

STREET BEATS

BoDeans: At the crossroads

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

BoDeans are a band at the crossroads. A group that will be either heard from in the future or become merely an asterisk in the record collection.

Lead singer Sammy Llanas is the first to acknowledge it.

"I know the record company was expecting more sales," said Llanas, whose band performs Wednesday at the Royal Oak Music Theatre. "I know they're behind us. They say we're a top priority right now, but I don't know how long that will last. If this album doesn't sell well."

"If any pressure comes, it will be after this tour."

The BoDeans' latest effort "Home" (Slash) has sold roughly 75,000 copies, the group's best start yet. Llanas said the record company was hoping for 400,000.

Those expectations were hardly unrealistic. The band was voted as the "Best New American Band" in Rolling Stone, garnered rave reviews on a six-week tour with U2 and had a guest spot on "Late Night With David Letterman."

All of the above would be considered enough to put a band firm footing. Yet, it is all the more reason a slip at this point could prove costly.

Album sales apparently already have band members checking the sales of their shoes.

Then again, records have always been a source of frustration for a group whose accolades have been



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generated mainly by live performances.

FOR THAT reason, the BoDeans forsake the sterile studio setting on "Home" and recorded the LP in a Milwaukee warehouse. The sparse location served the band well. Some of the tracks contain the rawness the group has had difficulty capturing on previous albums.

Most noticeable on "Home" is "Beautiful Rain," a song about the drought of 1988. Llanas voice is as gravelled and dry as the dusty cornfields he sings about, but his vocals pour with emotion.

"When that song was written we

were going through a drought in Wisconsin for five or six weeks," said Llanas, who is native of Milwaukee. "It was at a stage where it was emotionally affecting everybody. People were getting ornery and short with one another. I was happy to be able to document it."

Jim Scott produced "Home." Originally, the BoDeans sought the technical wizardry of Daniel Lanois (Bob Dylan, U2, the Neville Brothers). Although Lanois reportedly liked the spirit of BoDeans' music, he didn't have a vision for it.

Llanas and guitarist Kurt Neumann met Scott while working on

Robbie Robertson's LP. The three immediately hit it off.

For the first time, though, the band was able to make the creative decisions... before the shots were called by producers. Scott served as a mediator of ideas.

One idea the BoDeans have sought to get away from as being a voice from the heartland. "Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams" was released in 1986, right in the middle of the roots rock movement.

SOME MISTOOK the band's hometown and raw rock and labeled them as such.

"We feel we're much more than that," Llanas said. "We don't deny we do come from the heartland and is hard on our music. We've never been out to wave a banner."

Another banner the group has had to avoid is the Too U2 tag. "You Don't Get Much" draws comparisons to the Irish supergroup, mainly due to the guitar playing of Neumann.

"All I know is Kurt used those type of delays on his guitar for as long as I've known him," said Llanas, who's known Neumann since high school. "So in my mind, he's been doing it longer than the Edge. That's where we're coming from."

The Edge was in awe of Kurt's guitar setup and his sound. "I think the Edge learned from Kurt at that instance."

But much like U2 and other bands like R.E.M. the BoDeans have displayed a willingness to be patient.

"We're willing to wait for radio to come to us," Llanas said.

IN CONCERT

TIMBUK3

Timbuk 3 will perform two shows on Monday, Oct. 30, at The Ark in Ann Arbor. Show times are 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

BAD OSCAR

Bad Oscar will perform on Monday, Oct. 30, at the Blind Pig, 203 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-4555.

BOP HARVEY

Bop Harvey will perform on Monday, Oct. 30, at Hick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-2747.

SCOTT CAMPBELL

Scott Campbell will perform on Monday, Oct. 30, at Todd's, 3133 E. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 366-TUDD.

THE DIFFERENCE

The Difference will perform on Tuesday, Oct. 31, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-2747.

POIDOG

Poi Dog Pondering will perform with guests Canyon Dave and the Psychoed Lounge Cats at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, at the Blind Pig, 203 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-4555.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

The Gories, Spunking Bean, Luxury Christ and Slaughter House will perform at the Third Annual All Hallows Eve Hootenanny at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31, at Art Center Music School, 3275 Cass, at Alexander, Detroit. For information, call 833-3143 or 831-2555.

GOOSER & THE PEAS

Gooser & The Peas will perform on Tuesday, Oct. 31, at Paycock's Lounge in Hamtramck.

BOB DYLAN

Bob Dylan will perform on Wednesday, Nov. 1, at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$25. For information, call 763-TNTS.

BODEANS

The BoDeans will perform on Wednesday, Nov. 1, at the Royal Oak Music Theatre. Tickets are \$16.50. For information, call 763-TNTS.

DOG SOLDIER

Dog Soldier will perform on Wednesday, Nov. 1, at the Blind Pig, 203 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-4555.



The Zulus will perform with The Pixies Nov. 16 at Saint Andrew's Hall in Detroit.

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 albums on WOLFM, AM campus station of Oakland University in Rochester:

1. "Knock Me Down," Red Hot Chili Peppers.
2. "Gravitate to Me," The The.
3. "Love Song," The Cure.
4. "Pictures..." Camper Van Beethoven.
5. "Into the White," Flakes.
6. "Welcome to America," Die Warms.
7. "Look Who's Dancing," Ziggy Marley.
8. "Come Anytime," Hoodoo Gurus.
9. "Some Old Song," Third World.
10. "Can U Dig It," Pop Will Eat Itself.

BOOTS X

Bootsy X and the Lovemasters will perform on Thursday, Nov. 7, at S.D. 1115 N. Main, north of 12 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3544.

THE NEATS

The Neats will perform on Thursday, Nov. 7, at the Blind Pig, 203 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-4555.

CRIMSON GLORY

Crimson Glory will perform along with guests, Hallow's Eve, on Friday, Nov. 3, at Bud's, 5756 Cass Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For information, call 525-1168.

K.D. LANG

K.d. lang will perform at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

EKENE CERVENKA

Ekene Cervenka, former lead singer of X, will perform at 10 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For information, call 463-4755.

MICK TAYLOR

Mick Taylor, former guitarist with the Rolling Stones, will perform at 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$10.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.

IDIOTS

Idiots will perform along with Scott Campbell and Allison's Ghost on Friday, Nov. 3, at Lil's 21, 2930 Canfield, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.

THE WIRES

The Wires will perform on Friday, Nov. 3, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760.

TRINIDAD STEEL

Trinidad Steel Band will perform on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 3-4, at the Blind Pig, 203 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-4555.

PHINEAS GAGE

Phineas Gage will perform with guests, Model Citizens, on Saturday, Nov. 4, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760.

WALK THE DOGMA

Walk the Dogma will perform on Saturday, Nov. 4, at Lil's 21, 2930 Canfield, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.

SOUNDGARDEN

Soundgarden will perform on Sunday, Nov. 5, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

Camper Van Beethoven will perform at 10 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6, at the Neatline Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$10.50 in advance. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

PIXIES

The Pixies will perform with guests, The Zulus, on Thursday, Nov. 16, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

LOCAL

Here are the top 10 songs on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (repeated 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDRB-FM 90.9.

1. "Scary, Scary," Jerry Vale.
2. "Born to Die," Dave Uekahl.
3. "Slaughter Me," Terminal White.
4. "Hate Him," Grievance Committee.
5. "Warworld," War World.
6. "Fast Bow," Sound Incorporation.
7. "Save Me," Antifashism.
8. "Suffocating Smiles," Symp.
9. "Inside the Gates," Stepping Into Eden.
10. "Kiss God For Me," Arcturcho.

MUSIC NOTES

Figure 4: Refiguring its future

Figure 4 has split up, according to a recent press release. But the band will carry on.

Bassist guitarist Mike Bisch and drummer Robert Dotto have left the band to join forces with an undiscovered songwriting tandem in Los Angeles.

As a result, the group cancelled the remaining dates on its latest tour. The press release issued by Bisch goes on to state there are no more copies of the group's "Blind Justice" EP available and no further copies will be pressed.

Not so says Jefferson Shoemaker, who founded the group three years ago. Shoemaker said more copies are available and Figure 4 will continue as a group.

"Fred (Schaller) and I started this thing three years ago," Shoemaker said. "We're going to the wall with this."

Bisch, who had been with the band for a little more than six months, said it was a question of song credits and a lack of bookings.

"We were trying to go beyond the local club scene," said Bisch, who

has also performed briefly with Strange Bedfellows, Scott Campbell and Twigg Barbus within the past year. "But we didn't have the means to do it," Bisch added. He felt no more copies of the album should be issued because "To be issuing copies of the EP... you wouldn't be buying Figure 4 now. You'd be buying Figure 4 then."

Dotto performed on the recording of "Blind Justice." Bisch did not. Bisch said the split is amicable, adding he hopes Figure 4 continues on because "they have great songs."

"There have been 14 people in this band," Shoemaker said. "They're just two members who decided to take a hike."

Then I hear, Jeff Shoemaker is a difficult guy to work with. "That's ridiculous. I'm a nice guy. I just didn't want to turn this band into a jazz fusion outfit."

Shoemaker said the group has already found a replacement drummer, Mark Trupkovich. He adds, though, he plans to take some time off from touring. Instead, he'll focus on the ever-elusive record deal.

The break-up is a downward turn after what otherwise has been a stellar year for Figure 4. The group's EP was well-received by critics and the band enjoyed further exposure as an opening act for Rhythm Corps.

A pair of Ann Arbor bands, The Difference and Frank Allison & the Odd Sox performed this weekend at the College Music Journal's annual seminar in New York. The event is attended by arts and repertoire people and other record industry types.

The Orange Roughies were set to embark on a trip to San Francisco the night the earthquake hit. The group was to perform with Michelle Shocked in the Bay City. Dave Feeny said the band's album on Nocturnal Records has hit another snag and probably won't be out for another month.

— Larry O'Connor



The Difference along with Frank Allison & the Odd Sox performed this weekend at the College Music Journal's annual seminar in New York.

REVIEWS

CHANGE
— The Alarm

The Alarm have always had a difficult time of it. Their sound has always been somewhat of a surrogate Clash sound, but without the strength of the songwriting. They're not pretty or "show-businessy" enough to be major MTV stars, with only one of their videos, "The Stand," receiving any regular airtime.

But they do try. God, they are very trying.

They write anthemic songs with calls to "the people" to bond together and right the world's wrongs. They are "very serious people." Their latest LP, "Change" (IRS), doesn't do anything to change this impression.

The album starts off with "Sold Me Down the River," a straightforward guitar rock'n'roll song, the type that takes them from being anemic Clash imitators to being anemic Georgia Satellites imitators. Side one continues with further rabble-rousing, anthem-type songs with singer Mike Peters giving his best Bonosque dramatic vocals.

There does seem to be an effort to steer in the direction of good ol' boy rockin'. Especially with the inclusion of "Working Man's Blues," which is more than standard southern bar rock'n'roll.



Also prominently evident are the extremely banal lyrics like this sample from "Love Don't Come Easy": "Love don't come easy/Sometimes love don't come at all/It ain't over 'til it's over." Or this from "The Rock": "Like a rock, waves crash over me/The rock will never let you down."

Where the hell did they get these, Rock'n'Roll Lyric Writing 101?

I keep waiting for a song, dramatically sung, of course, about life on the road, about the pain of being anemic Clash imitators to being anemic Georgia Satellites imitators. Side one continues with further rabble-rousing, anthem-type songs with singer Mike Peters giving his best Bonosque dramatic vocals.

And just when you thought it was safe to listen to records again. All very dramatic and touching. Don't call us.

— Cormac Wright

THE STONE ROSES
— The Stone Roses

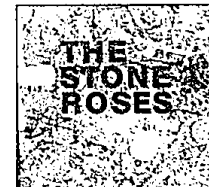
All hail the latest guitar heroes of British psychedelic pop.

The Stone Roses' self-titled debut LP topped the U.K. independent charts for months, and is currently the target of praise from U.S. new music moguls. College radio is spinning the record, and MTV is rolling the video for the single, "She Bangs the Drum."

The band is a brass quartet of Brits with Beatlelike and all the psychedelia staples — cryptic, colorful designs on the album sleeve, flowery print attire, aloof expressions.

"The Stone Roses" is an album full of overtly palsy songs with dreamy, droning images and highly reverberating guitars. A decided Liverpoolian influence is heard, from both sets of Liverpool's favorite songs, Echo & the Bunnymen and the Fab Four themselves — a few of the tracks, particularly "Waterfall" and "Don't Stop," could have been taken right from "Revolver." Hints of the Cure and Jesus and Mary Chain also pepper the record.

The driving force behind the upbeat music is John Squire's



forthright guitar playing. His gitbox is turned up loud, and he is obviously not afraid to make seemingly unnatural sounds while his strong rhythm section hammers away. Gary Mounfield's bass is exceptionally active.

Vocalist Ian Brown excels throughout, sounding ominous even on the acoustic "Elizabeth, My Dear," a brief one-verse number set to the traditional tune of "Scarborough Fair/Canticle."

Other highlights include "Song for My Sugar Spun Sister," the whimsical "Shoot You Down," and the anthem "This Is the One." Although it's a little too pop for its own good in a few spots, the record is a strong debut effort.

— John Cortez

THE ICEBERG/
FREEDOM OF SPEECH...
JUST WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

— Ice-T

The warning sticker on this record reads "X-rated... Parents Strongly Cautioned... some material may be X-tra hype and inappropriate for minors and suckers." Ice-T carries every implication of that sticker on the record's second cut, "The Iceberg," which graphically documents the interaction of men, women and appliances. It's enough to make one gladly accept being labeled a square or sucker.

The music is ever languid. And because the first cut is nothing more than a snatch of Jello Biafra's previously released spoken-word efforts set to music, this record gets off to a very poor start.

But from the third cut on, Ice-T lays down an angry, thoughtful and potent message that reaches out from the speakers and yanks the listener in.

"Lethal Weapon" features a wild, pulsing bassline bouncing off a hot horn riff while Ice-T raps about how his mind is his weapon.

— John Cortez



MC stand up for 'em coze," Ice-T hurls an amazing litany of profane invective at Tipper Gore and her brand of censorship. And the listener is forced to acknowledge Ice-T's correctness. A song like "The Iceberg" is just the type of thing that Mrs. Gore sought to suppress.

But if Ice-T's political and social commentary was also suppressed, the children that Gore was supposedly trying to protect would be in greater danger than they are in if they bear this record.

— John Logie