

## STREET BEATS

## Tracy Lee: Just having fun

Theatrics, and lyrics blend well

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Only Tracy Lee and the Leonards could pull it off.

In front of a packed house at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor, the group recently hosted a record release party to usher in its new album "Tomorrow Morning." Billed to open for Tracy and the Leonards was an unknown outfit, Silver Potatoes.

A collective gasp came from the audience when the warm-up group took the stage.

Looking like something from a poor man's science fiction movie, out came the opening act dressed in baggy painters clothes made of paper with spray-painted silver potato medallions hanging from their necks. Tracy Lee and the Leonards were their own opening act.

"It was a blast," said Tracy Lee Komarmy, 24, lead singer of the hard-to-define musical group.

And a good time was had by all. Tracy Lee and the Leonards showcased the material from their new album and sold a ton of copies of the new disc as well.

But more importantly, Tracy Lee and the Leonards had fun. And when they have fun, everyone has fun. Get it.

This Ann Arbor-based group packs a wallop, both musically and visually on stage.

Band members wear everything from turbans and monster outfits to Boy Scout uniforms. On a given night, Tracy Lee might be anything from an elegant 1950s nightclub singer, complete with long black gloves and a strapless gown, to a wigged-out psychedelically sister in white go-go boots from the 1960s.

ON THIS DAY, Komarmy might pass for any graduate student studying drama at Eastern Michigan University. Slipping coat, she is quite charming.

"We're all theatrical and we like to have fun," said Tracy Lee, whose group formed 2 1/2 years ago.

But with a highly animated group of this nature, there come questions.

Can this outfit play, or are they just all show?

Tracy Lee and the Leonards' strong musical lineup refutes the latter notion.

George Bedard is a well-known blues and rockabilly guitarist in the area. Bedard has been the frontman for such groups as the Kingpins and the Bonnevilles.

Dick Siegel, a guitarist and songwriter with the group, is a highly regarded songwriter in the Ann Arbor area. Showing the true depths of their zaniness, Siegel and Tracy Lee penned a tune



Tracy Lee and the Leonards, which produces a zany brand of rock and roll, regularly performs at Alvin's in Detroit.

"... We are taking it more seriously than when we first started."

— Tracy Lee

about a runaway poodle named "Fleecy."

The rhythm section is solid with Richard Dishman on drums and Keith Herber on bass.

Then there's Tracy Lee, who can belt out a tune with the best of them. Together, the five members collaborate rather well.

"We probably started out a little more novel than we are now,"

Tracy Lee said. "We've evolved into something more and we are taking it more seriously than when we first started. It comes from solidifying our sound a little more."

Some have referred to the sound as neo-50s rock. Tracy Lee, herself, disagrees. She believes the group's music really escapes a label.

CROWDS LIKE it anyway. Tracy Lee and the Leonards regularly play to packed houses at the Blind Pig and Rick's in Ann Arbor. Lately, they've been a good draw at Alvin's in Detroit.

"We really like playing Alvin's and it works for us," Tracy Lee said. "It's difficult to develop a following there because people

have to come from a distance to see you."

"We're not concerned about playing every bar in the community in Detroit or Toronto or Chicago," she added later. "That's not the direction we're going."

Instead, Tracy Lee and the Leonards want to push the album. Being known as a recording group is more appealing at this stage than a reputation as strictly a bar band.

Tracy Lee and the Leonards are certainly an alternative to the thrash and crash of garage/bar bands. They offer perfect renditions of '50s and '60s covers to go along with their own material.

"I think you come through music while either listening to it or playing it," Tracy Lee said. "It should be a positive experience."

## IN CONCERT

## • BRUCE COCKBURN

Bruce Cockburn will perform at 8 p.m. Monday, March 14, at the Michigan Theater, 803 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Reserved tickets are \$12.50 and \$14.50 and available at all Ticketmaster outlets.

## • INXS

INXS will perform Wednesday, March 16, at Cobo Arena. Tickets are \$17.50. For information, call 567-6000.

## • FLASH

Flash will perform Wednesday through Saturday, March 16-19, at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For more information, call 681-1700.

## • MILES DAVIS

Miles Davis will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 19, at Masonic Auditorium in Detroit. Tickets are \$22.50. For more information, call 832-2232.

## • BLUES JUBILEE

The Robert Noll Blues Mission, Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones, Eddie Burns, The Alligators, Little Junior Cannaday and Big Rodgers will all perform at the Blues Factory St. Patrick's Jubilee on Saturday, March 19, at Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, between Ford Road and Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. The show starts at 8 p.m.; doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are available at Moby Dick's and Ticketmaster Outlets. For more information, call 581-3550.

## • MUSIC MARATHON

Ten bands will perform five hours of live music starting at 9 p.m. Saturday, March 19, at St. Andrew's Hall, Congress, between Beaubien and Brush, Detroit. The lineup of bands performing will include Scott Campbell, See Dick Run, The Reputations, Tanjant Image, Funhouse, Hippodrome, The Hypnotics, Anton

James and Bruce Nichols. Admission is \$6 (\$3 before 9 p.m.). The show is open to people 18 and older. Proper identification will be required. For more information, call 961-6358.

## • ORANGE ROUGHIES

The Orange Roughies will appear Wednesday, March 23, at Bookies, 870 W. McNichols, Detroit. For more information, call 862-0877.

## • DAVE MASON

Dave Mason will perform Friday, March 25, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. Tickets are \$7 in advance and \$9 at the door. For more information, call 823-6400.



Bruce Cockburn will perform tonight at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor.

## • TERENCE TRENT DARBY

Terence Trent Darby will perform at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 27, at Royal Oak Music Theatre. Tickets are \$16.50. For more information, call 546-7610.

## • EMERSON, BERRY AND PALMER

Keith Emerson, Carl Palmer and Robert Berry will perform Saturday, April 23, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400. Tickets are \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door.

## CHRISTIAN

Here are the top-10 songs being played on WMUZ-FM 103.5 FM, a Christian music radio station in Detroit.

1. "How Much Love," Allie.
2. "Bonded Together," Twila Paris.
3. "Greater Still," Larnelle Harris.
4. "The Reason We Sing," First Call.

5. "For Always," CeCe Winans.
6. "A Little Broken Bread," Debby Boone.
7. "To the Mystery," Michael Card.
8. "Walk Between the Lines," Russ Taff.
9. "Perfect Prayer," Scott Roley.
10. "Precious Lord," Crystal Lewis.

## COLLEGE

Here are the top-10 albums getting airplay on WORB-FM 90.3, the campus radio station at Oakland Community College.

1. "Diesel and Dust," Midnight Oil.
2. "Birth, School, Work and Death," The Godfathers.
3. "Floodland," Sisters of Mercy.
4. "Globe of Frogs," Robyn Hitchcock.
5. "Fox Heads Stalk This Land," Close Lobsters.
6. "Starfish," The Church.
7. "Touched By the Hand of God," New Order.
8. "Without Without End," Mighty Lemon Drops.
9. "The Frenz Experiment," The Fall.
10. "Love Live the New Flesh," Flesh For Lulu.

## COUNTRY

Here are the top-10 songs getting airplay on WWW-FM 106.7, a country and western radio station in Detroit.

1. "One Friend," Dan Seals.
2. "Too Gone Too Long," Randy Travis.
3. "I Wouldn't Be a Man," Don Williams.
4. "I Won't Take Less Than Your Love," Tanya Tucker.
5. "Just Lovin' You," The O'Janes.
6. "Shouldn't It Be Easier Than This," Charley Pride.
7. "Turn It Loose," The Judds.
8. "Wheels," Restless Heart.
9. "Lyn' in His Arms Again," Forster Sisters.
10. "Life Turned Her That Way," Ricky Van Shelton.

## REVIEWS

## SIRIUS

— Clannad



"Sirius," the title track off the album, is one of many highlights on the disc. "In Search of a Heart" moves fast and lays the foundation for the rest of the album.

This album stands on its own in terms of being good pop music. However, longtime fans of Clannad might be disappointed. Traditional Irish music instruments like uilleann pipes and flutes now compete with electric guitars and synthesizers.

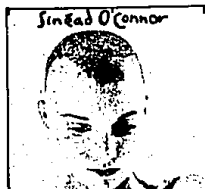
Also, this is a much faster band of music than Clannad is accustomed to deliver. Brennan's voice sometimes strains in an attempt to keep up. Her specialty has always been the slow, haunting numbers that she can single-handedly control.

In an attempt to give their music a commercial feel, one can't help but sense Clannad has forsaken a bit of its Irishness. And, as a result, a wee bit of its charm.

— Larry O'Connor

## THE LION AND THE COBRA

— Sinead O'Connor



A bevy of musical talent appears to be coming from the Emerald Isle of late. Add Sinead O'Connor's name to the long list of Irish artists that includes U2, Clannad, The Pogues, Cactus World News and That Petrol Emotion.

This 21-year-old is a definite talent in her own right. O'Connor writes, produces and mixes her own material on "The Lion and the Cobra" (Chrysalis). The depth of this album is remarkable.

O'Connor's voice can go from a throaty moan to a pitched shrill in a matter of a note. The music takes a jagged course, offering both raw, dark and upbeat melodic numbers alike.

"Mandinka" takes the latter, perhaps providing fodder for the contemporary ear. Hard rhythmic guitars pace this number, while O'Connor

puts her own stamp on the number with her high-octave vocals. "Jerusalem," by contrast, is a dark, introspective number. Haunting is perhaps the best way to describe it. "Just Like I Said It Would Be" takes a similar route, except there is a soothing acoustic guitar throughout the number.

"Never Get Old" is a piano piece of extraordinary skill. O'Connor handles the electric guitar and does quite a nice job in the slow moving, "Just Call Me Joe."

But the highlight of "The Lion and the Cobra" is the vocal odyssey O'Connor takes one on. It would serve no purpose to compare her to contemporaries like Annie Lennox, Kate Bush or even (yes!) Madonna. With a shriek, a howl and a whisper she sings. O'Connor has a voice that can only be described as her own.

— Larry O'Connor

## IF I SHOULD FALL FROM GRACE WITH GOD

— The Pogues



The lads mug it up with writer James Joyce on the cover of this disc, the band's third. There is a message here that we need not take this band too seriously.

"If I Should Fall" is the smoothest offering yet from the Pogues, but thankfully, not too smooth. The eight-piece band has sharpened its playing and its political wit.

The Pogues play a variety of traditional acoustic instruments — penny whistle, dulcimer, accordion — along with guitars and even a few horns here. They've caught an undeserved flak for setting traditional Irish music to a punk rock beat.

The title tune here is just right for irreverent lead singer, Shane MacGowan. He does equally well in a duet with Kirsty MacColl on a bit-travesty Christmas tune called "Fairytale of New York." The song offers a view of New York through an Irish immigrant's eyes: "They've got cars big as bars/

They've got rivers of gold/But the wind goes right through you/It's no place for the old."

Ireland is a country of many tragedies, and one is that Irish youth are still leaving their homeland in droves, seeking brighter futures in America, Europe or Australia. The Pogues know the problem well and consider the plight of two eras of emigrants in "Thousands Are Sailing."

They challenge English justice in a tune called "Birmingham Six." "God help you if ever you're caught on these shores/And the coppers need someone/And they walk through that door."

There are lighter topics here. Shane tells us a bedtime story about a speedy horse called Bottle of Smoke.

Good stories and inspired playing make this a fine recording.

— Brian Lyons