, made that full CD, started getting played on KEXP, got picked up by Sub Pop, sold out Neumos, got booked at Sasquatch, rereleased its self-titled debut, did a European tour and sold out Friday's performance at the Showbox and Saturday's show at the Moore in under 20 minutes each.

So, taking a breath isn't something the band's six members have had much time for. During a quick return to Seattle in between trips to Europe and the West Coast, singer-

guitarist Jonathan Russell said they're constantly catching up.

"We just got home on Friday, and people are like, 'Man, you guys are huge here now,' and we're like, 'Really?'" he said. "I haven't been on the Internet for a month, so I wouldn't know if they're lying to me. It's weird. This is the year of the firsts for us, absolutely."

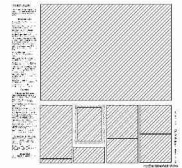
In March 2009, Russell, a recent Virginia transplant, met singer Josiah Johnson at an open mike at Ballard's Conor Byrne. The two formed the band's songwriting core, and the rest fell in around them: pianist Kenny Hensley, vocalist-violinist Charity Rose Thielen, drummer Tyler Williams and bassist Chris Zasche. Marrying piano pop with alt-country twang, the sextet nails exuberant harmonies and honest, simple lyrics. It's impossible to tell their chemistry is green.

A solid debut album and high-spirited live shows have given Seattle serious THATH fever. Now the band faces the world beyond (they appeared on "Conan" April 21).

"Right now we're somehow this poster child of Seattle ... but you can't expect it to last," Russell said, admitting he's the cynical one in the group. "Once you start playing shows in front of people you don't recognize, it's out of your hands."

And it's true. Despite largely positive reviews, last week trendsetting online music publication Pitchfork panned the album.

But Russell recognizes all they can do is keep playing music and connecting with fans — something they do with a charming lack of pretension. They respond to Twitter comments warmly and personally; they hung out after their April 16 gig at Easy Street for 90 minutes, signing



records and chatting.

“Nobody’s too cool for school in this band,” Russell said. “I like writing songs; you like listening to them. Cool. Let’s hang out.”

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#### *On the Internet*

LISTEN TO “LOST IN MY MIND” [www.subpop.com/artists](http://www.subpop.com/artists); search [The Head and the Heart](#).

#### **CONCERT PREVIEW**

### **The Head and the Heart**

8 p.m. Friday, Showbox at the Market, 1426 First Ave., Seattle, sold out (206-628-3151 or [www.showboxonline.com](http://www.showboxonline.com)); and 8 p.m. Saturday, Moore Theatre, 1932 Second Ave., Seattle, sold out (877-784-4849 or [www.stgpresents.org](http://www.stgpresents.org)).