



Tanjent Image is defining its pop/rock sound.

## Tanjent Image follows pop trail

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Tanjent Image is dressing for success — not shopping. Band members, though, apparently have had a hard time convincing some business proprietors of that. The group likes to wear leather garb, both on and off stage.

Because of that, Tanjent Image has developed a following. But it's not exactly the one they had in mind. "People follow me around all the time when I go into stores," said James Anders, bass player with the group. "They think I'm a hood."

Members of the cowhide-clad group don't appear too concerned. Tanjent Image's attention is focused more on its recently released fourth EP, "Suranland" (Nebula). On the EP, Tanjent Image's music is a combination of thumping synthesizers and guitars. Lead singer Reed Richard referees with his vocals. Pop peppered with pertinent lyrics might sum it up.

Anders, a self-professed loner, does the majority of the songwriting.

*"Our writing style has changed since then ("Suranland"). We're more guitar-oriented now."*

— Reed Richard  
lead singer  
Tanjent Image

His lyrics are spewed out in rapid, sometimes crude poetic fashion.

SONG SUBJECTS in the Tanjent Image camp are not the standard pop fare. "Suranland," the title track of the EP, deals with things that are plastic, according to Anders. "Faith" deals with how people use and abuse religion.

"Anytime" centers on drugs and "One Nation" is an anti-war song ("Got to have one of those," Anders said).

But listening to the tape and hearing the band perform live might be

two different things. Most of the material for "Suranland" was written six months ago, which might as well be six years ago.

"Our writing style has changed since then," said Reed Richard, lead singer for the group. "We're more guitar-oriented now."

"We all have a lot of influences," Anders added. "Our mood dictates the songs we write. We might change month to month."

Members admit the problem is trying to be different yet keep their pop/rock roots.

Another problem has been trying to stay focused. Tanjent Image has recently weathered some rough times.

One group member recently went through a divorce and the band had \$3,000 worth of equipment stolen. Members are obviously looking to better times ahead, especially with the release of "Suranland." Already, they are working on another album and a possible tour of the East Coast is in the works.

CLOSER TO home, Tanjent Im-

age is a regular headliner at venerable St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit for the Sunday concert series.

Though new on the scene, the group has had a fair glimpse of the state of local music. One thing bothers Anders.

"There's no unity," he said. "I think there should be more unity among the bands. Instead, everyone is looking over everyone's shoulder all the time. I think if everyone banded together, we could get a good thing going."

Members of Tanjent Image believe they have a good thing going with their music.

"It's likeable stuff. In my opinion," Anders said. "I think we can get somewhere with it."

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— James Anders  
bass player

## COUNTRY CORNER

### Singer puts twist on country sound

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

There's no southern twang in his voice. There's no cowboy hat. Also, nary a rhinestone on his clothes. No Confederate flags tattooed on his arms. But Mark Barrett plays country music.

Raised in Livonia, Barrett plays a brand of music that, well, most people wouldn't figure him for.

After all, *gasp*, he even played in a rock and roll band while in high school at Livonia Stevenson.

"I still listen to rock and roll music on the radio," said Barrett, who lives in Redford Township.

BUT DON'T worry, country purists. Barrett is a fellow traveler. He has a long list of credentials to prove it.

He has recorded with Richard Sterban of the Oak Ridge Boys, Robert and Ray Vega and Ronald Dunbar. He has performed live with Waylon Jennings, John Anderson, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Terri Gibbs.

Barrett is also a board member on the Ronnie Milsap Foundation for the Blind and is on the board for Richard Sterban's Entertainers and Athletes Foundation.

How's that for name dropping? But Barrett is quite aware merely playing with country stars won't cut it.

ONLY HIS music will tell the real story.

For that, Barrett blends a Nashville twang with his Detroit roots. The sound borders on rhythm and blues.

Barrett is using his non-traditional country background to his advantage.

Instead of pitching camp in Nashville full time and trying to rework the same sound of a million other country groups, he is trying to play country music with a bit of twist.

BARRETT BELIEVES trying to make a go of it in Detroit has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the drawbacks is that few country publishers are in the area.

"It think it gives you an edge, a benefit," said Barrett, who spent time in Nashville on the AMI



Mark Barrett plans to release a single this month on the Detroit Country Label.

record label. "My voice and my music doesn't sound like it's from Nashville. It doesn't have that typical Nashville sound."

"Nashville is known for its country and western music. . . If you want to play baseball, you go to the baseball field."

Barrett is going to the field armed with an assortment of pitches. He tries to avoid the traditional country clichés.

EVEN THOUGH he wasn't raised in the South, Barrett has a feel for the music. Besides, his family all grew up in Tennessee. The storytelling is what attracted him to country music.

"It's a little more sensitive to play country," he said. "In country music — like any music — you're more or less telling a story. In country, it's the way you tell it."

Along the country trail, Barrett has gathered a few of his own stories. His performing experience runs the gamut, from playing before large crowds at country fairs to a few people at seedy dives.

Some of the criticisms of today's country music is that it's too watered down with pop and rock. Barrett disagrees.

"The more crossover there is, the more popular country will get," he said. "The younger generation will appreciate country even more."

## IN CONCERT

### ● FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD SOX

Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Tuesday, May 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 936-8555.

### ● DIRTY LOOKS

Dirty Looks will perform Wednesday, May 11, at New York New York, 24300 Hoover, Warren. For more information, call 756-6140.

### ● SHOUTING CLUB

The Shouting Club, with special guests Hipodrome and Happy Death Men, will perform at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 13, in the Pagoda Room, Henry Ford Community Col-

lege, Dearborn. Cost is \$3. The show is open to all ages.

### ● BEER ON THE PENGUIN

Beer on the Penguin will perform Friday, May 13, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff, off I-75.

### ● ARTIE WOLFF AND THE PACK

Artie Wolff and the Pack will perform Friday, May 13, at Four Green Fields, 13 Mile at Woodward, Northwood Shopping Center. For more information, call 280-2902.

### ● SMITHEREENS

The Smithereens will perform on Friday, May 13, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazee, off Gratiot, Roseville. Tick-

ets are available at all TicketMaster Outlets. For more information, call 778-8150.

### ● AC/DC

AC/DC will perform, with special guests L.A. Guns, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 14, at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

### ● THE FALL

The Fall will perform with special guests, Luxuria & Collectors. What do we need in return? Wall of Voodoo. Looks like someone got the short end of that transaction. But before checking to see if there were draft choices involved, "Ugly Americans in Australia" (I.R.S.) is really not a bad album.

Actually, this live disc has quite a bit of charm. Mostly recorded at the Palace Theatre in Melbourne, Australia (two tracks were recorded at Big Joe's Bar & Grill in Bullhead City, Ariz.), this offering is able to capture the intimacy and energy of Wall of Voodoo's somewhat zany performance. Few live albums are able to do that.

This is a considerable feat especially since Wall of Voodoo sound has a heavy techno feel to it. And there's more of Wall of Voodoo's repertoire to listen to. Anyone who religiously watches MTV has probably seen the video for Wall's infectious and quirky mini-hit, "Mexican Radio."

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## JAZZ

Here are the top-10 albums receiving airplay on WJZZ-FM, a jazz radio station in Detroit.

1. "Natural Elements," Acoustic Alchemy.
2. "Simple Pleasures," Bobby McFerrin.
3. "Dancing in the Dark," Sonny Rollins.
4. "Short Stories," Bob Berg.
5. "Crazy Rhythms," Azymuth.
6. "Nothing Like the Sun," Sting.
7. "Behind the Sun," Clyde Winter.
8. "Characters," Steve Wunder.
9. "Living Colors," Dave Samuels.
10. "Yutaka," Yutaka.

"Crazy, Crazy Melbourne" starts off with a jazzy, nightclub piano and Andy Priebroch crooning in his best lounge-lizard voice. Then the number explodes into stream of techno-funk funk. Still, it's very enjoyable.

"The Heart Never Can Tell" has a rhythmic-chant quality to it, perfect for Australian Rules Football matches. Wall of Voodoo really gets zany with its keyboard cover of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire."

"Ugly Americans in Australia" makes a person want to see Wall of Voodoo in concert.

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## COLLEGE

Here are the top-10 songs being played on WORB-FM 90.3, the campus radio station of Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus.

1. "Alsatian Cousin," Morrissey.
2. "In Between," Beat Happening.
3. "Fall Down," Mighty Lemon Drops.
4. "All Night Long," Peter Murphy.
5. "Bone Machine," Pixies.
6. "Your Agent Man," Cabaret Voltaire.
7. "Reality," Tack Head.
8. "Fairly Tale of New York," Pogues.
9. "Golden Calf," Prefab Sprout.
10. "Kidney Bingos," Wire.

Of course, that might be the intent of the man who is considered one of the founding fathers of the new wave movement. Really, though, new wave is no longer new.

Perhaps DeVeto hasn't got wind of this. This album features the continual dirge which plagues so many allegedly nouveau music offerings today.

OK, so this music is different, something one has never heard before. But "Unanswerable Lust" scores low in the departments of enjoyable and listenable.

The vocals are disjointed and run against the grain of any melody that is trying to be put forth. Lyrically, we get gems such as this one found in the number "Pound."

"Certainty, it's so sexy/you're so

cold to drop/you could be eating Ciba Gelyg goat cheese/you need to tell someone to tell you when to stop." Now that's poetry.

A ray of hope comes with the acoustic opening of "Lady 21." Then the singing starts and things take a nose dive from there. A French lesson comes with "Mile," which makes perfect sense since the stuff in English is hard enough to comprehend.

In "Luxuria," a number on the album, there's a funky rhythm reminiscent of the B-52s. A few lines, though, perhaps offers some insight of today.

"God's gone back to heaven/he's deserted us/but what the hell/he never understood us anyway."

He must have listened to this album.

## COUNTRY

Here are the top-10 country songs receiving airplay on WWWW-FM, a country and western station in Detroit.

1. "I'll Always Come Back," K.T. Oslin.
2. "Famous Last Words of a Fool," George Strait.
3. "Santa Fe," Bellamy Brothers.
4. "Love Will Find Its Way to You," Reba McEntire.
5. "Cry, Cry, Cry," Highway 101.
6. "It's Such a Small World," Rodney Carr.
7. "Americana," Moe Bandy.
8. "Eighteen Wheels and Dozen Roses," Kathy Mattea.
9. "Young Country," Hank Williams Jr.
10. "True Heart," Oak Ridge Boys.

## REVIEWS

### SHADOWLAND — K.D. Lang

Yes, she looks like a man. Yes, she wears sawed-off cowboy boots. Yes, she's even a Canadian.

But listen up and listen good — K.D. Lang just might be the finest female country vocalist of her generation; arguably the best since departed Patsy Cline herself.

At least, that's what ex-Cline collaborator Owen Bradley thinks. He came out of retirement to produce "Shadowland" (Sire).

K.D. Lang (she, like the poet e.e. cummings prefers the lower case) has recorded before. Here, however, she gets the build-up to a budding superstar deserves. Country legends Loretta Lynn, Kitty Wells and Brenda Lee are trotted out to assist on one track. A plethora of hall-of-fame country session musicians, including one-time Bob Dylan sideman Hargus "Pig" Robbins, are also present. Even the Jordanaires pop up here and there.

They don't overshadow this self-styled upstart, however. Lang's voice is as vast and breathtaking as her native Alberta countryside. It's



best displayed on the gorgeous "Western Stars" and the title track, though her ballad work is solid throughout. She also breathes new life into "Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes," the old Perry Como chestnut.

If there's a criticism, it's that there are just too many ballads. One or two more up-tempo songs would have made for a better-rounded presentation of her talent. Another disappointment: "Crying," her flaccid duet with Roy Orbison on his classic 1960s hit isn't on the album. Search for the 45 and, by all means, buy it.

Still, Lang is an artist on her way. No doubt she'll soon begin scooping up armfuls of trophies on those country music awards shows that pop up every two weeks or so.

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### UGLY AMERICANS IN AUSTRALIA — Wall of Voodoo

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Wall of Voodoo shows its Australian audience that it is more than a one hit and run band. And there's no quicker way to endear yourself to a crowd of Aussies than writing a song about them.

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### UNANSWERABLE LUST — Luxuria

Who is Luxuria? What is Luxuria? Is it a person, place or thing?

Unanswerable Lust (Beggars Banquet), the first album from new wave guru Howard DeVeto (Magazine and Buzzcocks), leaves no answers. If anything, it leaves a trail of confusion.

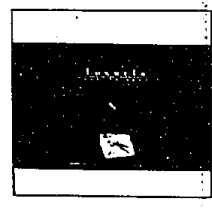
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