



# interview



## Failure is not necessarily a flop

by Tricia Romano

Success for the band Failure means being different from the average California group.

"Whether or not you thought we were good," said

Ken Andrews, the group's singer/songwriter, "It certainly wasn't hard to be different. We never really became part of the scene."

Failure, does not project typical Californian sounds and images of sun and fun.

Andrews concedes the band is not as extreme as Ween, and does note its estrangement from the usual L.A. music scene which has spawned the funk-kings Red Hot Chili Peppers and, most recently, the quirky X-tra

Large.

Maybe the dark, brooding sound of songs like "Macaque" from it's debut album *Comfort*, come from somewhere else. Maybe it has something to do with Andrews growing up in, of all places, Seattle. Andrews realizes what he has just said and stammers that he hadn't even learned to play guitar while living there, excusing the band from being labeled a Seattle (groan) grunge band.

Failure began roughly two years ago in the California-area with Andrews, then a film student, and friend, drummer Robert Gauss. After going through a series of bassists, Andrews and Gauss hooked up with Greg Edwards and created a group of guitar-based broodingly melodic songs.

The first single, "Pro-Catastrophe" was released on vinyl, leading to a second single, "Count My Eyes" and a subsequent signing with independent label, Slash records. With the release of it's debut, *Comfort*, the band went on the road with the likes of Mary's Danish and the Darling Buds.

Looking ahead, Andrews and Failure are writing new material for the next record. Despite the heaviness of its music, there is a lack of haughtiness in the lyrical style. Not preachy like U2, but not silly like Shonen Knife. Andrews takes life's little tragedies and twists them gently.

"Sometimes," he said, "there are personal experiences that were twisted around. Stories that completely make no sense. They're more fun to write."

"Greg and I just wrote this song, it could be based in either of our real lives. Taking things to the extreme is better

than your own boring life."

Despite the abundance of press given to the underground scene this year, Failure has managed to escape unscathed and unnoticed. Failure is not an anti-media band, nor are they reluctant alternative rock gods like Nirvana. Andrews sees nothing wrong with the mainstream acceptance of the indie scene. While Failure could be considered a true indie band, it has received flack from contemporaries.

"I find the whole politics of labels stupid," Andrews said. "It's proving to backfire in a major way. People have accused us of being conscious for signing to Slash."

But Andrews said, "There is something to be said for championing an unknown band."

Andrews, believes the finicky nature of those involved in the underground scene is petty and should be secondary to the music. Nirvana, didn't sell out, he says, it's just that a few people got a clue.

"If people are trying to say Nirvana is lame because they are selling millions of records, then they can just fuck off," Andrews said. "I would think that it (the underground scene) was not supposed to form an elitist culture. If someone's making good music, why not have them sell millions of records?"

Still, Failure's road to success may be a long one, just the way Andrews wants it.

"It's more important to us to do something that we like that is worthy of someone to listen," Andrews said.

Failure will open for Tool April 15 at the Huntridge Theater. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door.

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