

# STREET BEATS

## Gories: Pounding out their own R&B sound

By John Logie  
special writer

Two minutes into a performance by the Gories, an astute observer can easily determine which audience members are seeing the band for the first time.

The first-timers wear what Gories lead singer and guitar player Mick calls "the grass-eater look — that look that wildbeasts get before the pack of lions pounces on them."

"People who haven't heard us are generally taken aback," he said. "I don't know what it is about us. I'd like to think it was the noise level, but I know we're not that loud."

Indeed, it is not the band's volume that prompts the weak to go glassy-eyed and bovine. . . . It is the band's sound.

For the past three years, Mick and his partners in crime, guitarist Dan Kroha and drummer Peg O'Neill, have played a grungy, snarly brand of rhythm and blues which is startlingly unlike anything this side of Bo Diddley's worst lost weekend.

Mick says the sound "generally reminds me of a Marmaduke cartoon, where Marmaduke and this kid are hiding, but looking over the fence at the milkman, and the kid looks at Marmaduke and says, 'OK, Marmaduke, bark real loud right now!'"

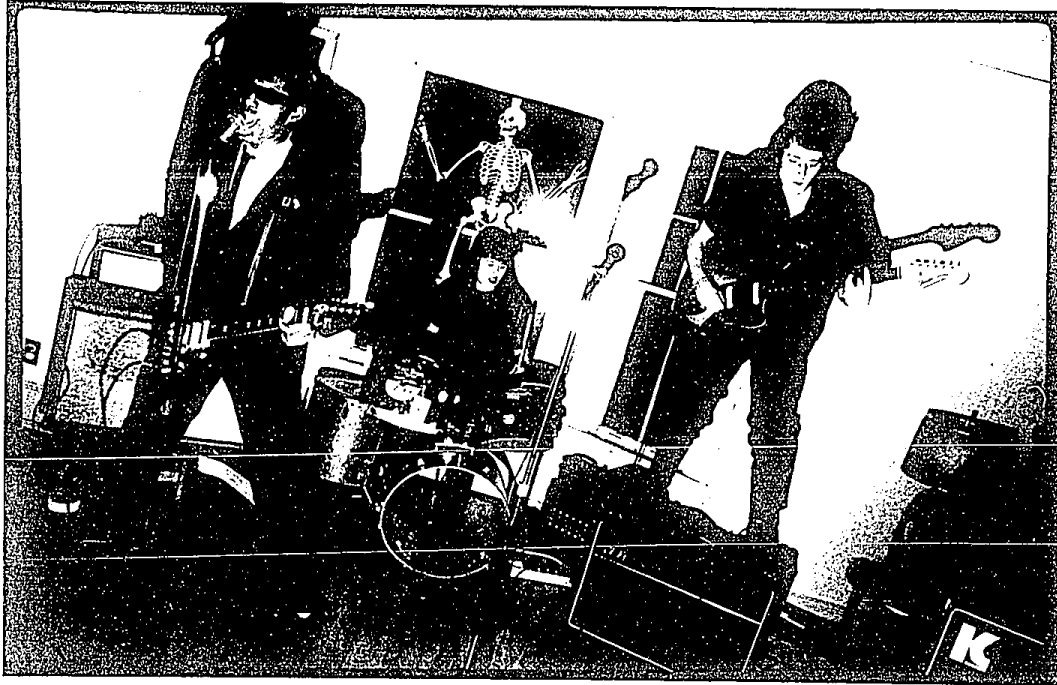
A basso back, the sound of breaking glass and crying over spilled milk, are all elements of the Gories' sound, but there's a lot more to the band.

MICK IS nothing if not manic. Clad in sharkskin and sunglasses, he claws his Kent guitar and rants into the microphone with unsettling fervor.

Dan bolsters Mick's guitar lines with a steady stream of bashed-out bar chords. Peg pounds a tom-tom with a maraca and generates more noise than one person with a sorely limited drum set including a non-functional bass drum.

You'd expect a band like the Gories to spring from twisted roots, but were it not for occasional perversities, the Gories' genesis would read uncomfortably like an old Mickey Rooney/Judy Garland "we can have a show of our own" backyard musical.

"We were sitting around one night listening to an LP called 'Scum of the Earth, Volume 1,'" Mick recalls, "and Dan was polishing off a six-pack. I looked at him and said, 'I know, we could do this just as good as these guys.' And Dan said, 'I know, you're right. Why don't we form a band?'"



The Gories — lead singer/guitarist Mick, guitarist Dan Kroha and drummer Peg O'Neill — played a grungy, snarly brand of rhythm and blues.

Before forming the Gories, Kroha's entire playing skills consisted of strumming one chord during a song in a band called "Gidget and the Gories," Mick said.

Early on the band was uncertain about its guitar/guitar/drums lineup.

"We got all kinds of offers from people who wanted to play bass for us," Mick said. "When we first formed, we really could have used a bass player, but once we got used to the idea of just the three of us up on stage, our arrangements started to reflect that."

"We got the tone of the guitars . . . the timbre where we wanted it. We're use to our sound . . . I can imagine how fat of people wouldn't be, but to us it sounds really complete."

Those who have seen the band will undoubtedly agree that three Gories are more than sufficient, but the

band is hard pressed to explain just how and why it arrives at this sufficiency.

"Most people would say that Screamin' Jay Hawkins is an influence, but it's really not the truth," Mick said. "It just sounds like it. Our primary influences are the Sonics, because they were really wild in the studio."

"AND HOUND DOG Taylor and the HouseRockers is still a big influence because here are these three old bluesmen from Chicago and they play two guitars and a drum set, and they use Silverstone amps."

Mick is especially fond of his vintage Silverstone tube amp, and well he should be. It has given him two years of service — and that can't be said of any other piece of Mick's gear.

"I'm on amp number two, and I'm on guitar number six right now . . . heading for guitar number seven," he said. "Very rarely do I go through a set without breaking a string. Strings are cheap to come by. It's when I bash up guitars that's the problem, but it's only happened once on The Gories' latest 'accident' bodes well for the band."

"We're actually a playing unit right now," Mick said. "In the first shows, we didn't know when to begin or end the songs. I think we can almost legitimately claim to be able to play now, which was never really our goal, and as far as I'm concerned, it's still not. It just happened along the line."

"We were just standing around one day, and we realized that we knew how to play, practically. It was kind of a big shock to us."

The Gories will perform on Friday, Jan. 5, at Willis Gallery.

## IN CONCERT

- FULLY LOADED**  
Fully Loaded will perform on Tuesday, Jan. 2, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Livonia. For information, call 936-2747.
- PHONE**  
Phone and the Freedom band will perform on Tuesday, Jan. 2, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- J.D. LAMB**  
J.D. Lamb will perform on Wednesday, Jan. 3, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 936-2747.
- KNAVES**  
The Knaves will perform on Wednesday, Jan. 3, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 936-8555.
- HYPPODROME**  
Hippodrome will perform on Thursday, Jan. 4, at 3-D Club, 1815 N. Main, near 12 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.
- SWEET SWEET LIFE**  
Sweet Sweet Life will perform on Thursday, Jan. 4, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- KING DAVID**  
King David will perform on Thursday, Jan. 4, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 936-2747.

- GRANFALLOON**  
Granfalloon will perform on Friday, Jan. 5, at Paycheck's Lounge in Hamtramck.
- DIRTY BLONDE**  
Dirty Blonde will perform on Friday, Jan. 5, at Blondie's, 21139 W. Seven Mile, east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 525-8108.
- SERF ENCEPHALADS**  
Serf Encephalads will perform on Friday, Jan. 5, at Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 535-9850.
- JEANNE AND THE DREAMS**  
Jeanne and the Dreams will perform Friday and Saturday, Jan. 5-6, at Rick's

- SKALA BIM**  
Bim Skala Bim will perform with guests, Gangster Fun, on Friday, Jan. 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- D.I.**  
D.I. will perform with guests, Coven and Pittbull, on Saturday, Jan. 6, at Blondie's, 21139 W. Seven Mile, east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.
- SKA NIGHT**  
Bim Skala Bim, Gangster Fun and D.J. Eddie Riott will all perform on Saturday, Jan. 6, at the Art Center Music School, 3975 East, Detroit. For information, call 831-2585.

- PREP**  
Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WBTH-FM 88.1, student-operated station of Bloomfield Hills School District.
- 1. "Janie's Got a Gun," Aerosmith.
- 2. "Storm Front," Billy Joel.
- 3. "Feel a Whole Lot Better," Tom Petty.
- 4. "Another Day in Paradise," Phil Collins.
- 5. "Bang!," Gorky Park.
- 6. "Pretending," Eric Clapton.
- 7. "Terrifying," Rolling Stones.
- 8. "With Every Beat of My Heart," Taylor Davis.
- 9. "Love Song," Tesla.
- 10. "Dangerous," Roxette.

## PREP LOCAL

- LOCAL**  
Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on Detroit Music Scene, which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (repeated 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDRB-FM 90.9.
- 1. "Some Day Son," Strange Bedfellows.
- 2. "Rainy Day Picture Show," Hypnotics.
- 3. "Now You're Gone," EPX.
- 4. "Blue Christmas," Twiggy Barbat.
- 5. "Chan Chan," Nemesis.
- 6. "Arrangements . . . Rubber.
- 7. "Wake Up Rebecca," Chris Gorey.
- 8. "N.G.L.F.," Pest.
- 9. "Jingle Bells," Bad Yacc.
- 10. "I'm Not Santa Claus," Lab Animals.

## REVIEWS

### UPTOWNSHIP — Hugh Masekela

Despite having had a huge hit in the '70s with "Grating in the Grass," Hugh Masekela is best known in the United States for his contributions to Paul Simon's "Graceland" album. As the title suggests (blending the American notion of "uptown" with a reference to South African "township" live music), "Uptownship" is an effort to play to the fans Masekela won as a result of his work with Simon.

While Masekela's love for American music is probably every bit as strong as Paul Simon's love for South African music, "Uptownship" suffers from Masekela and his fellow musicians cover the work of American composers. And it is these songs which are far closer to an American musical sensibility, but remain African. On these songs, Masekela and his band play with vigor and confidence. And it is these songs which are far closer to the spirit of Simon's "Graceland" project than the cover versions of American material. The best of these songs is the title track, which features a bouncy township bassline, cascading guitars, inspired horn duets, and what can only be described as a skating-rink organ. Masekela draws these elements together, and creates a vibrant, uplifting whole.



pet, one might mistake the song for the original. Fortunately, the remainder of "Uptownship" consists of songs which are at times informed by an American musical sensibility, but remain African. On these songs, Masekela and his band play with vigor and confidence. And it is these songs which are far closer to the spirit of Simon's "Graceland" project than the cover versions of American material. The best of these songs is the title track, which features a bouncy township bassline, cascading guitars, inspired horn duets, and what can only be described as a skating-rink organ. Masekela draws these elements together, and creates a vibrant, uplifting whole. It's a terrific song, which makes it seem unfortunate that it is the only Masekela composite on the album.

### THREE MONTHS, THREE WEEKS & TWO DAYS — Bill Pritchard

"Three months, three weeks & two days" is an excellent offering from Bill Pritchard. Filled with songs about childhood nostalgia, bitter-sweet romance, political drama and lost hope, "Three Months" is a great listen. Pritchard, originally from England, sounds a lot like another intelligent British singer/songwriter, Robyn Hitchcock, because of his clever word play and somewhat deadpan singing. Lucky for us, Pritchard was signed by Canada's Network Productions, which is known for supporting other alternative acts such as Skinny Puppy, Severed Heads and Sarah McLachlan. Pritchard's biting, ironic lyrics sound best when they are offset by the deceptively gentle accompaniment of a single acoustic guitar or a piano. In "We Were Lovers," Pritchard sings, "And all the greedy green politicians/the hehogs politically speaking/and censor what is sensual/we were lovers/and I think that's worth . . . mentioning/over a background sound of people whispering a



la the layered sounds of Pink Floyd. "Cosy Evenings," a Pritchard-style Christmas tune, has lyrics like, "Mouths aren't rational, mouths need feeding/and if the system screws you, months get desperate/and those cosy Christmas evenings are gone forever." If "Three Months" has a flaw, it is on the song "Invisible State." The backing vocals sounded uncannily like Tracy, Lori and Shirley singing along with "The Partridge Family." It's not a horrible flaw, just a little unsettling. The rest of the album is great, so if you see it in the stores, grab it immediately and enjoy.

### KNUCKLE SANDWICH — Orange Roughies

The Orange Roughies need this album. This band's reputation has been garnered for the most part by toiling on the local club circuit for nearly three years. Yet no album. So here it is, folks, the long-awaited "Knuckle Sandwich" (Nocturnal). At first, let's say this is better than we expected. This album has been in the can for 1 1/2 years. There was a chance that the material would be come dated, especially considering that "Eyepatch" was on the band's debut cassette two years ago and finds itself here on the "latest" LP. Still there is a spark on "Knuckle Sandwich," something very reminiscent of the Roughies early albums. Unlike before, though, this album captures a cohesiveness that was lacking in the band's infancy. Then, as now, the group reached the stratosphere on the guitar stylings of Dave Feeny. Feeny stretches the limits here. "Eyepatch" has become his hallmark, bouncing from raunchy guitar scourgery to airy melodies. He follows suite the rest of the way. He provides the full quota of diving and



soaring guitar lines complete with hooks. His guitar can carry this album alone. John "Roscoy" Pineau's vocals have always been, well, an acquired taste. But even here Feeny's guitar manages to provide the right amount of canvas for Roscoy to sing without becoming too overbearing (and, yes, at times, enjoyable). Credit perhaps for that is attributed to the production work. The mixing, along with the cover art work, is first-rate. This does not look like the average (read gray) local band album cover. Finally, the Orange Roughies have their calling card. Now, let's see what they can do with it.

— Larry O'Connor