

Robb Roy: Ready for stardom

By Larry O'Connor staff writer

Written off as breaking up nearly two years ago, Robb Roy looks poised to break out.

The five-member rock band will perform Tuesday, Oct. 10, in a competition for the top prize in "Sound-Check," an internationally-renowned talent search sponsored by Yamaha.

The group left for Los Angeles Friday, but not before receiving a resounding send-off at the Metro Music Cafe in Royal Oak.

Robb Roy will be one of four bands competing for first prize, which is \$10,000 worth of equipment and an opportunity to vie for the International Finals at Budokan Theatre in Tokyo, Japan.

The show in Los Angeles will feature Richard Marx and female pop artist Martika. The performance will be taped and televised some time in December.

"The band is better than ever really," said Graham Strachan, who lives in Redford Township and is lead vocalist.

To REACH the semifinals of the international talent search was no small feat. Robb Roy submitted two songs, "Show Me" and "The Gypsy Walks," along with nearly 5,000 other bands back in July.

Then Strachan received a call from the people at Yamata, telling him the band was one of 100 bands still in the hunt. Then Robb Roy was suddenly one of four finalists from the Midwest.

The band performed an afternoon showcase at Slimmers in Dearborn before some impressed judges.

On the basis of material and live performance, Robb Roy was select-



The future is looking pretty good for the five-member band, Robb Roy, which is in the running for top prize in "Sound-Check," an inter-

national talent search sponsored by Yamaha.

Label interest has picked up. According to Strachan, A&M and UA are currently taking a look at the group.

If Robb Roy is signed, members can attribute their success to the old-fashioned work ethic. The band has played virtually every club in the area, developing a loyal following along the way.

"It's been worth it," Strachan said.

Label interest has picked up. According to Strachan, A&M and UA are currently taking a look at the group.

If Robb Roy is signed, members can attribute their success to the old-fashioned work ethic. The band has played virtually every club in the area, developing a loyal following along the way.

"It's been worth it," Strachan said.

Label interest has picked up. According to Strachan, A&M and UA are currently taking a look at the group.

IN CONCERT

BOB MOULD

Bob Mould will perform Monday, Oct. 9, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Advance tickets are \$130, slightly higher at the door. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

INNER CIRCLE

Inner Circle will perform Monday, Oct. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

ITAL

ITAL will perform Monday, Tuesday, Oct. 9-10, at Rick's Cafe, 811 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 966-2747.

BIG CHIEF

Big Chief will perform Tuesday, Oct. 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

MAMA-U

MAMA-U will perform Wednesday, Oct. 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

JUNATHON RICHMAN

Junathon Richman will perform two shows at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11, at the Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$14.50 in advance, slightly higher at the door. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

ADRENALIN

Adrenalin will perform with special guests Dr. Drive, Wednesday-Saturday, Oct. 11-14, at Taggers, 2481 Elizabeth, East River, Pontiac. For information, call 961-1700.

FIRST LIGHT

First Light will perform Thursday, Oct. 12, at Rick's Cafe, 811 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 966-2747.

JIMMY CLIFF

Jimmy Cliff will perform Thursday, Oct. 12, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 430 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$12 in ad-

vance (slightly higher at the door). For information, call 961-MELT.

IAN MOORE

Ian Moore will perform Thursday, Oct. 12, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.

ANNE DE DAVIS

Anne De Davis will perform with guests the Opomus on Thursday, Oct. 12, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

BEER ON PENGUIN

Beer on the Penguin will perform with guests No Flight No Wrong on Thursday, Oct. 12, at 2-D Dance Club, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3364.

SEA MONKEYS

Sea Monkeys will perform Thursday, Oct. 12, at Psyche's, 2332 Canfield, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8924.

THE LEONARDS

The Leonards will perform Friday-Saturday, Oct. 13-14, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 862-7650.

THE GEAR

The Gear will perform Friday, Oct. 13, at Lili's 21, 2920 Jacob, off Jon Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 675-5555.

CHILI PEPPERS

Red Hot Chili Peppers will perform Friday, Oct. 13, at the Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$17.50. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

EREBUS

Erebus will perform along with guests Ugly But Proud and Violent Intentions on Friday, Oct. 13, at Blondies, west Seven Mile, east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.

WILD WOODY'S

Wild Woody's will perform Friday-Saturday, Oct. 13-14, at Grid's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. For information, call 334-9232.

RON THOMPSON

Ron Thompson and the Restigators will perform Friday-Saturday, Oct. 13-14, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.

BEFORE OR AFTER

Before or After will perform Friday, Oct. 13, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 430 E. Congress, near Beaubien, Detroit. Admission is \$5. For information, call 961-MELT.

OTIS RUSH

Otis Rush will perform Friday-Saturday, Oct. 13-14, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

CHILD SUPPORT

Child Support will perform Saturday, Oct. 14, at Lili's 21, 2920 Jacob, off Jon Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 675-5555.

LIZZY BORDEN

Lizzy Borden will perform along with guests Murder City on Saturday, Oct. 14, at Blondies, west Seven Mile, east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.



Bob Mould will perform Monday, Oct. 9, at the Nectarine Ballroom in Ann Arbor.

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 album receiving singles on 8411 AM, campus station of Oakland University in Rochester.

- 1. Mind Bomb - The 4.
2. Dime Train - The Care.
3. More Songs About Love and Hate.
4. Heylin Pt. 2 - Camper Van Beethoven.
5. Beantite - Pixies.
6. Understand - Naked Raygun.
7. High Day - Ziggy Marley.
8. Home Man - Zoo.
9. Magnun Cuz Louder - Hoodoo Gurus.
10. This Is The Day, This Is The Hour, This Is The... - Pop Will Eat Itself.

COUNTRY

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WWWW-FM 104.7.

- 1. "Are You Ever Gonna Love Me," Holly Dunn.
2. "You'll Never Be Sorry," The Bellamy Brothers.
3. "Loving Proof," Ricky Van Shelton.
4. "Above Beyond," Rodney Crowell.
5. "Never Givin' Up on Love," Michael Martin Murphey.
6. "High Cotton," Alabama.
7. "And So It Goes," John Deever.
8. "A Better Love Next Time," Merle Haggard.
9. "Hooky Hook Heart," Highway 101.
10. "Killer Time," Clint Black.

Is it jazz? Is it rock? Is it blues?

Shoulders gets urban with music

By Larry O'Connor staff writer

For all the labels placed on them, Big Shoulders are an aptly named band.

Are they blues? Are they jazz? Are they rock? Well, the Chicago-based outfit is all of those and then again none of those.

"We fought the blues band label, we fought the rock band label," guitarist Larry Clyman said. "The term we came up with is urban roots music."

OK, we'll buy that. And while we're at the cash register of good music, throw in Big Shoulders debut album on Rounder Records as well. Advance copies of the soon-to-be released promise a rollicking good time.

The instrumental numbers on the album soothe while providing a broad overview of the band's influences as sidemen to some of the best in the business.

Want to drop some names? How about B.B. King, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Albert Collins, Los Lobos, Lonnie



The Chicago-based Big Shoulders is a hard band to describe. Their music, band members have decided, is urban roots with hints of blues, jazz and rock'n'roll.

Blacks Robert Cray, Muddy Waters and John Mellencamp? All of them are people members of Big Shoulders have performed with at one time or another.

Clyman, himself, served as a guitarist with well-known blues man Lonnie Brooks before starting Big Shoulders two years ago.

DRAWING FROM those influences, Big Shoulders has crafted its own mix of music. The sound, though, is rooted in blues.

Unexpectedly, things began to take off. The Chicago club circuit. Big Shoulders' music is receiving medi-

um to heavy rotation on radio there.

ALL THE members recorded the LP together in the same room. Any overruns were included in the final product.

Blues is a bit type of music where there is interaction between the artist and the audience. Clyman said. When you get into the studio, you use it.

The hallmarks of Big Shoulders has been live performance. The band reportedly was one of the highlights of the Motor City Blues Festival.

"We make music the old-fashioned way," Clyman said. "We play it."

The Shoulders will go to the North West Oct. 21 at Sully's 4758 Greenfield Avenue, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.

REVIEWS

MAGNUM CUM LOUDER

— Hoodoo Gurus

Not long ago, someone suggested that American college radio was becoming far too slick for its own good. At the time, we didn't give it much thought.

After listening to Hoodoo Gurus' latest LP on RCA, though, now one begins to wonder if there isn't some validity to that observation. Perhaps it is becoming too chart-oriented as major record labels use the college airwaves to break relatively new acts, especially since commercial radio doesn't seem to offer such an opportunity.

The end result might have "alternative" bands going for more of a mainstream sound. Case in point: Hoodoo Gurus.

Which one is the real Hoodoo Gurus? Could it be the group that turns out such acoustically glowing gems like "Come Anytime" and "Shadow Me"? Or rather is it the band that seems to be seeking commercial appeal with less-than-inspiring numbers such as "Take Me All the Way"?

Some of Hoodoo Gurus' best moments come when the group decides to take the hard rock path in



songs such as "Glamourpuss" and "Hallucination." A note on the album tells the listener to play this LP loud. What it forgets to add is that covering your ears doesn't hurt either.

Through some of the lyrics are rather trite, the group has acquired a knack for catchy melodies. For example, "Where's That Hit?" pulls out all the hackneyed baseball expressions one can equate with everyday life. Yet a stellar bit of guitar work pulls this number out of the muck.

Sure, one should expect more out of a "new music" group such as Hoodoo Gurus whose main audience is the collegiate crowd. Then again, maybe we're asking too much. After all, it's only rock'n'roll.

Let it be at least be said that Hoodoo Gurus has a very consistent sound on its hands.

— Larry O'Connor

COME SEE COME SKA

— Gangster Fun

What is ska? Between sizzling and skald, there is ska in Webster's book. Gangster Fun is one hot band that plays ska.

For those of you unfamiliar with Gangster Fun and its music, the band has been around for more than two years forming from a group of friends at Oakland University. The group's hallmark has always been an entertaining and engaging performance, leaving you to beg for more (I know, having sat through a couple of encores at the Hamtramck Pub).

So now comes the tricky part, trying to transfer that energy to vinyl. For the most part, Gangster Fun succeeds on "Come See Come Ska." This album is something of a rough sketch of what Gangster Fun is capable of onstage.

One role the LP does fulfill is providing a delightful introduction to ska, which is often referred to as monster music.

Really, the sound is rather straight-forward. The best is fast, using reggae and calypso styles. The sound is just right to put your best dancing foot forward.

Stripped down keyboards are layered with a horn of plenty, includ-



ing trombone and cornet. Vocals are shouted above the dance rhythms.

Without a doubt, this is the album you throw on when the party breaks up into subcommittees discussing Nietzsche. This will wake them up.

If this is truly ska, then Gangster Fun certainly can do it with the best. Two songs on this independent release stand out, "O-Soo" and "Informer." "O-Soo" is a favorite simply because of the wily lyrics. The number is not about a woman named Sue but rather about the Sault Ste. Marie locks. "Informer" flips the switch because it has all the hooks and it's aggressive.

Credit for that goes to John Bunkley, whose driving lead vocals really set the tone for this album.

Until then, however, sit down with this album and get to know Gangster Fun. This seven-man outfit has an offer you cannot refuse.

— Larry O'Connor

GARDEN CITY

— John Tesh

Best known as the guy who occupies the seat next to Mary Hart on "Entertainment Tonight," Tesh is also a keyboardist and composer of New Age and jazz-oriented tunes.

The big local question is whether Garden City (Express) makes reference to a certain western Wayne County suburb. Nope. It's Garden City, New Jersey.

Still, "Garden City," the title song, is a pleasant enough piece.

As a body of work, however, Tesh's music is the surreal equivalent of his co-host's personality — perky and cheerful — even when, as on "Shock," he reaches for something deeper.

Tesh's chief musical fame has come through the television theme music for the Tour de France bicycle endurance race. And up-temo, macho themes appear to be his strongest suit.

"Shock," "Bastille Day" and "Destination Paris," the latter pair perhaps inspired by the race, clearly fit under this heading.

"You Break It," the album's lone non-instrumental, introduces Diana DeWitt, who delivers her vocal in the style of a somewhat harder-edged Olivia Newton-John. Ex-DuoBrother Michael McDonald lends a



hand on background vocals, though his distinctive growl is largely lost in the mix.

A reprise of "Bastille Day" at the album's conclusion makes no sense. After all, it isn't the title track, nor is it a variation on the song that precedes it.

Tesh's music has its uses — it's not a bad background companion for a long motor trip, for instance. But he shouldn't give up the day — or in his case, night — job.

— Wayne Ford