

## STREET BEATS

Shouting Club is Chris Mason (front) of Fern-  
dale and Cormac Wright (left) of Southfield,Brian Simon of Dearborn Heights and Jim  
Cortez of Royal Oak.

ART EMANUEL/retail photographer

This 'club' of rockers  
has a lot to shout aboutBy Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Over a cassette counter, Shouting Club was born.

But the first meeting between the band's founders, Cormac Wright of Southfield and Jim Cortez of Royal Oak, probably won't find its way onto an album titled, "Great Conversations in Record Stores, Volume II."

The first encounter between Wright and Cortez went something like this: Wright, who had recently arrived from Dublin, Ireland, and was living in a Red Red Inn, was looking to meet some of the "local yobboes" and talk some music.

And where better, he figured, than a record store.

He spotted Cortez, who was wearing a U2 button. Wright sauntered over and introduced himself, using the mutual like of the Irish band to break the ice.

Said Cortez: "I wasn't impressed. I heard better accents." I asked him if he was from Windsor.

THE AVERAGE music listener would be impressed how the collaboration between the chatty Wright and the somewhat subdued Cortez clicks on the band's melodic, guitar-dominated rock.

The drumming of Chris Mason of Ferndale and the bass play of Brian Simon of Dearborn Heights ties the

Shouting Club's music into a neat, tight package.

Wright plays guitar and Cortez is the lead singer ("I was forced into that," Cortez says). Cortez writes most of the lyrics as well ("I was forced into that, too," he adds).

If Cortez comes off as a bit sour, not to worry. Actually, he's quite affable and rather humorous.

And the rumor about him being asked to leave a tavern recently so they could have happy hour isn't true.

WHY JUST listen to the enthusiasm Cortez exudes when discussing his role as lead singer.

"I don't try to pander to people," he said. "I don't try to get them to dance. A lot of times, I don't even look at them."

Shouting Club hasn't been looking at too many people lately for another reason. The band has kept its club dates to a minimum while working on a three-song demo tape.

One of the numbers will be used on a compilation album to be released after the first of the year on Tremor Records.

"We found by not playing we've gotten more reaction," Wright said. "People are coming up to us and asking why we haven't been playing or if we broke up."

Typical of the band's sardonic sense of humor, they printed up flyers to inform people they wouldn't

be playing anywhere. They like the limited playing schedule.

"WE FIGURE you can have a little overkill playing all over the place," Wright said.

"We're not like a lot of other bands in Detroit," he added. "A lot of bands in Detroit are bar bands. It's the same old rama lama bama all the time. We're more song-oriented."

That's certainly reflected in the band's demo tape. Even though the word, "days," finds its way into all three song titles, the writing is strong.

Cortez's vocals are strong as well. Which is not bad, considering Cortez had no lead-singing experience until Shouting Club came about.

Cortez is not the only member playing out of place, though. Simon is originally a guitar player who learned to play bass only recently.

Mason's drumming remains only consists of playing in his high school band. All of which, Wright points out, is one of the band's strengths.

"I'd hate to say we're good musicians," Wright said. "I think once you become a musician, you lose your originality."

Shouting Club will perform with the Orange Roughies Friday, Nov. 20, at the Hootenack Pub, Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

## REVIEWS

THE LONESOME  
JUBILEE— John Cougar  
Mellencamp

John Cougar Mellencamp's career has followed a curious path.

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His music was played on mainstream FM rock stations, which then disdained "new wave" rock with its quirky, sometimes cynical bent.

Likewise, most who loved new wave rockers like Elvis Costello and The Pretenders hated John Cougar, with his swagger and cool-guy posturing.

But that was then. On his 1983 album "Uh-Huh," Mellencamp began to sing of lost dreams "that kind of came and went" in his hit "Pink Houses."

By the time he released "Scarecrow" in 1985, he was raging at farm foreclosures suffered by his Indiana neighbors. "Minutes to Midnight" from that album told the story of a young man who rejects advice from an older man, then later admits "I could see that he was right." The tough guy was maturing into an insightful songwriter.

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ple answers to loneliness, growing older, or making a better world. The best is "Check It Out." It opens with a fiddle and hammered dulcimer laying down a catchy repeating riff. Midway those instruments give way to an electric guitar taking over the melody, making the song build majestically.

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(Soda) pop: Today's hits  
getting too commercial

Item: A recent hit by the rock band Genesis had nearly a three-month play on rock, pop and middle-of-the-road radio stations before it was released as a single.

Item: An alternate video version of Michael Jackson's chart-topping hit "Bad" lights up television every night.

There's something happening here, what it is is exactly clear. In the late 1980s the surest way to get a hit single is to use your song to plug beer, soda pop and goodness knows what else.

It's had enough the Beatles' "Revolution" was peddled to a sneaker manufacturer. At least that's an oldie.

But Genesis' "Tonight, Tonight, Tonight" was a chart-topping commercial for Michelob beer before it was a chart-topping 45. Meanwhile, Michael Jackson's television commercial definitively answers his own question as to who's "Bad": Pepsi-Cola.

WHAT'S WRONG with that, you ask? Consider rock history. Rock 'n' roll is a business, a competitive one at that. And record labels have gone to great lengths to get the radio air-

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play that's absolutely essential to any hit record.

The most blatant example is payola — slipping cash, drugs or heaven knows what else to disc jockeys in return for airplay.

At least once a decade, somebody drags out the old payola argument to put somebody else, usually a small, independent record label, on the hot seat. It happened again last year, implicating independent, black-oriented dance and rap labels.

Now, I'm not saying these labels are guilty or innocent. Nor am I saying payola is right, it isn't. It gives certain records an unfair advantage and keeps other worthy records off the airwaves and out of public reach.

But payola is a small-time's crime. Major record labels with hundreds of thousands to spend in promotion don't need it. Proven artists with a hard-core following don't need it either.

AND IRONICALLY the most innovative rock and pop music, from Elton's "Mystery Train" to Motown soul, from garage rock to disco, from Little Richard's primal scream to the beat box blasting of today's rappers, hasn't come from major labels or established artists. Instead it's come from tiny, independent record labels.

If it's wrong for a small label, with limited resources, to slip an extra \$1,000 or so to a disc jockey to get its record played, why is it hunky-dory for young millionaires, affiliated with well-connected entertainment conglomerates, to sign lucrative, mutually beneficial pacts with other conglomerates to push their records up the charts?

Whose unfair advantage is it?

## IN CONCERT

## JORMA KAUKONEN

Jorma Kaukonen, former Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna guitarist, will perform at 8 p.m. tonight, Nov. 9, at the Ark in Ann Arbor. Advance tickets are \$10. For more information, call 996-8742.

## PINK FLOYD

Pink Floyd will perform Tuesday, Nov. 10, at the Pontiac Silverdome. Tickets are \$20 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## MIDNIGHT CAFE

Midnight Cafe will perform Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 11-12, at the Token Lounge in Westland. For more information, call 522-0245.

## R.D.M.C.

Run D.M.C. will perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 12, at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$15.75 and \$13.50, and available at Ticket-

Master Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## ANITA BAKER

Anita Baker will perform Thursday and Friday, Nov. 12-13, at the Masonic Temple Auditorium, 500 Temple, near Cass, Detroit. Tickets are \$22.50 and \$25. Tickets are available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## SEDUCE

Seduce will perform Saturday, Nov. 14, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400.

## GEORGE BENSON &amp; EARL KLUGH

George Benson &amp; Earl Klugh will perform Saturday, Nov. 14, at Masonic Temple Auditorium, 500 Temple, near Cass, Detroit. Tickets are \$20 and available at TicketMaster

Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## THE DEAD MILKMEN

The Dead Milkmen will perform Monday, Nov. 23, at the Netcarne Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Doors open at 8 p.m. Advance tickets are \$8.50 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## YES

Yes will perform Saturday, Nov. 21, at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

## SQUEEZE

Squeeze, with special guests, The Silencers, will perform at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, at the State Theater in Detroit. Reserved seats are \$16.50 and are available at TicketMaster Outlets. For more information, call 996-8742.

## COLLEGE

Here's what is being played at WOUX-AM, the campus radio station at Oakland University.

1. "Big Decision." That Petrol Emulsion.
2. "Atonement." Spahn Ranch.
3. "The Prisoner." Squeeze.
4. "Saturday Boy." Billy Bragg.
5. "Rocket Machine." Opal.
6. "IOU." Replacements.
7. "Pop Goes the World." Men Without Hats.
8. "Tuff Gnarl." Sonic Youth.
9. "U Must B." Urban Blight.
10. "On a Night Like This." Backbeat Zydeco.

## COUNTRY

Here's the top-10 songs being played on country music station WWW-FM.

1. "Whiskey If You Were a Woman." Highway 101.
2. "Why Does It Have to Work." Restless Heart.
3. "I Won't Need You Anymore." Randy Travis.
4. "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle." Glen Campbell with Steve Wariner.
5. "I'll Be the One." Statler Brothers.
6. "I'll Be Yours Baby Tonight." Judy Roman.
7. "Little Ways." Dwight Yoakam.
8. "You Again." Forester Sisters.
9. "Mama's Rockin' Chair." John Conlee.
10. "Fishin' in the Dark." The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

## CDs

Here are the top-10 selling compact discs at Harmony House in Westland.

1. "Abbey Road." The Beatles.
2. "Momentary Lapse of Reason." Pink Floyd.
3. "Nothing Like the Sun." Sting.
4. "Tunnel of Love." Bruce Springsteen.
5. "Big Generator." Yes.
6. "Let It Be." The Beatles.
7. "Bad." Michael Jackson.
8. "Hold Your Fire." Rush.
9. "Dirty Dancing." Soundtrack.
10. "Document." R.E.M.

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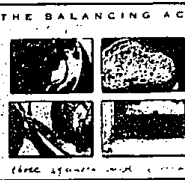
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nies with freewheeling, mostly acoustic guitars, along the lines of R.E.M.

Lyrically, things get a bit thicker. Songs tell of journeys in search of "groovy grass things" and former lives abandoned. Mixed in is a fair share of macabre humor.

Some of the lyrics get too thick, overloaded with metaphor.

THE BETTER tunes, like "Whiskered Wife" and "Three Cards," are straightforward.

So despite that growing list of necessities, this band may be telling us we are missing something.

In "Adventure," a commentary on apathy, we are asked "Where is your sense of adventure/Has it drifted far away?"

Or does it exist only on the screens of our VCRs?

— Brian Lysaght

IN THE FACE  
— Caruso

Caruso has all the makings of a great pop band. Same clothes, same hairdos and most important, a catchy beat.

The brothers Caruso are able to capture the latter on "In the Face," a slickly produced, five-song EP. The brother act, which hails from Trenton, Mich., is shooting for the commercial ceiling on their second album on NuBeat Records.

With song titles such as "Can't Stop Dreaming," "She's a Sensation" and "Young and Tender," it's apparent Caruso wants to put teenage girls in nirvana with their music.

But Caruso doesn't profess otherwise. Their goal has been to put out finger-snapping tunes.

On "In the Face," Caruso achieves that. The beat on "London," the first number on the disc and the one which has received the most air play on radio, is a fast-paced, enjoyable morsel of pop music. It's accented



with a gashing guitar and vibrant vocals.

Yet "London," like some of the other songs on the EP, is lyrically lacking in places. "London leaves me undone, oh yeah," is a fine line. But one would need more than an abacus to count the times it's repeated in the song.

The clichés tend to run over themselves in "She's a Sensation" as well.

By contrast, though, "Young and Tender" is the strongest written song on the EP and shows quite a bit of promise.

Musically, the Carusos have their house in order. Especially noteworthy are Joe Caruso's guitar and Rob Caruso's drumming. The vocals are excellent.

Now all Caruso has to do is get it in writing.

— Larry O'Connor