

Making moves at home &amp; abroad – July 10, 2009



playing major engagements regularly. Why aren't more bands gunning for the big time?

'Maybe they don't have the drive, or maybe they're afraid; I don't know,' says Tan. Goh points out that while seizing opportunities is important, it's equally important for bands to be ready to make the most of those opportunities, which includes practising and working on repertoire.

To put these comments in context, it's crucial to emphasise that Electrico sincerely wants other local bands to enjoy the success that it has, because a healthy local music ecosystem benefits everyone.



'Believe it or not, one of the reasons we're doing all of these things like playing at the NDP is to bring up the local band scene,' says Tan. 'Some people might not think it's a big deal to play the NDP, but it's an important historical achievement that raises the bar about what's possible.'



'Raising the local band scene is too big a job for one band to take on, so we really need to work together with everyone so that we don't end up accidentally undermining one another's efforts.'



### Making a living

This isn't pure altruism on Electrico's part, of course, even though it genuinely does want Singapore's English music scene to flourish. The sooner local bands realise that they shouldn't be pricing themselves too low, the sooner it will become viable to make a living playing English music.

For example, English acts today are still paid far less than Mandarin acts in general, according to Electrico manager Marcia Tan. Bands should be less hung up about selling out, and more concerned about learning how to make a living.

Even though there's still a lot of work to be done back home in Singapore, Electrico is looking beyond the local scene to the possibility of helping to create a regional festival circuit that would include countries such as the Philippines, where the bands also perform in English. This kind of symbiotic ecosystem would get around the small sizes of individual markets.

That may sound like a tall order, but optimism and ambition are necessary ingredients for success. After all, Electrico didn't get where it is today by thinking small.

However, Electrico's planning to take a break at the end of this year to recharge batteries, and maybe get some songwriting done. Even though the band's third album, *We Satellites*, was only released last year, the band is already thinking about how to surpass it. 'We need to make the next record a really good one,' Dave Tan says.

