



Hippodrome is Kyle Richards (left) of Livonia, Doyle Dean of Dearborn and Chris Richards of Livonia.

Hippodrome rocks around the obstacles

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

It's only a few minutes to show time and Hippodrome's lead singer and guitarist Chris Richards looks a tad worried.

He should be really worried.

Without benefit of a sound check, his three-member band is about to take the stage in a place that looks big enough to be a garage for 747s. And it's very empty.

But the show, as the backneyed expression reiterates, must go on. Richards must go on this night with his "conservative persona," complete with horn-rimmed glasses and dockers.

By day, he's a tour guide at Greenfield Village and didn't even have time to change for the show.

AT THIS stage it's generally figured what else could go wrong? In a nutshell: Everything.

After a few songs, Richards stops the show. Squinting into the bright lights, he asks no one in particular, "Could I get some water? I'm dying up here."

Once watered, Richards and his bandmates continue to burn through the 45-minute set. Things are looking good.

Then, close to touchdown, disaster strikes. Richards

turns to the sparse crowd with a horrified look.

"Does anybody have a guitar chord?" he asked. "I'm not kidding. I just destroyed mine."

At this point, any other group of musicians would have left the stage, pawed their equipment and joined a monastery in Tibet. But not Hippodrome.

RICHARDS JUST tells the smattering of people to take a bathroom break while he tries to find another chord. A band, which follows Hippodrome, lends him one.

To say nothing ruffles these fellows is akin to saying the wind in Siberia is nippy in January. Actually, despite all the problems, the show comes off quite well.

"We could go out there and play in our underwear," Richards said, "and it wouldn't faze us. In fact we will someday."

For now, Hippodrome is content to play with its clothes on — even if Richards looks like a national Review cover boy. The band has been together a little over four months.

IN THAT span, the band has developed a chemistry. Richards is joined by his brother, Kyle, on bass and Doyle Dean, whose previous musical experience was

with a hard-core punk band.

Together, they produce a sound that is unique and enjoyable. The adept guitar work of Chris Richards, who hops around the stage like a wayward kangaroo, adds to the fun mood.

He's backed up with Kyle's steady bass and Dean's machine gun drumming. Lyrically, they get to the point.

"A lot of people listen to us and label us as an R.E.M.," Richards said. "I violently deny that. I don't even like R.E.M."

There's a big trace about writing stupid lyrics. There are about situations in life.

SOME SITUATIONS in life are obvious. Last fall, in stance, how Hippodrome came across its drummer.

Richards had placed ads in several music trade publications in the area in search of one for his new band. He was going to post the job on a bulletin board at a Dearborn record store but was minus a pen.

When he asked the guy at the counter if he could borrow one, the guy at the counter wanted to know why. Richards told him.

He was talking to Dean. Personally, Dean had little trouble fitting in. Musically, though, was a different matter.

"It was kind of hard at first," said Dean, who played with a punk group, *Saturday Reasons*. "In hard-core it's very, very simple drum beats. All I was doing, basically, was yelling and screaming."

Now Dean has to be ready to play anything. Hippodrome claims to deliver any cover song in 30 seconds or less.

"WE'VE DONE the worst cover version of 'Comfortably Numb' ever attempted," said Richards proudly. "And we still haven't recovered from that."

Hippodrome has recovered enough to record some new material at Dave Peery's Tempermill Studios in Livonia. Plans include releasing a single, "Medieval Cheese," on cassette in January.

Already Richards is thinking of a marketing ploy. "We're going to sell (the tapes) at cost," he said. "It costs \$1.50 to make each one, we're going to sell it for \$1.50. We want to make it very unrefusable."

"Everybody's going to want it. It will only cost a couple of bucks. If it's a bad tape, they can just tape over it."

Hippodrome will perform with *Shouting Club* and *Orange Roughies* Friday, Jan. 8, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2948 Canfield, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

IN CONCERT

ORANGE ROUGHIES

The Orange Roughies, with special guests Shouting Club and Hippodrome, will perform Friday, Jan. 8, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2948 Canfield, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

BEAU COUP

Beau Coup will perform Friday, Jan. 8, at Harpos, 1428 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400.

MAP OF THE WORLD

Map of the World will perform Friday, Jan. 8, at Lil's 21, 2930 Jacob, near Holbrook, Hamtramck. For more information, call 878-8555.

MARIO & BOY SMILING

Mario & Boy Smiling will perform Saturday, Jan. 9, at "Sunday Morning," 4768 Greenfield, between Michigan Ave-

nue and Ford Road, Dearborn. Admission is \$3. For more information, call 846-5377.

SOFT WAR

Soft War, with special guests Gangster Fun, will perform Saturday, Jan. 9, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2948 Canfield, off I-75. For more information, call 846-5377.

VERTICAL PILLOWS

Vertical Pillows will perform Saturday, Jan. 9, at Lil's 21, 2930 Jacob, near Holbrook, Hamtramck. For more information, call 878-8555.

SCOTT CAMPBELL

Scott Campbell will perform with special guests, Jugglers & Thieves and Colorful Drama, on Friday, Jan. 15, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2948 Canfield, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

DOC WATSON

Legendary blues artist Doc Watson will perform Saturday, Jan. 16, at Alvin's, 5750 Cass, near Palmer, Detroit. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance and \$15 at the door. Show times are 9 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. For more information, call 832-2355.

ECHO & BUNNYMEN

Echo & the Bunnymen will perform Friday, Jan. 20, at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$15.50 and \$15 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone call 423-6666.

RITA MOSOUKA

Rita Mosouka will perform Friday, Jan. 15, at St. Andrew's Hall, Congress and Beaubien, Detroit.

ROY BUCHANAN

Blues artist Roy Buchanan will perform Wednesday, Jan. 13, at Harpos, 1428 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400.

WHITESNAKE

Whitesnake will perform Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

STING

Sting will perform Friday and Saturday, Feb. 10-11, at the Masonic Temple Theater in Detroit. Tickets are available at all TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone call 423-6666.

SONIC

Here are the albums (no particular order) which receive considerable air play on "Sonic Underground," which is hosted by Steve Kostian 8-10 p.m. Sundays on WRIF-FM 101.

1. "The Joshua Tree," U2.
2. "Document," R.E.M.
3. "Never Let Me Down," David Bowie.
4. "Louder Than Bombs," The Smiths.
5. "Blah Blah," Iggy Pop.
6. "Earth, Sun and the Moon," Love and Rockets.
7. "Skylarking," XTC.
8. "Georgia Satellites," Georgia Satellites.
9. "Crowded House," Crowded House.
10. "Rucky Fellini," Dead Milkmen.

LOCAL

Here are the songs (no particular order) by area bands receiving air play on "Detroit Music Society," which can be heard on WDR-FM 90.9 from 4-5 p.m. Sundays and 5-6 p.m. Tuesdays.

1. "Psychodrama," Funhouse.
2. "The Glory," Second Self.
3. "Hold On," Beer on the Penguin.
4. "Such As I Am," Before or After.
5. "I'll Remember You," See Dick Run.
6. "Buy Me a Pony," Little Monsters.
7. "Kicks For Sorrow," Hypnotics.
8. "I Can't Believe It," Hippodrome.
9. "Here It Comes," Aston James.
10. "Chance With You," Jugglers & Thieves.

HIGH VOLTAGE —Maynard Ferguson

This latest venture is something new for Maynard Ferguson. But new challenges are something Ferguson seems handle as well as he does the trumpet. "High Voltage" is the first album from Ferguson with his new electronic fusion band named, what else, High Voltage.

The seven-piece band is complete with saxophone, percussion, drums, guitar, keyboards and bass to go along with Ferguson's trumpet. And the east of instrumental blend in well.

For jazz aficionados and non-aficionados alike, "High Voltage" is pure pleasure to the musical ear.

Yes, there are some awkward moments. In one cut, "Sunday Morning," one can sense Ferguson's trumpet trying to out-muscle the other instruments. "Snap" is one of two vocal numbers on "High Voltage." It falters only because the bebop vocals do not mesh well with the music.

But, it equals, really.

—Larry O'Connor



PLEASED TO MEET ME —The Replacements

Critics seemed to butting heads in order to praise of the latest offering from the Minneapolis band.

And, no, it's not because The Replacements happen to be from Prince's hometown. One thing they do have in common with the Purple Rain maker himself, though, besides place of origin, is that The Replacements have mastered their art quite well.

Indeed, as R.E.M. becomes more popular in commercial avenues, The Replacements seem destined to takeover the throne as the best underground band around. "Pleased To Meet Me" gives solid reason to believe The Replacements won't be underground for long, either.

Why that is stems from the fact The Replacements show an incredible amount of moxie for an up-and-coming group.

Paul Westerberg, the group's singer/songwriter and guitarist, provides a brand of music with both energy and diversity. And the producer of the album, Jim Dickinson, knew well enough to leave the rawness off the music.

The Replacements' music is rooty, folk, jazzy, punkish, hard rock and a lot of other things not easily categorized. In short, there is not set pattern in their music.

—Larry O'Connor



DETROIT— DEAD OR ALIVE? — various artists

Want to know what is happening in our own back yard musically? Is there another Bob Seger, Mitch Ryder or Iggy Pop in our midst? Well, geez, don't expect local radio to tell us.

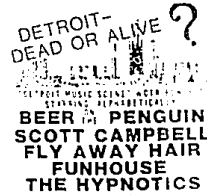
Some of the rock stations in this area seem to be content to live in the dark ages. The only thing to be heard in that airwave desert of classic rock is 1970s antiquities like Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" and Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama."

To pay homage to such rock legends is all fine and dandy. But to do it for 24 hours a day!

Really, one day our children will ask us what kind of music was there in the 1980s. And we won't know because we were too busy listening to the discosaurs of the 1960s and 1970s.

Anyhow, if you want a sampling of some Detroit rock 'n' roll, this cassette tape on Nebula, which is available at Sam's Jams and Harmony House outlets, offers some good nuggets.

Featured on the live compilation tape is Beer on the Penguin, Scott Campbell, Fly Away Hair, Funhouse, The Hypnotics and the Mindreaders. Recorded live at St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit, this tape captures the energy of the event without being too distorted with feedback like some live



recordings tend to be.

Also, one of the attractive features of compilation albums is that there's a wide variety of music to be heard. And such is the case here.

Especially noted on "Detroit—Dead or Alive?" is the guitar buzz of "Waiting For You" by Beer on the Penguin and the rather humorous "I'm Saving Myself For Angela Cartwright" by Scott Campbell. Also, The Hypnotics (obviously living up to their name) do a haunting version of "Psychodrama."

Campbell, incidentally, coordinated the project as a fund-raiser for WDR-FM. The educational radio station in Detroit has an hour-long show which, gasp, is actually devoted to local music.

The show, which is hosted by Campbell, can be heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays and 5-6 p.m. Tuesdays. But if you want more than an hour-a-week dose of local rock, "Detroit—Dead or Alive?" is a good bet.

—Larry O'Connor