

save me

radar

we hit the road with haim, the new favorite band of everyone you know. by sonya singh. photographed by lindsey lee

a place

"Haim are the best band in the world right now," says Marcus Mumford, grinning against a blast of cheers and whistles from a Brooklyn arena crowd. Sure, his band snagged Album of the Year at the Grammys two nights prior, but *right now*, his opening act—composed of drummer Dash Hutton and three sisters, Este (bass), Danielle (guitar, vocals), and Alana Haim (guitar, keyboards)—is worth celebrating. He invites the Los Angeles natives back onstage

along with fellow opener Ben Howard for an all-hands-on-deck cover of The Band's "The Weight," a late-night-jam version of Mumford & Sons' star-studded Grammy performance, complete with ad-libbed verses, guitar licks, dancing, and hugging it out.

I'm traveling with Haim on the East Coast leg of the tour, crammed into a van with the band, their audio engineer, and driver/road manager/head of security/father Moti Haim. Inclusive vibes abound, with Mumford stopping by Haim's green room to joke around and bassist Ted Dwane snapping photos on his vintage camera.

"Mumford just won a Grammy!" says Alana, throwing her hands in the air. "They have full right to take anyone on the road. But they wanted *us*, and they make us feel like family."

Touring, though, is still a relatively new thing for Alana, 21, Danielle, 24, and Este, 27, despite the fact that they spent the late '90s playing charity gigs and fairs with their

parents in a classic-rock cover band called Rockinhaim. A decade later, Este was studying music at UCLA, Danielle was playing shows with Julian Casablanca, and Alana was finishing high school when the girls decided to regroup as Haim.

They honed a live set of blistering solos and epic drum-offs in front of small hometown crowds, mass-texting friends to boost the turnout. "For years we just wanted to play and play and play, and hopefully we gained some fans in L.A.," says Danielle. "But you can't be sustained without a good record. At the time, [the *Forever* EP] was the best we could do. Thank God people seemed to like it."

In the span of one manic year, Haim was turning heads at SXSW one minute and

her arm and handing one to Hutton.

Later that evening, a deafening roar means it's time to walk down the long corridor to the stage. Danielle and Este salsa dance part of the way. The quartet meets in a huddle, heads bowed, Hutton's skater cut meeting the girls' cascading tresses. They pause, taking in where they are and where they came from.

"Most days, it's 'Holy shit. How did this happen?'" Este says, shaking off some pre-show jitters. "It's weird to think that we put something out there, and that people like it so much they memorize it and then come to the shows. Every day for us, it's not something we expect. Everything is still a surprise."

playing London's O2 Arena with Florence and the Machine the next. But instead of going on about their accolades, the girls would rather talk about the time they set off a heap of fireworks in Tennessee and then jumped into a pool with their clothes on. "If we bicker, it lasts maybe a minute, then we move on," says Este. They swap clothes. They write songs together. They share a single hotel room each night.

As Moti drives the band to sound check for tonight's gig in Fairfax, Virginia, the week's most troubling drama strikes—the toothpaste supply is running dangerously low, so we make a pit stop for Crest and temporary tattoos. "We just solved our biggest crisis in one Rite Aid trip," laughs Alana, sticking a Hello Kitty tattoo on

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