

STREET BEATS



Allison's Ghost includes Stephen Kornohan, John Rivard, Priscilla Ederle, Bob Brunsten and brother Tim.

A 'Ghost-ly' new kind of sound

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Just a notion, perhaps. A theory, maybe.

But watching the group Allison's Ghost perform recently at the Hamtramck Pub, something tells us that: (A) Allison's Ghost is a new music band, (B) guitarist John Rivard has listened to a few Cure records; and (C) lead vocalist Priscilla Ederle's mind is more in a Paris cafe than Hamtramck.

On all three counts, we find later that we're correct. Allison's Ghost was formed out of the fallout from Before or After, Bob Brunsten and brother Tim, along with Rivard, performed in the new music band for two years. They left for creative reasons, according to Rivard.

ONWARD, THE group auditioned a singer named Ederle. She didn't make the cut. Instead, the band members opted for a guy named John from Canada who had a demo

tape and who had toured with another group.

Nearly a year later, Allison's Ghost was in search of a new lead singer. Ederle auditioned again.

She was a good choice, as it turns out. Her breathless vocals and whispery stage presence is the perfect foil for Allison's Ghost's incandescent brand of pop music.

Any hard feelings about the first snub? "Not really," said Ederle, 20, who is a 1987 graduate of West Bloomfield High School. "I ran into them at a party in Troy. I jokingly got on Bob's back. I said, 'You're the band I tried out for and you rejected me.' It wasn't bothered by it. They were probably afraid to call me back after the first time."

DRESSED in black, including a black turtleneck and wide-brimmed black hat, Ederle further enhances the moody, surreal image of the band. The keyboard-guitar combination of Tim Brunsten and Rivard keep the group grounded in reality.

Rivard's echoing guitar work sets the pace while Tim Brunsten's keyboards set the sound in layers. Surprisingly, the guitarist would like that to change.

"In fact, I'd like to see the songwriting go more in that direction," said Rivard, who wrote many of the band's earlier numbers. "Not so much in the techno-beat area, but more keyboard-based instead of guitar-based."

"I'm afraid of getting into one sound. We were just talking about that last week." Allison's Ghost has been talking about a lot of things lately. The band has an EP in the works, due out later this year. The band plans to tour the Midwest and Canada in support of the project.

Reasons for optimism are justified. What was intended to be a basement tape ended up getting air play on college and high school radio stations. Allison's Ghost prides itself in live performance. Before a decent crowd at Hamtramck Pub, the band drew a fair amount of applause.

MORE THAN a few eyes are glued to Ederle, who moves about the stage in wayward, if not awkward, fashion. Her face is difficult to see under the massive chapeau on her head.

Occasionally, she looks up and appears to be hypnotized by the ornate ceiling at the Pub. Her mind wanders, she admits.

"Sometimes, I'll have to drink four or five cups of coffee," Ederle said. "After working eight hours you have to go to a show. Sometimes you don't go on until 12 o'clock. It's long wait. You have to worry about falling asleep."

Ederle does her share of songwriting along with the rest of the band. Her job, until recently, was in women's apparel at K Mart. Between blue light specials, she used to come up with song ideas. She's also taking vocal lessons to work on breathing exercises and techniques. "There's a lot of different tastes in the band," she said. "We're all into new music."

Music Biz 101: How to get gig

By Jill Hamilton
special writer

Fantasies about managing a local band usually involve visions of glamour, fame and fortune. These fantasies, however, quickly fade when an aspiring manager discovers the other perks of band management — grouchy club owners, temperamental musicians and a non-existent paycheck.

Local band managers can be responsible for handling the band's finances, including raising money, if necessary, developing fliers, placing ads and announcements for upcoming performances, deciding when, where, and if an album will be produced and how it will be distributed, and most important of all, getting the band booked in the first place.

THE LAST item turns out to be the most difficult of all. Most people who manage a local band are either one of the members of the band or a friend of the band who thinks that the job will be easy and fun. Would-be managers soon find that the job is fun, yes, easy, no.

There is no tried-and-true formula for getting a band gigs, so most beginning managers find themselves learning while on the job. Club owners often seem gruff and uninterested and it's hard to figure out exactly what they want.

Roland Perez, who manages the Club Heidelberg in Ann Arbor, has a few tips on what up-and-coming bands can do to increase their chances of getting booked.

In addition to handling all of the booking for the Club Heidelberg, Perez is especially qualified to give advice because he once managed a band himself — The Opossums. This has made him, perhaps, more sympathetic to the plight of beginning managers.

Perez truly wants to support local musicians and it shows. His club now has a reputation for being on the cutting edge of local, alternative music and for giving new local bands their all-important first gig.

PEREZ HELPED compile the

following tips for winning over club owners.

- Pretend like you know what you're doing.
- When calling a club owner don't say, "Uh, how do you handle bookings?" and then hang up. Instead, explain who you are and where the band has played, then ask when the club's next open night is. If the club owner hasn't heard of the band, he or she will probably ask for a demo tape.

- Develop a good promotional package.
- Write a cover letter reiterating what you said on the phone and promise to call the club owner in a specific time period. That puts more pressure on the club owner to listen to the tape, Perez said. Sending photos is also helpful.
- If possible, record an album.

Because bands with albums out are commonplace around Detroit, recording an album is becoming almost a necessity.

- IF THE BAND has an album out, send the album, instead of a homemade tape of it. Unprofessional looking tapes are taken less seriously, Perez said.

- If sending a tape, try to make it as professional looking as possible.

Even something as little as messy handwriting can cause a tape to be overlooked. Enlist an artist friend to do the art work.

- If the band has done some recording but doesn't have an album out, send a short demo tape of three or four songs. Bands can save money by buying cheaper 30-minute tapes, Perez said.

- Don't forget to label the demo tape. Perez commonly receives tapes without the band's name or a phone number of a contact person, he said.

- BE POLITELY persistent. Club owners will often give a band a gig just to get the manager off their backs, Perez said.

- When you get the gig, invite everyone you know to come.

Club owners need to make money, so they're more apt to invite back bands who draw big crowds. For first-time gigs, the appearance of having fans serves just as well as actually having fans.

IN CONCERT

- **Cull Heroes**
Cull Heroes will perform on Monday, Feb. 26, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **Silent Partners**
Silent Partners will perform on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **Rite of Unusual Size**
Rite of Unusual Size will perform on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **The Cows**
The Cows will perform with guests.

- **Mol Trifid**, on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor.
- **Juice**
Juice will perform on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **Typhoid Mary**
Typhoid Mary will perform on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor.
- **Benefit**
Kash Phlugg, Ron Murphy, Jugglers and Thieves and the Gear will perform 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday, March 1, in a benefit for the American Diabetes Association at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$7. All proceeds benefit the American Diabetes Association. For information, call 961-8137 or 287-2790.
- **Dumpruck**
Dumpruck will perform with guests, Anne De Davis, on Thursday, March 1, at Club Heidelberg in Ann Arbor.
- **The Knaves**
Typhoid Mary will perform on Thursday, March 1, at River Rock Cafe in Detroit. For information, call 259-8202. Also, the band plays Saturday, March 3, at the Woodbridge Tavern in Detroit. For information, call 259-0578.
- **Phinesa Gage**
Phinesa Gage will perform on Thursday, March 1, at Psyche's Lounge, 2932

- **Canif**, east of Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8924.
- **Sugarcubes**
Sugarcubes will perform with guests, Primitives, on Friday, March 2, at the Latin Quarter, 3067 E. Grand River, Detroit. Tickets are \$15.50 in advance. For information, call 99-5586.
- **R.H. Factor**
R.H. Factor with Greg Stryker will perform Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, Feb. 28 and March 2-3, at Jugglers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For information, call 681-1700.
- **Red C**
Red C will perform on Friday and Saturday, March 2-3, at Jameson's, 1812 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 547-6470.

- **Blue Savannah**, Erasure
- **Favorite Pack of Lies**, Steve Kilbey
- **Faith Collapsing**, Ministry
- **Entertain Me**, Psychedelic Paris
- **Lucky Ball and Chain**, They Might Be Giants
- **I Won't Write You a Letter**, Dogg Boys
- **Beautiful Red Dress**, Laurie Anderson
- **Venus Sands**, Creatures
- **Never Be Mine**, Kate Bush
- **I Couldn't Smile**, Junk Monkeys

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 singles receiving air play on WOLU-AM 640, campus station of Oakland University in Rochester.

1. "Blue Savannah," Erasure
2. "Favorite Pack of Lies," Steve Kilbey
3. "Faith Collapsing," Ministry
4. "Entertain Me," Psychedelic Paris
5. "Lucky Ball and Chain," They Might Be Giants
6. "I Won't Write You a Letter," Dogg Boys
7. "Beautiful Red Dress," Laurie Anderson
8. "Venus Sands," Creatures
9. "Never Be Mine," Kate Bush
10. "I Couldn't Smile," Junk Monkeys

LOCAL

Here are the top 10 singles (no particular order) on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (repeated 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDTN-FM 90.9.

1. "Another's Hand," Staining Pavement
2. "Consider Me," Goobar & the Peas
3. "Burning Down," Blue Nimbus
4. "Terry," Zain Groove
5. "Bad News," Soul Station
6. "Could It Be You?," See Dick Run
7. "I Won't Step on You," Mochness Lobster
8. "Can't Get Close to You," The Gear
9. "Found My Place," Freemasons
10. "Can't Say No," Joanne Quest

REVIEWS

SACK FULL OF SILVER — Thin White Rope

In 1988, the United States sent Thin White Rope over to the Soviet Union to become the first independent American rock band to tour the country.

In 1989, the United States sent moosey heavy metal heroes like Bon Jovi and Skid Row over to the Soviet Union to serve as "peace ambassadors." What a good idea... letting those nice young men serve as examples of the American way of life.

The Soviets must think we're pretty gunge over here. Lord knows what the Soviets made of Thin White Rope, a very odd band indeed. Did they enjoy hearing the Thin White Rope ditty, "The Napkin Song"? How did they feel about "Voo Doo Right" or "The Ghost," a song set to the tune of "Amazing Grace"? Has "Diesel Man" hit the Soviet top 40 list yet?

How did they feel about Kysner's cigarette and whiskey quaff, Roger Knukul's jangly guitar playing and Matthew Abourek's off-kilter drumming? Or about Thin White Rope's peculiar ability to imitate little courtiered ditties with screeching feedback and make it all sound reasonable?

Did interpreters translate the true meaning of lines like, "Out calling



burgers in a friend's car/each paper napkin a happy star/Deep in the trash can they begin to sing/see what a life of innocence brings?"

Or how about "Dead man's shirts in the closet calling/why didn't you write me before I died?" would've, but I don't know what to say to my best friends."

Did the Soviets understand what the symbolism of dinosaurs throughout "Sack Full of Silver" means exactly? Why does songwriter Guy Kysner repeatedly make reference to those large, extinct creatures with lines like, "Your window is your prehistoric eye/gaze ahead and watch those dinosaurs roll by" and "an cartoon-animated broken wire/of pterodactyl bones"? Maybe the Soviets would be so kind as to explain it to us. We seem to have missed that day in English class on how to interpret strange and dense lyrics. Maybe it's one of those onomatopoeia things.

Isn't Glasnost wonderful?
— Jill Hamilton

KING BLANK TO — The Ian Lowery Group

The Ian Lowery Group is a band going through an identity crisis. To begin with, the founding member Ian Lowery can't seem to decide what the real name of the band should be. On the last album, the group was called King Blank, to which their latest effort, the band is called The Ian Lowery Group. To make this all the more confusing, Mr. Lowery chose to call this album King Blank To.

After deciphering the problem of what, exactly, the band is named, the next question is, "Who are these guys trying to sound like?" This is a puzzle that even the band itself doesn't seem to know the answer to. Heroin fits the fatal flaw for The Ian Lowery Group.

King Blank To kicks off with "Need." This song was evidently selected as having the most "hit" potential since it is the only song off the album to receive airplay on MTV's alternative music show "120 Minutes." Who knows, maybe it will be a hit, since it is a direct rip-off of a Smithereens tune and the Smithereens have certainly been successful.

The Ian Lowery Group then does their imitation of the Violent Femmes with the psychotic, little country ditty, "Sick Little Minds."



The saving grace of this tune is the amusingly disturbed lyrics about a girl contemplating whether or not she should knock off her parents.

With "Beach Fire," the group tries their hand at acoustic, meaningful folk rock. The only problem is, all of the good subjects like ozone destruction, homelessness and apartheid had already been taken, so The Ian Lowery Group chose to sing about "all the girls and the beer, the hot sand and the cool surf." Gee, a song about guys and girls at the beach drinkin' beer — what a great idea.

Can't something nice be said about this album? Well, sure, it has a lot of, uh, variety. While looking for a sound of their own, the group attempts everything from blues to rock to country.

Keep away from this one, gentle readers.
— Jill Hamilton

WHACK! DING! — See Dick Run

If any example was needed as to the excellent quality of the new wave of Detroit bands, "Whack! Ding!" by See Dick Run can be held high.

If anybody ever suggests that "local" implies "shoddy workmanship and low standards," slap them in the face with this LP.

With their debut record on Elementary Records (213 Windermere, Royal Oak 48073), See Dick Run has announced its arrival on a gilt-edged calling card.

As an independent band, at a level comparable to See Dick Run, presenting a package to rival most major label releases is worthy of much praise in itself.

Without the backing and finances of a major label, a band has to work three or four times as hard to get to this position. See Dick Run's professional package is wrapped around eight tight, punchy, catchy pop songs.

Their sound is guitar laden and they steer straight down the Beatles, Archies, Huey Lewis (!!) and Beach Boy road, SDR play pop and are proud of it.



Highlights here are "Infatuated with Mary" and the beautiful melody of "Good Thing." Time for Detroit radio programmers to open their ears to something fresh for their, and our, sakes.

This is now pop for pure people.

— Cormac Wright