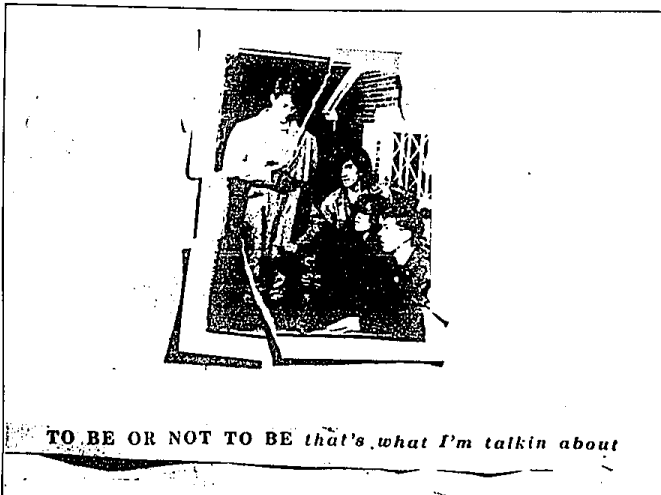


STREET BEATS



TO BE OR NOT TO BE that's what I'm talkin about

The Holy Cows may be a band that likes to joke around, but it also is one that can produce

some fine music — a Replacements-style, guitar-driven type of garage rock

Band finds success with its garage rock sounds

By Jill Hamilton
special writer

The Holy Cows are a band of jokers who also happen to kick out some mighty fine tunes. They got started about three years ago in the archetypal garage setting and have been pumping out their cow tunes ever since.

Their music is Replacements-style, guitar-driven, jump-out-of-your-seat-and-dance garage rock. Michael Feeney says he is influenced in his songwriting by Dinosaur Jr. and country/bluegrass bands. Although it seems like a strange combination, the band's music does sound like a successful mixture of these disparate styles.

The Holy Cows' teasing side comes out in their concerts. They are fond of misrepresenting themselves under fictitious band names. At one concert, they say they were "The Good Ole Boys Blues 'n' County Band from Chicago."

During another performance, they deemed it "Wheel of Fortune Night" and put large labels on all of their band equipment. Throughout the night at another show, John Popo-

vich would play the opening chords of various over-played shock-rock tunes, then stop in mid-chord, saying to the audience, "We're not playing any of that junk tonight," before ripping into a powerful Holy Cows tune.

THE FOUR guys grew up together in Chelsea, and still consider themselves a Chelsea band ("We're not an Ann Arbor band," they admonish firmly). These Chelsea boys are: Scott Salyer on guitar, Mike Popovich on drums, John Popovich on guitar and Michael Feeney on bass. They had all been members of other bands including Frank Allison and the Odd Sox and a band called Outcrowd.

About a year and a half ago, the Holy Cows put out their first cassette called "Greener Sidewalks." The album enjoyed fairly good sales, especially in Ann Arbor, and this encouraged the band to keep playing together.

In June of 1989, they released an album called "To Be Or Not To Be: that's what I'm talking about" containing favorites like "Grace My Presence," "Melvin," and "Oh, My Clothes." The album has exposed the

band to a larger audience and college radio has given it a lot of airplay. One week, the album was the No. 1 song at Duke University's college station.

Plans for a new album are in the works. Several new songs are already written, including the catchy "Wait a Minute" and "Keyhole," but the band members seem to have differing opinions on when it will be released. Salyer says that he "wants to take time to do it right" but Feeney says he would rather "get the album out as soon as possible."

BUT ALL is not just popular albums and enthusiastic crowds in Holy Cow land. As Feeney puts it, "We're a band with a complex." They feel the local music scene is not all that it could be.

"Most of our fans come to every show and become our friends," Salver said. "We can't keep playing to the same crowd, we need new people to show up." Mike Popovich echoed these sentiments and added, "Local music needs a big push from the bars around here."

But the Holy Cows are not just sitting around waiting for fame and

fortune to find them. Instead, they have decided to create their own success. They started their own record label, Picnic Horn Records and six months ago joined forces with agent Rodney Robeson. Picnic Horn Records now has on its roster such local luminaries as Anne B. Davis and the Opposums. And perhaps the Holy Cows' proudest achievement, they now have T-shirts bearing the name of the band.

The Holy Cows are bursting with plans for the future. They hope to keep expanding Picnic Horn Records so that, eventually, they can help produce other local bands' records. The Cows also plan to do more out-of-state gigs to widen their audience.

The band also hopes to attract the attention of a major record label. With a history of putting on great shows and churning out excellent albums, they probably won't have to wait very long.

The Holy Cows will perform with Anne B. Davis and the Opposums on Friday, Jan. 12, at The Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

IN CONCERT

● faith healers

Faith Healers will perform on Monday, Jan. 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● future shock

Future Shock will perform on Monday, Jan. 8, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● 13 engines

13 Engines will perform on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● no right no wrong

No Right No Wrong will perform on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● DC Drive

DC Drive will perform Wednesday, Jan. 10, and Friday and Saturday, Jan. 12-13, at Juggers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For information, call 681-1700.

● simply you

The Simply You Show will perform on Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

● big twist

Big Twist and the Mellow Fellows will perform on Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● juice

Juice will perform on Wednesday, Jan. 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● gorles

The Gorles will perform along with guests, Prehistoric Cave Strikers and Rump Hangers on Thursday, Jan. 11, at the Radio Tavern, Ouellette Avenue, Windsor.

● bop harvey

Bop Harvey will perform on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 11-12, at Rick's Ameri-

can Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● dog soldier

Dog Soldier will perform with guest Harm's Way on Thursday, Jan. 11, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

● ella wig

Ella Wig will perform on Thursday, Jan. 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● god bullies

God Bullies will perform with guests Mol Triffid, on Friday, Jan. 12, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

● opposums

The Opposums will perform with guest Ann B. Davis on Friday, Jan. 12, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● wayouts

The Wayouts will perform with guests Lime Glants on Friday, Jan. 12, at the Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 833-9650.

● scott morgan

Scott Morgan will perform with guests Cult Hero's on Saturday, Jan. 13, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● red C

Red C will perform on Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 12-13, at the Midtown Cafe, 139 S. Woodward, Birmingham. Show time is 10 p.m. For information, call 642-1133.

● vibe tribe

Vibe Tribe will perform Friday and Saturday, Jan. 12-13, at Jameson's, 1812 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 547-6470.

● b.b. king

B.B. King will perform with guest, Etta James on Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$23.50. For information, call 567-6000.



No Right No Wrong will perform Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Rick's Cafe in Ann Arbor.

LIVE PHINEAS GAGE — Saint Andrews Hall, Detroit

Not everyone stays at home, slipping egg nog and sharing quality time with far-flung relatives during the holidays. At least not those who need their daily dosage of live rock-and-roll.

Some of these less traditional folks opted to spend a little of the Christmas season watching Phineas Gage give a very spirited performance at Saint Andrews Hall.

The place was pretty darn full and especially impressive, considering the time of year and the fact that Phineas Gage is a local act. There were seats left in the hall, but only because the audience was more in-

terested in standing around the stage than in sitting back in their chairs and watching.

A majority of the audience was probably there to catch the headline act — Crossed Wire — but Phineas Gage quickly won them over when the carrot-topped lead singer stepped out and shyly announced that it was their first gig at Saint Andrews Hall.

Phineas Gage played a bouncy set of songs, chock full of killer hooks. They have a talent for turning out eminently likable pop songs along the same lines as tunes by Elvis Costello or Squeeze.

Actually, Chuck Farnum's singing does sound a bit like the nasal tones of Elvis Costello. Alex Lumsosky's guitar playing was piercing and direct, echoing a trace of the Cure or U2.

The crowd responded enthusiastically to the set, albeit some a little too enthusiastically. A small group of people were slum dancing at various times throughout the show and one guy insisted on repeatedly hopping into the stage then jumping into the crowd.

The highlights of the show were two showcased songs, "Scattered"

and "Turn It Upside Down." Chris Farnum can around the stage, shaking his tambourine violently and tossing his curly tuft of red hair as he goaded on the other band members. Phineas Gage finished off the set with a Christmas tune, interwoven with various bits of John Lennon's "So This Is Christmas."

These guys put on a great show and proved themselves to be a very talented quintet. In 1990, we can probably expect Phineas Gage to return to Saint Andrews Hall. Maybe next time as the headliners.

— Jill Hamilton

ALTERNATIVE LOCAL

Here are Ann Delta's top-10 album releases of 1989. Delta is music director at WDET-FM.

1. "Aura," Miles Davis.
2. "Holler," John Lee Hooker.
3. "Lyle Lovett and his Large Band," Lyle Lovett.
4. "Blaze of Glory," Joe Jackson.
5. "Absolute Power & Twang," L.A. Jang.
6. "Mister Music Head," Adrian Belew.
7. "Majesty of the Blues," Wynton Marsalis.
8. "Mind Bomb," The Ties.
9. "Captain Swing," Mikelletto Shocked.
10. "Live," New Grass Revival.

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

1. "Whatever It Takes," Lab Animals.
2. "Stones," Strange Bedfellows.
3. "Started Out as Friends," EFX.
4. "Life of Crime," Hypnotics.
5. "Speed Bump," Ray.
6. "Hard Life," Rubber.
7. "Stop Killing Me," Imitation of Life.
8. "Serious," Christopher Gorey.
9. "Right by My Side," George Edwards.
10. "Suffocating Smiles," Syn Syn.

REVIEWS

CANDLELAND
— Ian McCulloch

When Echo and the Bunnymen split from singer Ian McCulloch a couple of years ago, the band name stayed with the majority, amidst claims that they would be back with a new singer.

Anyone familiar with McCulloch's distinctive vocals may find this hard to imagine and we will await for these results. Of course, the death of their brilliant drummer Pete Dinklage in a car accident has not helped their cause.

Well, for those of you who mourned the passing of the original Echo, grieve no more. For no matter who it is credited to, this LP sounds like the latest Echo and the Bunnymen record.

It's a curious thing that happens when a dominant singer leaves a band. Their first recordings sound like a continuation of the old band. Morrissey, former lead singer of the Smiths, is another example.

Are they trying to prove that they were the reason for the original band's sound or are they trying to offer a quick substitute to garner their old band's following?

While song sounds and structures on "Candleland" are Bunnymen-ish, as a whole it is infinitely more subdued. It still features McCulloch's eclectic word paintings. Take, for example, from the strong lead off the track, "The Flickering Wall":



"I heard the footsteps in the street, I saw the lights on the flickering wall. I moved my lips but I couldn't speak, choked on the wonder of it all." Or from "Horses Head" are these lines: "A single rose, the curtains closed, a strangers clothes, were all I found, the great unknown, the lightrope show, a world below, don't look down."

Musically, it's a mish-mash of Echo and the Bunnymen and, at times, New Order.

Outstanding moments are "Flickering Wall," "Proud to Fall" and the single "Candleland," which features some beautiful backing vocals by Liz Fraser of the Cocteau Twins.

The second side of the recording (or, for you CD people... from "Horse's Head" onward) is pretty lame. The song tempos are similar and tend to plod.

... And you can't quite dance to them, Dick!

— Cormac Wright

EARTHQUAKE
WEATHER

— Joe Strummer

"Let's rock again," Joe Strummer growls as this, his first solo album, begins. The power chords of "Gangsterville," the first track, follow.

So, it's safe to assume that Joe Strummer has left the movies to resume recording. He has a role in Jim Jarmusch's film "Mystery Train," for those who prefer his acting.

"Earthquake Weather," released late last year, is uneven. It flashes with the brilliance Strummer's former band The Clash showed through the late 1970s and early 1980s. But at times, "Earthquake" only flickers. There are three or four duos on this 14-song recording, songs going nowhere.

Strummer's lyrics can be a blur of image and symbol, a mixture of angry urgency and resignation. He even includes a brief glossy Auto and auto parts (DeSoto, slant six, "carburetor bible") and blazing guns predominate here.

There is a Prince-like slice of funk, and a reggae tune, that most sound the guitar army call of Strummer and bandmates Zander



Schloss and Lonnie Marshall. But on "Island Hopping," Strummer sings against soft guitar runs: "It's been the same since I don't know when/So I'm going island hopping again."

In the haunting "Sleepwalk," Strummer asks: "What would it be/If you could change every heartbeat/That ran through your life and mine?"

"Passport to Detroit," despite the title, tells little of his favorite town. It tells instead of a "lisper." "He said I'm telling you the truth/I wouldn't be on this roof/I hadn't seen some kissing in the park/Or known how to mend a broken heart."

The Clash fans have probably already picked up this recording. It is a pleasure to hear Strummer singing on record again. As mixed as "Earthquake Weather" is, it's good to hear Strummer rocking again.

— Brian Lyons

HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY,
CHARLIE BROWN
— various artists

The song is called "Linus & Lucy" but, if you've spent any time as a child in the last quarter century or so, it's instantly recognizable as the main theme from the Peanuts TV specials.

That song, and others from the long-running cartoon series, are contained in this jazzy tribute (GRP).

Now four decades old, Peanuts has long been a child's comic strip with a decidedly adult point of view. Likewise, this soundtrack collection is not just for the little ones.

Most of the songs here were written by the late jazzman Vince Guaraldi. His works — free-spirited, though with reflective undertones — perfectly captured the spirit of Charlie Brown and friends, while remaining capable of standing on their own.

While the numerous jazz all-stars who appear here add their own personal touch, they don't stray too far from Guaraldi's originals. (And the all-digital sound is a plus.)

Chick Corea's version of the appropriately ghostly "Great Pumpkin Waltz" is a particular standout.

But it's masterful bluesman B.B. King (and his guitar, Lucille) who



nearly steals the show with "Joe Cool," a witty tribute to one of cartoon canine Snoopy's many alter-egos.

Label owner Dave Gruhn's "History Lesson" proves him a worthy successor to Guaraldi, while a group of child actors chime in on the closing track — a reprise of "Linus and Lucy."

Newcomer Amani A.W. Murray, barely a teenager himself, lays down a nicely restrained sax lead on the "Charlie Brown Theme."

Other artists contributing their talent include musicians Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Kenny G and Lee Ritenour and singers Joe Williams and Patti Austin.

While Austin's "Christmas Time Is Here" makes it appropriate for holiday gift-giving, this is clearly an album for all seasons.

Now, how about a heavy metal tribute to Calvin and Hobbes?

— Wayne Peel