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# 'Cooler version of a school project'



MILANA DONE/DAILY NEWS

**EMMA SUE SEDLACEK**, 17, from O'Neill, sings with Rude Band. She joined the band in March as the newest and youngest member. "There was Emma, front and center, rockin' out," drummer Tyson Conn said, recalling the first time Emma sang for the Rude Band at a St. Patrick's Day celebration earlier this year.

## 17-year-old from O'Neill 'rockin' out' in Rude Band

By **MILANA DONE**  
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Sounds from the Midtown Event Center in Norfolk could be heard a mile away on the night of June 17. The Rude Band, a musical group that's anything but, rocked out for three hours at the lively outdoor venue. The performance was impressive in more ways than one as it was its first official set with its new member.

Back in March, the Rude Band, then a trio, played a set at O'Neill's St. Patrick's Day celebration.

St. Patrick's Day is always a big event in O'Neill, deemed "The Irish Capital of Nebraska." This year, though, it was a little bit bigger, specifically for Emma Sue Sedlacek.

The 17-year-old from O'Neill was an opening act for the Rude Band, a group based in South Dakota that covers songs from various genres, from country classics to 1980s rock hits to current pop anthems. Sedlacek independently played a 90-minute set with only her voice and her acoustic guitar.

"Her whole show was songs I loved. I loved her  
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MILANA DONE/DAILY NEWS

**EMMA SUE SEDLACEK** sings for the Rude Band during her first performance with the band at Midtown Event Center in Norfolk on June 17. The South Dakota-based cover band meets a few times a year to practice together.

## Rude Band

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voice, and I loved her guitar playing," said Grace Hansen, guitarist and charter member of the Rude Band. "Comments from my other band members and our crew were positive as well."

Toward the end of the Rude Band's set, the trio invited Sedlacek to the stage to play a few songs with them.

"It's always fun to bring someone up on stage to perform with us because you never know when things will go hilariously sideways," drummer Tyson Conn said. "But there was Emma, front and center, rockin' out."

Shortly after the set, the band offered Sedlacek a spot in the group and the deal was done.

Between the new addition in March and the performance last week, Sedlacek already has learned a thing or two about collaborating and working together.

"I didn't realize how much of a team effort being in the band was," Sedlacek said. "It's like a cooler version of a school project."

**THE RUDE BAND** hopes the recent months and performance are only the tip of the iceberg of learning experiences Sedlacek gains.

"Whether it be the music, performing, meeting people provided something for me to learn, and I hope it'll do the same for her."

Since all members of the band are vocalists, Sedlacek



MILANA DONE/DAILY NEWS

**EMMA SUE SEDLACEK** plays guitar as the newest member of the Rude Band. Since all four band members do vocals, Sedlacek leads vocals on about a quarter of the songs and will join Grace Hansen on guitar for a majority of songs.

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"We always wanted a second guitar player and now we have one," Hansen said. "She will also join us in singing backups, harmonies, fronting the band and talking to the audience."

The Rude Band had been without a fourth member since the fall of 2020. Since then, the band had welcomed temporary stand-ins, but none became the lead singer and songwriter for Neon Lights, a youthful band based in Norfolk that formed about a year ago. Sedlacek and her peers play rock and alterna-

tive style music from the 1990s and 2000s along with some of Sedlacek's original songs.

"It's so cool seeing songs that I just wrote in my bedroom come to life," Sedlacek said.

**LIKE MANY**, Sedlacek found lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic to be an opportunity to cultivate new interests. She spent lots of time writing songs and singing with her ukulele and picked up guitar from there.

"It was intimidating at first to speak up and have my opinions be heard," Sedlacek said. "Then I realized they asked me to be in the band because they

want to hear what I have to say."

Although she's the youngest member, Sedlacek offers the Rude Band a fresh perspective and a fresh set of eyes and ears to the band's sets.

"I think having someone of her talents join up with us can serve as a reminder of how great it is we all get to do what we do," Conn said. "There's already a long list of tunes that she sings and plays on, that we've never played, which has lit a fire under me to learn ASAP so we can keep the music momentum rolling."

**THE BAND'S** Norfolk performance was just the beginning of a busy summer. The Rude Band has a list of destinations in South Dakota as well as a couple of upcoming shows in Iowa and Minnesota. A complete list of upcoming shows can be found on the band's website.

"I think it's going to be a great summer," Conn said. "And, if she decides to hang with us fogies a while longer, I think all of us will learn a thing or two."

Sedlacek has one more year of high school. After that, she's not quite sure what's in store after that, but she knows she wants it to include pursuing music, whatever that looks like.

"She is the age of the audience that we want to appeal to and a budding talent that I hope she will benefit just as much through her association with us," Hansen said. "Emma is an integral part of The Rude Band for as long as she'll have us."