

STREET BEATS

Last Cavalry charges on with Wild West rock

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Rollin', rollin', rollin'. Get those doggies rock 'n' rollin'.

Yes, it doesn't take a crack of the whip to get Last Cavalry in full throttle. This five-man band plays like it was the last show before the Alamo.

Last Cavalry produces a spirited brand of country "n' westernish rock 'n' roll that would knock John Wayne off his saddle.

Some would call it cow punk or stagecoach punk. Drummer Dave Youngquist prefers to call it "tumbleweed thrash."

LAST CAVALRY'S music has all the needed elements for a good country twang. Their original material contains plenty of references to whiskey, women and trains.

"Mike (LaBrie, lead guitarist) actually works for the railroad," Youngquist said. "See, we have roots."

But none of the band members were pickin' and a'grinnin' before Last Cavalry evolved. Their musical backgrounds vary from jazz to surf punk.

And the turn to a more rootsy brand of music almost evolved by accident two years ago.

"I was living in Birmingham, and we couldn't rehearse because the neighbors would scream," Youngquist said. "Terry, Dale and I would practice with an acoustic guitar and a snare."

"That was the only way we could play. When you're left with acoustic guitars, there's not much else you can do."

THE ROOTS'Y tunes began to appeal to them. Little did they know rock with a country edge would become fashionable as bands such as the Replacements, the BoDeans and the Brandos have taken the same route with relative success.

"When David first told me about doing country music with high energy, I thought it was crazy," said Terry Burns, lead vocalist for the band.

Instead, the only thing people might find daft are Burns' stage antics.

He firmly embraces the axiom: Have wireless mike, will travel.

During one of Last Cavalry's high-energy numbers, Burns can be found in numerous places, least of which is the stage. He likes to run into the audience and, at times, share a table with some of patrons as he sings.

'Country lyrics you can relate to a little better. I'm getting a little older. It beats, "Hey baby, I'm going to pick you up tonight and drive around the high school parking lot."'

— Dave Youngquist
Last Cavalry

ONE TIME Burns literally was swinging from the rafters.

"The place we were playing at used to be a bank (McGee's in Pontiac) in the 1920s. I climbed up there . . . and started swinging," said Burns earnestly. "We have it on videotape."

Skip the video. You just have to watch a few minutes of the band's first set to know anything goes.

Burns, after placing his Budweiser down, tears into the first song as if he's warning all of Texas of an oncoming Apache raid.

Most of the show is original music. There's also some hybrid renditions of country classics such as "Folsom Prison," ("I'm a big Johnny Cash fan," said Youngquist.) "16 Tons," and "Ruby."

THE BAND'S musical objective is to take the roots of country and put a spike on them. The Nashville sound has become slick, they believe and, as a result, a bit bland.

They're appeal is wide range. New music aficionados like them because they're fast, and the average rock'n'roll devotee can appreciate the raw edge to their music.

Even a guy with work boots, who happened to stroll into the 3rd Avenue Cafe in Royal Oak, couldn't help but slap his knee as the band performed.

Lyrically and musically, Youngquist feels, the band hits home.

"Country lyrics you can relate to a little better," he said. "I'm getting a little older. It beats, 'Hey baby, I'm going to pick you up tonight and drive around the high school parking lot.'"

RECENTLY Last Cavalry won a



Members of rootsy-rocking Last Cavalry include Cameron Coe (left), guitar; Dale Jennings, bass; Terry Burns, lead vocals; Dave Youngquist, drums; and Michael LaBrie, lead guitar.

new music contest, sponsored by Snickers and Oakland University radio station WOUX-AM, at St. Andrew's Hall. The top prize was the chance to audition for a record com-

pany. Last Cavalry will be featured on a compilation compact disc of area bands to be released around Christmas. The first-of-its-kind compact

disc, produced by Creative Audio Group in Troy, will be released internationally.

Of course, a tour down South is an eventual goal as well. They figure

their act will go over real well in places such as Austin, Texas.

"Wherever we play, we go over well," Burns said. "People respect us. We work hard for it."

IN CONCERT

● ORANGE ROUGHIES

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

● JESUS & MARY CHAIN

Jesus & Mary Chain will perform with Opal on Friday, Nov. 20, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, near Brush, Detroit. Tickets are \$11.50. For more information, call 287-8090.

● STRUT

Strut will perform Friday, Nov. 20, at Harpo's, 14238 Harper, off I-94, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400.

● 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.

● THE DEAD MILKMEN

The Dead Milkmen will perform Monday, Nov. 23, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Arbor. Doors open at 9 p.m. Advanced tickets are \$8.50 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.

● SECOND SELF

Second Self and Line Society will perform Wednesday, Nov. 25, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 Congress, near Brush, Detroit. Tickets are \$5. For more information, call 287-8090.

● THE ALARM

The Alarm will perform Saturday, Nov. 28, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 Congress, near Brush, Detroit. Tickets are \$15.50. For more information, call 287-8090.

CDs

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

1. "Live Bullet," Bob Seger.
2. "Momentary Lapse of Reason," Pink Floyd.
3. "Big Generator," Yes.
4. "Faith," George Michael.
5. "Cloud Nine," George Harrison.
6. "Actually," Pet Shop Boys.
7. "Babylon and On," Squeeze.
8. "Lonesome Jubilee," John Mellencamp.
9. "Kick," INXS.
10. "Document," R.E.M.

COLLEGE

Here's the top-10 songs being played at WHRR-FM 89.3, the campus radio station of Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn.

1. "Seattle," Public Image Limited.
2. "Everything's Exploding," Flaming Lips.
3. "The Motion of Love," Gene Loves Geshel.
4. "Exhuming McCarthy," R.E.M.
5. "A Rush and a Push and the Land Is Ours," The Smiths.
6. "Tunnel of Love," Bruce Springsteen.
7. "Girlfriend in a Coma," The Smiths.
8. "Bop Til You Drop," The Ramones.
9. "You'll Dance to Anything (Instant Club Hit)," Dead Milkmen.
10. "Rain in the Summertime," The Alarm.

JAZZ

Here are the top-10 jazz albums being played on WJZZ-FM 105.9.

1. "Gift of Time," Jean Luc Ponty.
2. "Picture This," Billy Cobham.
3. "Go," Hiroshima.
4. "I'm the One," Roy Ayers.
5. "Nothing Like the Sun," Sting.
6. "The Heat of the Heat," Kevin Eubanks.
7. "Give It What You Got," Hiram Bullock.
8. "Through Any Window," Neil Larsen.
9. "Now You Know," Makoto Ozone.
10. "Portrait," Lee Ritenour.

REVIEWS

CLOUD NINE

— George Harrison

Former Beatle George Harrison is back and is stronger than he's been in years with the bouncy, hook-filled "Cloud Nine," his first album in five years.

The riveting 11-song set, which features old friends Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and Elton John, may even return a hearty dose of respect to Harrison, who in recent years has become the Rodney Dangerfield of rock.

After all, snickers and side comments have unfairly accompanied nearly every album he's released since 1973's chart-topping "Living in the Material World." It became almost fashionable to be a Harrison-basher.

That kind of thinking should subside with one listen to "Cloud Nine," co-produced with ELO's Jeff Lynne. There is something for everyone.

On the blues-flavored title track, which opens side one, Harrison and Clapton duel away on slide guitar. Following is the catchy, pop-textured "That's What It Takes," a solid bet to be released as a single.

For Beatle purists, "When We Was Fab" is like taking a magical trip back in time to the days of backward



... NOTHING LIKE THE SUN

— Sting

It's A-O-K. Someone can put away the safety net.

If anyone was poised for a fall, it would've been Sting. With the dreaded second-album curse coupled with his going with the same format, this could've been a failure.

Once again, the former Police vocalist and bassist has defied the odds and come through with flying colors on the jazz scale with "... Nothing Like the Sun."

But, as the man himself will readily attest, this album is hardly a solo effort. As with "Dream of the Blue Turtles," Sting has a little help from his friends.

Brantford Marsalis is back on saxophone, Kenny Kirkland returns on keyboards, and Dollette McDonald and Janice Pendarvis are back on vocals. But wait, there's more.

Included as well on this all-star jazz collaboration are guitarists Hiram Bullock, Mark Knopfler and Eric Clapton along with a host of others.

This time out, there is an adherence to even a more complete jazz sound. The excellent saxophone play of Marsalis is brought out more in "... Nothing Like the Sun," giving the album a texture which brings the lyrics across in story-like fashion.

— Tim Smith



DUTCHMAN'S GOLD

— Walter Brennan

And you thought the real Walter Brennan was the one you saw on the television show "The Real McCoys."

Now.

To fully understand the complex nature of the true Walter "Way Out Wally" Brennan, listen to the man's music (if you want to call it that). On vinyl, "Dutchman's Gold" is where Brennan comes to grips with the man under the worn brown leather hat.

Bruce Springsteen, Bono and John Cougar Mellencamp would be hard pressed to skim the depths of their own personal experiences and bring to light their true feelings in the lyrical fashion of Brennan.

"I'm a little older, but a whole lot wiser," says Brennan in an ode to farm life. "My wife says I'm an old miser/Miss the smell of . . . fertiliser."

Oh, ya.

Gosh, even Bob Dylan might be a tad envious in how Brennan was able to get to the heart of the matter in song (if you want to call it that). At



times, he's the optimist searching for a better fate.

One couldn't help but detect cynicism, though. Brennan seems to be grappling with the complexity of life and what it all means.

Says Brennan (in song No. 2), "The sun comes up/The sun goes down. The hands on the clock keep goin' around/I just get up and it's time to lay down. Life gits tee-jus, don't it?"

And if a tear doesn't well up in your eye when Brennan tells the heart-wrenching story about his pooch, "Shen," dying, why you're probably not even human.

No one can weave a story like Brennan, though, in that voice which shrills for emphasis like he just sat on a tack. Every vivid line is repeated in bellum-induced vocals by a backup group, sort of like the Mousketeers backing Elmer Fudd.

"The Dutchman" is definitely a classic. A cracked classic, perhaps, but a classic nonetheless.

— Larry O'Connor