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## Generals: 'Simply' successful

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

About every three seconds, Kevin James' eyes light up with another marketing idea.

The latest in a series of light bulbs concerns The Generals' next LP, which will be titled "Use Once and Destroy." The album should be out sometime in July.

"Just think, it could become a cult thing," said James, who is lead guitarist in the band. "People would buy the album, listen to it once and destroy it and then buy another one. All we would need is for four people to buy it."

"Which is about how many people bought our single," added bass player Flip Cherven with a smirk.

Humor and philosophy are not lacking in The Generals' camp. Band members are quite adept with both.

Musically, The Generals can be described as punk with a pop flair. There's snarl. There's hooks. In the final analysis, there's songs that de-

serve a second look.

Around here, though, that isn't easy. Where do you want to start? Radio? How about the lack of clubs? Or the missing strong independent record label? All of which adds up to a dilapidated support network for new bands.

THE GENERALS shrug it all off. Instead, they have taken their act on the road. The band has performed before appreciative crowds in Minneapolis, Minn., Chicago and other places in the Midwest.

A people in the Detroit music scene are a bit surprised by The Generals' success. The band hasn't been a regular on the concert trail for awhile, except for a few shows at Saint Andrew's Hall in Detroit.

The Generals formed in 1988. Vocalist Tony Cole, drummer Matt Washburn and James were in Alien Nation and Cherven was in the Mangos. They broke with those bands. (Washburn joined The Generals recently).

At first, the band could be found performing at The Graystone in Detroit. Known mainly for hardcore punk acts, The Generals were automatically lumped into that category.

"That's been a problem for us for a long time," said James, who lives in Birmingham. "In Detroit, there's two extremes. We weren't hardcore enough or you'd play some places and were too loud. We were sort of caught in the middle."

People in places, such as Minneapolis and Chicago, have been a bit more open minded, taking The Generals at face value. Some expect a Detroit band to kick out the MC's or the Iggy Stooges sound, but The Generals shake them up.

SONGWRITING is the key, they believe. The Generals try to capture a simple melody with a simple line without clichés. James, who is an English major at the University of Michigan, sees to that.

"The song is a song," James said.

"It's not a poem. It's not 'Paradise Lost.' We're not out to write an epic."

"We'll leave that to (rock group) Yes," Cherven added.

The Generals have a cut, "How Much More," on the recently released WORF-FM compilation tape. The previous recording effort, a seven-inch single "Danger Stranger," didn't fare too well.

"We marketed it the wrong way," Cherven said. "We sat on it too long."

Those mistakes will be avoided this time out. "Use Once and Destroy" is being recorded at Diversion Studios in Berkley. This band is definitely in it for keeps.

Otherwise, James wouldn't be sounding like a junior Iacocca.

"There are the basic laws," he said, striking his index finger up in the air. "If it's yellow and tastes like soap, it's beer. If it's yellow and tastes like vinegar, but only costs 85 cents a quart, buy it."

## They're a 'jar' full of good music

### St. James' 'Twiggy' is local rage

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Ladies and gentlemen, from Peach-On-Cobbler, England... it's Twiggy Barbus, and the Lizards in Jars.

No, they are not appearing in junior high science classes, but are the latest rage in local pubs. Twiggy and Company recently performed a rather hot set of covers at Paycheck's Lounge, opening up for Johnny Allen & The Appeal.

Some rather familiar faces dot the Twiggy Barbus lineup, including Scott Campbell, guitar; Skeen (Funhouse), guitar; Ken Dicks, drummer; Mike Bluch (Figure 4), bass; Lance Graves, guitar; Missy Gibson (Strange Bedfellows) and Beaux Mitchell (Skanking Voodoo).

But who is this Twig character? Gees, he looks an awful lot like WRIF-FM disc jockey Greg St. James.

"Now, he's my first cousin, three times removed," St. James said.

According to St. James, Twiggy apparently has been residing in Bad Moon Rising, West Germany, after recovering at the Hoover Institute. Twiggy, you see, is a recovering "vaulcoholic."

Though the disease has yet to find its way into medical journals, apparently it can begin with dust-busters and evolve into mass buying of custodial-sized Hoovers.

TWIGGY HAS triumphed over his weakness for vacuum cleaners, instead blowing out some rather spirited rock'n'roll. The all-star group performed a seven-song set, featuring some rather inspired covers of David Bowie's "Rebel, Rebel" and "Putting Out Fire (With Gasoline)."

Before the group launched into "Jumpin' Jack Flash," Twiggy slowly walked to the microphone and peered out into the crowd.

"Guns N' Roses stole this from the Rolling Stones," said Twiggy, striking a serious Bonosque pose. "Well, we're stealing it back."

Twiggy Barbus and the Lizards in Jars made their debut last summer at the "Morons of Rock" show at Saint Andrew's Hall. Since then, Twiggy has miraculously lost his British accent (not to mention ditching the Rod Stewart wig) and been playing benefits and other gigs.

Twiggy, err St. James, is the driving force behind the group.



Twiggy Barbus, who resembles Greg St. James of WRIF-FM, and the Lizards in Jars are the latest rage in local pubs.

"Since it's so hard to get local music on the radio, I thought I'd get all the local bands together," St. James said. "This is my way to support local bands."

## LIVE

### JOHNNY ALLEN & THE APPEAL — Paycheck's Lounge, Hamtramck.

The yeoman approach to their craft is indeed to be admired. You wait for this five-piece outfit, led by Johnny Allen, to slow down, but it never comes to be. Instead, Johnny Allen & The Appeal build into a whirlwind of momentum that only ceases when the lights are turned off.

For little more than an hour, Johnny Allen and his band burned through a 17-song set. Most of the tunes were originals, featuring some of the great cuts off Allen's "Desperate Years" LP and showcasing material for his next LP, "Blood." The sound is rather straight-forward, get-your-kicks rock 'n' roll.

Allen lives out the role of the underdog rock 'n' roll Joe. The jeans ripped in the knee, the black leather jacket with the motorcycle boots to match the look is complete. His songs allude to dreams, ones that he lives out on stage.

And, at times, on stage is where he gets beside himself with an emotion. On some songs, he pulls his guitar behind his head for a little feedback. He hits his knees to re-emphasize the

commitment he has to the songs.

Then there are the occasions when he wanders out into the audience with his guitar in hand. After a rather exhausting number, Allen goes as far as to make a sign of the cross (Well, heck, it was Sunday).

Such Springsteen-esque gestures, though, might be forgivable only because Johnny Allen seems sincere. Authentic numbers such as "Barfoot in the Snow" and "Desperate Years" further drive this home. The material he showcases for the next LP, such as "Certain" and "I Know Just What You're Thinking" are along the same lines.

Allen is backed up by a rather skilled, if not steady, group of musicians. If anything, they help anchor the whole production. The most intriguing of the other band members is the back-up vocalist, whose voice certainly stands out. She and Allen had dueling lambornos on a cover version of the Beatles' "Come Together."

Johnny Allen & The Appeal already have their act together.

— Larry O'Connor

## IN CONCERT

### • ANON B. DAVIS

Anon B. Davis will perform on Tuesday, May 20, at the Billed Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • MUDDCAT RUTH

Muddcat Ruth's Pressure Cooker will perform on Wednesday, May 31, at the Billed Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • MAP OF THE WORLD

Map of the World will perform on Thursday, June 1, at the Billed Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SKANKING WOODOO DOLLS

Skanking Woodoo Dolls will perform on Friday, June 2, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff.

### • HEARTBEATS

Heartbeats will perform Friday and Saturday, June 2-3, at the Billed Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SIEGEL SCHAWALL

Siegel Schawall will perform on Friday, June 2, at the Billed Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • NEW SCHOOL PARTY

New School Party will perform on Friday, June 2, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

## LOCAL

Here are the top 10 songs on "Detroit Solo Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDRB-FM.

1. "In the New Hittville," The Gear.
2. "No More Running," Ash Can Van Gogh.
3. "Self Control," Skin Heats.
4. "First," First, Figure 4.
5. "Love Goes Blind," Hyper Performance.
6. "Sour Cream," Sensitive Big Boys.
7. "Nightmare," Joy Barlow.
8. "Fast Green," Frank Allene & the Odd Set.
9. "Little Dove," Fly Away Hawk.
10. "The Fall," Doe Boys.

## COUNTRY

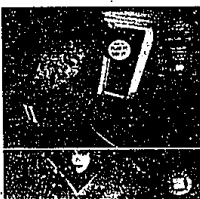
Here are the top 10 songs on WWW-FM.

1. "From the Word Go," Michael Martin Murphey.
2. "After All This Time," Rodney Crowell.
3. "Don't Turn Us Away," Patty Loveless.
4. "Which Way Do I Go (Now That I'm Gone)," Wayne Jennings.
5. "I'll Be Home," Alabama.
6. "Hey Bobby," K.T. Oslin.
7. "Young Love," The Judds.
8. "It's Still Over," Randy Travis.
9. "The Gospel According to Luke," Chip Ewing.
10. "Like Father Like Son," Lionel Cartwright.

## REVIEWS

### SOMETHING REAL

— Phoebe Snow



I approached this LP on Elektra with some enthusiasm, having had it recommended by someone whose taste I used to respect.

Well, I won't get fooled again. Ten songs, smooth as silk and blandly harmless. Songs that make AOR radio programmers sleep well at night. Songs that make the rest of us sleep well while listening to them. Songs that allow Phoebe Snow to show how wonderfully talented she is and to impress with such an incredible vocal range.

Songs that deal with relationships — "I want something real from you baby, one time before I die, we can make love all night 'til the sky catches fire, keeping talking for hours and never get tired, I don't want you to lie but you're such a beautiful liar."

Yaaaaawwwwwww.

All are gift-wrapped with a Steve Winwood style of "lip" with smooth, contemporary production. Gentle acoustic guitars, laid back saxo-

phones and atmospheric keyboard drones around.

Snow writes four of the songs, but they are as boring as her choice of other people's material.

"I was stubborn when I was young, I thought I had all of the answers," it says in "Mr. Wondering." Now, how did they think of that original line?

This is an album for all those lonely country girls sitting at home waiting for Mr. Right, still listening to Carol King's "Tapestry" and considers Whitney Houston to be the greatest thing ever and cries every time she hears Elton John's "Your Song."

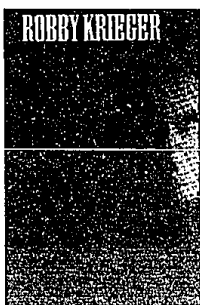
Watch out. If you put this on your turntable, you may not stay awake long enough to remove it.

Just say no.

— Cormac Wright

### NO HABLA

— Robby Krieger



Let's play word association. We'll mention a band and you'll tell us what name pops into your mind.

"The Doors?"

Chances are 99.9 percent of the people questioned would utter the name Jim Morrison, who was the singer/songwriter of the famed group. But few people know that it was guitarist Robby Krieger, not Morrison, who wrote "Light My Fire" and "Hello, I Love You."

And, it was Krieger who was instrumental in patenting the Doors' sound. Anyway, Krieger is definitely a candidate for an American Express Card commercial.

Perhaps the release of "No Habla" (I.R.S.) may change that.

Those expecting some relaxed licks from his Doors days will be disappointed, though. There are some Doors' cuts, such as "Wild Child" and "You're Lost Little Girl."

But Krieger's finger work put a different shade on each tune. He stretches the boundaries with his searing guitar play.

Aside from those, there are several jazz-influenced numbers that are intriguing. Some even tip-toe on the boundaries of new age. If anything, they definitely have movie soundtrack potential.

Krieger's strength is his ability to somehow blend in with the other musicians and then take his guitar above it all. Each song has its own trademark.

This album could open the doors for some well-deserved notoriety for Krieger.

— Larry O'Connor

### THROUGH THE STORM

— Aretha Franklin



She is the "Queen of Soul." On this effort, though, it's more the Queen of Soul and her court.

The heavyweights in the pop music industry are rolled out to help see Franklin "Through the Storm" (Arista). James Brown, Whitney Houston, Elton John and Levi Stubbs of the Four Tops team up with the Detroit native on her follow-up to the Grammy-winning "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism."

The thought here must be: If it worked with George Michael, why not everyone else?

For the most part, the duets here are excellent. Listening to Franklin trade soulful belts with the Go-Gather (James Brown) on "Gimme Your Love" is something to cherish. Then there is the girl chatter with Whitney Houston on "It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never Gonna Be."

ONE OF the better pairings comes with Elton John on "Through the Storm." Here, there is a lay-

team songfest that evolves into a rather joyful piece of music. Franklin and Stubbs also combine for the elegant "If Ever a Love There Was."

Not only do the duets make for some great music, they offer somewhat of a historical perspective of her career. When the Queen of Soul was reeking up the hits, Whitney Houston was probably playing in sand boxes.

Franklin proves she can hold her own, and then some, with her contemporary. Her best moments come solo, especially on the more jazzy and slow-moving numbers such as "Mercy" and "Come to Me."

Her voice is timeless. Against the drum machine and techno-bank of the 1980s, the recording shows it all.

These elements certainly don't do justice to a great number like "Think (1929)." Yet Franklin's vocals are nothing less than stunning 23 years later.

— Larry O'Connor