

# WORKIN' BAND

by Adam St. James

## Internal Affairs

### 21st Century Wedding Band

**Hometown:** San Jose, CA  
**Gigs/Year:** 50  
**Income:** \$3,200 per show  
**Tunes:** Alternative rock covers  
**Web:** iarocks.com

**HISTORY:** Lead vocalist Mark Hawke—a police officer in real life, hence the band's name—put together Internal Affairs after a “successful” career as a karaoke singer. That is to say, he went out and sang karaoke often enough that he finally got the hots for putting together a real band. “I just wanted to get out and jump around in bars,” Hawke recalls of the band's beginnings in 2002. “I had no idea it would grow to this level.” The level he's talking about is a project that plays every weekend for about as much money as some working bands make in a season, a group featuring the best players in town, a set list of really cool modern rock covers, and even their own tour bus.

**BRIGHT IDEAS:** Updating the basic wedding band was the main idea that drove Hawke in the game plan for Internal Affairs. “We took a look at all the bands out there—and there are a couple of bands here that make a lot of money—but they're all R&B-based,” he says. “We wanted to do the same level of professionalism, but with more current material. People getting married these days are more familiar with Stone Temple Pilots and stuff like that than they are with old R&B and the old-school wedding band material.”

**BOOKING ADVICE:** “Know what you're going to say before you get on the phone with a club or client. Before I really went after the wedding market, I talked to a few wedding coordinators to ask what people really want from a wedding band. One of the things that has helped us land the gig is that we offer to learn two songs specifically for the couple. Of course you have to be able to hit all the basics: What time are you going to show up, how long to play, make sure you're getting fed, and have a place to change. You just have to get used to asking about all the details that are important to you every time you book a show. And if you want to make more money, start asking for more money. But then you've got to deliver.”

**BEST GIGS:** “A lot of what we would consider a 'best gig' depends on the situation. Big events are fun, but even small clubs—when they're packed—can be real fun. We play the Black Oak Casino, up near Yosemite,

and they treat us like rock stars. They feed us, we have a dressing room, and even though we don't get paid as much as at a wedding, it's a super-fun gig.”

**MAJOR EXPOSURE:** We just did Lance Armstrong's cancer benefit, the “Live Strong Challenge,” in front of 12,000 people. We also did the Blue Angels' “Fleet Week” event at San Francisco's Pier 39 recently. And maybe because of those, one of the major radio stations here in the San Jose area, Mix 106.5, just called today. They want us to play a promo party for the radio station next month. They're going to make us a signature band for the event and promote it a lot on the air and in print. Basically, work brings work. There's no such thing as a bad gig. Exposure gets us gigs. If you want to work and get higher-paying gigs, you've got to work, do a good job, and put on a show.

**BRIGHT IDEAS:** Our contract is the main thing. The musicians have a contract that spells out a dress code, expectations, no drinking during gigs—that sort of stuff. Anybody who wants to join the band has to sign it and put down a \$500 deposit to prove that they're really serious and going to stick to the rules. It's gotten rid of a lot of the hassles of how the band operates, and spells out what is expected of everyone in the band. The quality of people you work with is very important. We only have people in the band who have day jobs, cars, and maintain their equipment. Otherwise, they're always asking to borrow money, or your instrument, or you have to buy them a suit or something. It operates so much smoother this way; every band should try it.

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If you would like your band featured in this column, email Adam St. James at [adam@logicalleadguitar.com](mailto:adam@logicalleadguitar.com)



### SELECT SET LIST

**Baker Street**  
Foo Fighters/Gerry Rafferty

**Meet Virginia Train**

**She Talks to Angels** Black Crowes

**What's the Frequency Kenneth?**  
R.E.M.

**Right Through You**  
Alanis Morissette

**Times Like These** Foo Fighters

**Can't Get Enough** Bad Company

**Interstate Love Song**  
Stone Temple Pilots

**Steve McQueen** Sheryl Crow

**I'm the Man** Joe Jackson

**Hard to Handle** Black Crowes

**Message in a Bottle** The Police

**Sweet Emotion** Aerosmith

**New Sensation** INXS

**Beautiful Day** U2

**Lights** Journey

**Talk to You Later** The Tubes

**Walk Away** Kelly Clarkson

**Remedy** Black Crowes

**Jimmy Olsen's Blues**  
Spin Doctors

**Photograph** Def Leppard

**Eruption/You Really Got Me**  
Van Halen

**Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love** Van Halen

**Girlfriend** Matthew Sweet

**Surrender** Cheap Trick

**Underneath It All** No Doubt

**Halo** Foo Fighters

**Higher Ground**  
Red Hot Chili Peppers