

# HUGS FROM SICK PUPPIES?

## Latest disc breaks away from the warm feeling of Web video

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If you want to see the up-and-coming rock band Sick Puppies at their concert here on Saturday, you'll have to pay. But the hugs will be free.

"If anyone asks for a hug, they're welcome," said Shim Moore, the group's singer and guitarist from Australia.

That shouldn't be a surprise, given how the three-piece band's "Free Hugs" video became a phenomenon on YouTube more than a year ago. The clip, which shows the true story of a man carrying a "Free Hugs" sign and how people react to him, has been viewed more than 24 million times.

The video is set to the group's song, "All the Same," which eventually peaked at No. 8 on Billboard's Hot Modern Rock chart.



Sick Puppies will have a concert at Headliners on Saturday.

The subject of the video is Juan Mann, whom Moore met and filmed at an outdoor shopping mall. When Mann was banned from his labor of love, he collected a petition of 10,000 signatures to resume his hugging.

"It was such a simple message of love. There are literally thousands of videos on the Internet now of people giving free hugs," Moore said. "People saw it as a gift to them and they saw it as a gift that they could give to other people, which is the same thing that music is. It's a gift."

The gift that Moore and company offer in concert and on their most recent album "Dressed Up as Life" isn't quite so warm and fuzzy. They play with an aggressive style that could take some people only familiar with the "Free Hugs" video by surprise.

"It's just intense," Moore, 23, said in a phone call from Des Moines while on tour. "It is angry and it's aggressive, but it's not negative. When you come to the show, you're definitely going to get a very energized feeling from it."

### MULTIMEDIA

[See the "Free Hugs" video](#)

There's a lot going on in the latest Sick Puppies record.

"It was more sort of a coming-of-age record for us because every struggle that we endured on the way to completing the record is in the record," Moore said. "It's got references to things from growing up,

moving over [to the U.S.], making the record, leaving people, people leaving you - we got all of it in there."

Moore is joined by bassist Emma Anzai, whom he met in high school, and Mark Goodwin on drums. He said their sound grew out of bands like Rage Against the Machine, Green Day, and Silverchair.

This is Sick Puppies' first tour as a headliner and they're loving it.

"The whole point of what we do is playing live, and the whole thing that connects with people is playing live," Moore said.

As great as the response to "Free Hugs" has been, the band's music seems to be resonating on its own now - its song "My World" cracked the top 20 on the hot modern rock chart - and the band is moving on.

"Honestly we don't look back," Moore said. "We keep looking forward."

Sick Puppies performs at Headliners, 4500 North Detroit Ave., on Saturday. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Advance tickets are available at all Ticketmaster outlets, charging by phone at 419-474-1333, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), or at Culture Clash, 419-536-5683, and Ramalama Records, 419-531-7625.

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