



RYAN HAFER

THE AMERICAN WAKE: From left, Damien Murray, Robert Keyzers, Chris Hatt, Frank LaBlanc and Eric Ree.

Fair days for American Wake

By **ROBERT KINSLER**
SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

"Tell No Tales" is the American Wake's fourth full-length release and marks a dramatic step forward for the quintet. While the rock outfit's past releases have each featured a handful of originals blended alongside re-worked traditional Irish material, 10 of the dozen tracks on "Tell No Tales" are their own.

From the beautiful ballad "The Quay" and the driving "Passing By" to the infectious Saw Doctors-flavored "My Old Friend," this is the American Wake firing on all cylinders.

"It's a different band than it was 11 years ago," lead singer/rhythm guitarist Eric Ree acknowledged in an interview this week. The American Wake also features Frank LaBlanc (mandolin, electric guitar, vocals), Chris Hatt (bass, vocals), Damien Murray (drums, vocals) and Robert Keyzers (fiddle).

"I grew up in Buena Park, but sang with an Irish accent," Ree said. "Frank always kidded me about that; when we write our own songs, people

hear my voice."

The American Wake performed its first show on St. Patrick's Day 1994 and quickly grew into one of the region's best live acts. But the group has quietly developed into artists able to craft compelling material that works on deeper layers. "Tell No Tales," with its nautical theme, features songs that simultaneously work as seafaring stories while also exploring love ("She Swears Like a Sailor"), loss ("The Doryman") and celebration ("The Drinking Jolly Roger").

"Some of these songs are brand new, others we have been working on for two or three years," Ree said.

However, the recording process was remarkably fast.

The American Wake went into the studio in early July, and all 12 tracks were completed after only about 10 sessions. The album was engineered and co-produced by Ryan Hafer.

The ease at recording was helped by the band's relentless schedule of marathon-length shows as well as the strong friendship the members share. The American Wake will be seeing plenty of one another this holiday weekend; the group performs at the Orange International Street Fair tonight, Saturday and Sunday.

"The guys in the band are my best friends," said La-

Blanc, noting that the band really hit its stride when it recruited fiddle virtuoso Keyzers to complete its current lineup about four years ago. "Because we all have regular (day) jobs, we wouldn't do it if it wasn't fun."

The American Wake will perform at the Orange International Street Fair on "Irish Street" (at Glassell and Almond) at 5 and 7 tonight; at 4, 6 and 8 p.m. Saturday; and 5 and 7 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free.

For information on the American Wake, visit www.theamericanwake.com. For more information on live performances at the Street Fair, visit www.orangestreetfair.com.

SAD DAY FOR LOCAL MUSIC

Fans of Walter Trout & the Radicals are mourning the loss of bassist Jimmy Trapp, who suffered a stroke Aug. 23 and died the next day. Trout has posted a moving tribute to his longtime friend on his Web site:

"Jimmy Trapp was my friend. We go back almost 30 years together. The first time I met him, he came to Costa Mesa to audition for a band called Midnight Angel. We all hung out, sat around. We loved him immediately and hired him on the spot without even hearing him play. Needless to say, when he showed up to the gig and was a great

player, we were all very happy.

"He started the Walter Trout Band with me and was there from day one. He was the best man at my wedding, and I was the best man at his wedding. He was my brother. He was a great musician and musical partner for me. His humor, his intelligence, his friendship will all be missed more than I can find words to say."

Information: www.waltertrout.com.

ORANGE SLICES

The local blues community is gearing up to say goodbye to Steve Copeland & Raging Sun, performing its final shows today and Saturday, 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m. at the Long Beach Marriott. Along with Trout, Copeland (who has recovered from a stroke he suffered last year, but wants to spend more time with his family) and company are among the strongest blues-rock acts to emerge from Orange County and many of the outfit's friends will be making guest performances at the farewell shows.

Information: www.raging.sun.com.

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MORE ONLINE

To hear a sample from the American Wake's "Tell No Tales," go to www.ocregister.com/entertainment.