

STREET BEATS



Reggae outfit ON-XYZ will celebrate its first decade in the business with a 10th anniversary performance Saturday, Dec. 17, at Alvin's, Cass Avenue, near the Wayne State campus in Detroit.

ON-XYZ puts charge into reggae

By John Cortez
special writer

To say that ON-XYZ is a versatile band is like saying Da Vinci did a few odd jobs and was pretty good with his hands.

Khalid Shakoor, leader of ON-XYZ (pronounced "onyx"), describes their sound as a blend of Talking Heads, Black Uhuru, Miles Davis and Sun Ra.

Formed in 1978 as ON-XVZ: Seal of the Funk, the band quickly realized there were more funk bands in Detroit than streetlights. They embraced reggae and became known as ON-XYZ: "Subatomic Nuclear Funk Fusion Reggae Band."

"That meant that we felt our music originated more in Atlanta," said the lanky Shakoor. "We felt that our music was sensitive enough to affect the sub-atomic particles in every person's body. We wanted them not only to dance to our music, but to heal themselves to it."

With the addition of a horn section and an extensive African rhythm

section, the group is preparing to release a new mini-LP, "Shake Up Yourself," under the name ON-XYZ: Primal Electronics. According to Shakoor, this moniker reinforces the group's original purpose.

"We began with an inspired dream to play positive music for people the world over, and that still guides us," he said. "Primal electronics blends acoustic and rhythmic instruments from all the continents with electric ones."

The band's stage show reflects this notion. The players dress in flamboyant outfits representing African, Eastern and European fashions. They play original songs, and cover anything from Bob Marley to Jimi Hendrix, or "anything the audience wants to hear."

THEY have taken their electrifying act everywhere from Iowa City to Chicago to Toronto to New York's famed CBGB's. They also opened for such renowned artists as Black Uhuru, Jimmy Cliff and Par-

liament/Funkadelic.

"I think the strongest part of our live show is communication with the audience," Shakoor said. "The main thing is to touch the people, to move them. If we see the audience is not responding, we try to find out why so next time it won't happen."

Shakoor also cites the band's unpredictability in concert as a strength.

"Every ON-XYZ show is different," he said. "The audience senses our enjoyment of the music. It is something that is not contrived."

On a recent night at Ann Arbor's Blind Pig, vocalist Kareem Baqi warns the audience, "I hope you guys like dancing 'cause this one may move ya!"

ON-XYZ then kicks into "Shake Up Yourself," a gritty, urban-edged funk tune with a reggae backbeat. Shakoor, perched behind his keyboards, provides a melodic rhythm beat to blaring percussion, while Baqi and Shirley Haydon wall on the vocals. Guitarists Randy Smith and Daud trade licks, while the crowd

tramples the small dance floor. ON-XYZ is on.

A similar scene will unfold on Saturday, Dec. 17, at Alvin's near the Wayne State campus. ON-XYZ will celebrate its first decade in the business with a 10th anniversary performance. Former members of the band will reunite for a set of their "subatomic" material, and then the present lineup will sway spectators to its "primal electronics."

Their unique brand of reggae/fusion has attracted the attention of a few major record labels. Shakoor said he has a verbal commitment from at least one label. He cannot release details, but he hopes to complete a deal soon.

IN THE MEANTIME, ON-XYZ continues to explore new musical galaxies. Indian and Eastern music are favorites of Shakoor, and may influence the road ON-XYZ will travel. But their sound will remain as indescribable as the universe in which it echoes.

MUSIC NOTES

Area rockers give the gift of music

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

'Tis the season to give, and plenty of people in the Detroit music scene are doing just that.

First off, on Wednesday, Dec. 14, Caruso, See Dick Run and Robb Roy will band together in a benefit for the Gleaners Food Bank and the Food Bank of Oakland County. The concert will take place at The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, near 10 1/2 Mile Road, Roseville. Doors open at 8 p.m.

Also dropping in are Karen Monson, Romance and some other surprises. The benefit is being organized by the newly formed Detroit Music Network.

Caruso's Mike Caruso, who's involved in putting the Network together, said the group is in its infancy. But hopes are that it will grow into something big.

"The general direction of the network is that there is some room for good will," Caruso said. "Too many bands think of themselves as islands and that they're in competition with everyone else. . . . We think something like this can only upgrade the standard of music in Detroit."

Along with Caruso, those active in forming the Detroit Music Network include Jim Edwards of See Dick Run, Bob Minichella of Romance and Monster. Caruso would certainly like more musicians to join the ranks.

Similar organizations exist in other cities, like the Chicago Music Coalition for example. The basic idea is to share information, and lend support to the Detroit music scene.

One of the complaints made by some musicians in Detroit is that there are too many cliques. As a result, there hasn't been much of a cooperative effort in getting the word about Detroit area musicians.

"I think it's important that somebody takes the first step forward," Caruso said. "What can happen? It can only go uphill from here."

Doors open for the benefit show Dec. 14 at 8 p.m. Admission is \$2 plus a can of food with a dollar knocked off for every additional can of food (Organizers prefer to collect canned meat or high-protein tuns).

ANOTHER SPIN for a good cause is the "Local Riffs" compilation cassette and compact disc that hit the racks today.

The album features nine Detroit bands, including J.D. Lamb, Circular Motion, Second Order Thinking, The

Civilians, Roulette, The Shake, Tan-jent Image, Orange Roughies and See Dick Run. The compilation was the end result of the WRIF-FM's "Local Riffs" competition this year.

Bands were selected by listeners in weekly and monthly competition. Some 900 musicians sent in tapes to WRIF-FM.

The CD is \$10 and the cassette is \$5. Proceeds from the sale will benefit the Child Protection Team at Children's Hospital. The Child Protection Team is a group of professionals who intervene on behalf of children when abuse or neglect is suspected.

A series of Saturday night concerts will take place in conjunction with the release at The Ritz in Roseville. The Civilians, The Shake and The Orange Roughies will perform on Dec. 10.

On Dec. 17, Second Order Thinking, Tan-jent Image and See Dick Run will take the stage.

Three bucks or three cans of food will get you in the door. Cash proceeds will benefit Children's Hospital; the cans of food will be donated to the Southeastern Food Coalition. And while we're on the subject of album releases, Broken Yoyo will release its new LP, "The Big Picture," on its own label Flasco Records any day now. The eight-song album comes after two 7-inch single releases in the past. With a band of this scope, a full-length LP might be what the rock/roll doctor ordered. This band deserves national recognition.

CLASSICAL

Here are the most requested selections on Dick Wallace's show on WQRS-FM.

1. "Capriccio Espagnol," Rimsky-Korsakov.
2. "For the Beauty of the Earth," Rutter.
3. "Horn Concerto No. 4," Mozart.
4. "Espana," Chabrier.
5. "Fanfare for the Common Man," Copland.
6. "String Serenade," Elgar.
7. "Symphony No. 5," Beethoven.
8. "Voices of Spring," J. Strauss Jr.
9. "Concerto No. 8 in A minor," Vivaldi.
10. "Air On A String," Bach.

COUNTRY

Here are the top-10 songs receiving airplay on WWWW-FM.

1. "I Know How It Feels," Reba McEntire.
2. "New Shade of Blue," Southern Pacific.
3. "Chiseled in Stone," Vern Goodin.
4. "I Wish That I Could Fall in Love Today," Barbara Mandrell.
5. "Spanish Eyes," Willie Nelson.
6. "If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin')," George Strait.
7. "Runaway Train," Roseanne Cash.
8. "When You Say Nothing At All," Reba McEntire.
9. "Desperately," Don Williams.
10. "I've Been Looking," Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

COLLEGE

Here are the top-10 albums on WAYN-AM, campus station of Wayne State University.

1. "All Right for President," All.
2. "All This and Nothing," Psychedelic Furs.
3. "Seven Simple Songs," Orange Roughies.
4. "Truth and Soul," Flaxhouse.
5. "Demo Cassette," Inside Out.
6. "Every Dog Has Its Day," Let's Active.
7. "Common Ground," Rhythmic Corps.
8. "Too Much Ain't Enough," Sedex.
9. "Kick Out the Jelly," Junk Monkeys.
10. "Test Kit," Radox Acid.

IN CONCERT

- **HOLY COWS**
Holy Cows will perform tonight at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 998-8555.
- **WAS (NOT WAS)**
Was (Not Was) will perform at 10 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance. For more information, call 99-MUSIC.
- **STEVIE WONDER**
Stevie Wonder will perform at 8 p.m. on Monday through Wednesday, Dec. 5-7, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$27.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

- **BAD COMPANY**
Bad Company will perform at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at the Royal Oak Music Theater. Tickets are \$15-50. For more information, call 546-7610.
- **IDENTITY**
Identity, a reggae band from Cleveland featuring former Ice members, will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 998-8555.
- **KEITH RICHARDS**
Keith Richards will perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Fox Theater in Detroit. Tickets are \$20. For more information, call 567-6000.
- **J.D. LAMB**
J.D. Lamb will perform on Friday, Dec. 9, at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw. For more information, call 336-2292.

- **JUNK MONKEYS**
Junk Monkeys will perform on Friday, Dec. 9, at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For more information, call 875-6555.
- **SEE DICK RUN**
See Dick Run will perform with special guests, Walk the Dogma, on Saturday, Dec. 10, at Alvin's, 5768 Cass, Detroit. For more information, call 821-2355.
- **DETROIT BLUES BAND**
The Detroit Blues Band will perform on Saturday, Dec. 10, at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw. For more information, call 336-2292.

- **BOOTSLEY X**
Bootsley X will perform on Saturday, Dec. 10, at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For more information, call 875-6555.
- **ROMANCE**
Romance will perform Thursday through Sunday, Dec. 18, at Dayton's, Rochester Road, near 14 Mile, Clawson. For more information, call 538-1555.
- **FRANK ALLISON**
Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform on Friday, Dec. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 998-8555.
- **TRACY LEE**
Tracy Lee and the Leonards will perform on Saturday, Dec. 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 998-8555.

REVIEWS

PEEP SHOW

— Siouxsie Sioux

Siouxsie Sioux has consistently released great singles since forming the Banshees with guitarist Steve Severin way back in 1976. Ranging from their first British hit, "Happy House," to the unique "Christine," the wild "Spellbound" through to the recent "Cities in Dust," her singles have all been easily identifiable "Siouxies."

She deserves credit for the fact that she has maintained true to her original motivations and, as a result, has carved a niche as the "Queen of Avant-punk."

This LP, "Peep Show" (Geffen), is their eighth studio album and they have expanded from their nucleus of Siouxsie, Steve Severin and drummer Budgie to include a new guitarist, Jon Klein. This band changes guitarists like underwear.

Their claim on this record is that they stripped away a lot of the "sounds" and concentrated on coming with "simple songs." Sounds like they're being studious at those wacky, fuzzy songwriters U2.

In truth, though, there are some strong songs on this album. Unfortunately, they still suffer from the same problems of monotony over the course of an LP. Too much of a good thing.

The single you MTV junkies probably know as "Peek-a-boo," a musically quirky look at softcore pornography and the dehumanizing of women. The other highlights of the album are the powerful "Scarecrow," with power guitars thundering along, and the excellent "Killing Jar."

These songs make up the first three on side one and from there on the quality of the songwriting degenerates until we are left with the overblown "Rhapsody," a song dealing with the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. This has always been an obvious theme for songwriters throughout history.

While her visual image has always been one of starkness and exotica, her songs range from punky to the grandiose. On this LP, Siouxsie's strength lies in a minority of songs. But that minority is exceptional.

— Cormac Wright



FISHERMAN'S BLUES

— Waterboys

Well, aren't we getting a bit folksy, the violinist here has become a "fiddle player." That's the first clue.

So it is that "Fisherman's Blues," (Chrysalis) the long-awaited follow-up to the critically successful "This is the Sea" LP from the Waterboys is a trip on the back roads of a mystical Celtic musical experience. This is a stripped down, mud up to the top of your boots, back to your roots LP.

But so often when a band makes a foray into the music of the past, the question to be asked is: Is it new?

In the Waterboys case, not always. The sincerity is there. This Welsh group must have been on one long pub crawl because they appear immersed in the music of Ireland. And there's nothing wrong with that as long as it leads to a new twist in your music.

"We Will Not Be Lovers" achieves this. This fiddle-filled LP has an intensity that has been the hallmark of the Waterboys' music in the past. Steve Wickham, whose past credits



include working with U2 and in Tus, does an outstanding job here on the violin.

Then the Waterboys veer off on melancholy avenue. The music on side two is traditional Irish in every sense of the word. Acoustic guitar and the fiddle are the basis for many of the tunes. "When Will We Be Married?" is something you'd only expect to hear on St. Patrick's Day in O'Halloran's Tipperary Pub.

That's not to say the Waterboys don't do a good job of playing this stuff. Really, there's a foot-tapping quality to "And A Bang on the Ear" and "Has Anybody Here Seen Hank?"

Mike Scott's quirky, strained voice is the perfect vehicle for this kind of music. He likes to whoop it up like some tribe leader occasionally, sometimes too much.

Whether or not this translates into a more original Waterboys' sound, we'll have to wait and see. But we shouldn't have to.

— Larry O'Connor

PARTNERS IN TIME

— Mr. B with J.C. Heard

To steal a lyric, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

Mark Braun, a.k.a. Mr. B., and James Charles Heard created an album that swings to the legal limit and then some.

"Partners in Time" (Blind Pig) features Braun, the 30ish, Ann Arbor-based boogie-woogie pianist, and Heard, the seasoned drummer, who did this fall a few days before a scheduled concert with Dirty Gillepie in Detroit.

Heard, 71 when he died, led a full musical life, jamming with hundreds of fellow jazz greats from Count Basie to Lester Young. He led his own Detroit-based jazz bands since the 1970s.

Braun is a Flint native and Ann Arbor-based musician who made a name first locally with the Steve Nardella Band, then to a larger audience playing solo as Mr. B.

On this recording the two become partners in what may be for some listeners a musical history lesson — a fine sampling of boogie-woogie, a



truly American style that helped put the rock in rock and roll and traces its roots to gin joints, dance halls and other hot spots.

There is some charged up blues here too and a fine cast of local musicians playing the stuff.

Meet the I-94 Horn Section, which includes trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, and meet talented tenor saxophonist George Benson. Guitarist George Bedard was co-third of the production team and plays guitar on one track. The album was recorded at United Sound Systems in Detroit.

Vocalist Jeanne Carroll from Chicago belts out wonderful, gutsy blues on three tracks, especially the Ida Cox tune "Wild Women."

But it is Braun and Heard who combine to stop the musical clock. If this album is hard to find, it is worth the effort. It's got that swing.

— Brian Lipschitz