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Brave Combo Wants To Be Civilized

BY ALEX KANAKIS, BLAIR LOVERN

I will only be relaxed

When I become civilized

There was nothing in those Brave Combo **lyrics** off their 2004 Grammy-winning release *Let's Kiss* having to do with joining a symphony, was there?

Ah, no.

Technically, **Brave Combo** hasn't joined a symphony. But Denton's most famous, contemporary, polka-jazz-dance-cha-cha-zyedeco-acid rock-Muzak-bubblegum-cumbia-and-so-forth band has joined up with one for three straight shows. They'll be playing in Arlington, Garland and Las Colinas **tonight through Saturday** (all three cities share essentially the same orchestra).

It's the first time Brave Combo has ventured into this territory. Both the big band and the little band struggled to hear one another initially during their first rehearsal together in Arlington Tuesday night.

But conductor Robert Carter Austin said Brave Combo has been one of the easiest and most fun musical guests to work with.

Austin joked with his musicians before the rehearsing started: "This is their debut with an orchestra so be kind to them. You've got them outnumbered."

"Man, this is cool," said Brave Combo singer/guitarist/accordionist Carl Finch with a big smile, after running through one practice song.

Photo Gallery

Brave Combo
Rehearsal

Practicing with
Symphony Arlington



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"We've been really, really lucky to be challenged over the years by interesting things," Finch said. "We say things like, 'what if we play this polka festival in the Northeast full of people that will hate us?' We're always trying to break new ground. Sometimes it feels like if we approach the music like: Here's a battle we want to win, not just play another gig. It's fun from that point of view. If you set yourself up for a great risk of failure and if you don't fail, it's exhilarating."



Video

Performance/Interview with Brave Combo and the Symphony Arlington Music Director, Robert Carter Austin.

What about playing with a symphony for the first time?

"This could totally flop, I have no idea," Finch said.

Even if they do, it ought to be a lively flop. Other symphonies have expressed interest in playing with Brave Combo, so the anticipatory flop/success factor ratio can't be too startling.

Be sure to check out the photos from the rehearsal, as well as video, featuring the thoughts of Maestro Austin. Then head over to one of the three cities for a different and even Braver Combo than you've seen before.

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