



Bloom blossoms with 'Riverside'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Luka Bloom has never been one to wrap his music in trite metaphors, pastoral imagery or rambling political diatribes. Bloom's acoustic guitar is his axe; his words the power that can cut through to the core. His debut album "Riverside" (Reprise) is an understated, yet surprisingly stunning piece of music. The Irish solo artist doesn't sugar coat his terms, not even in interviews.

Bloom from the hip:

"The difficulty of Irish artists making it in their own country: 'Ah, they're a bunch of... beguilers. It's this 'fella from down the street, he's no good' attitude."

Playing larger venues: "Three hundred or 30,000 — it's all the same."

The success of "Riverside": "I'd like to think it's a good album."

The length of this interview: "How are we doing here? I've got to run to a soundcheck. Do you have enough stuff?"

Any remaining questions can be answered in his music, which is as straight-forward as it is passionate.

There's an air of bewilderment and wide-eyed discovery on "Riverside," which in itself provides a very uplifting tone to the album. Most of the songs on the LP were written after Bloom arrived in the United States from Ireland two years ago.

EACH NUMBER is a story, some written in the hurried fashion of a summer camper who can't wait to pen home to mom.

"It just blew me away coming to America," said Bloom, who had Dublin home before arriving here. "It's not what I expected it to be. I thought it would be a very aggressive place... but it wasn't."

"I didn't come here with a hype machine behind me. I didn't have a manager. I didn't have an agent. I didn't have a record deal. I came here with nothing. People were so helpful, such as telling me what places to play and who to talk to."

Without any publicity preceding him, Bloom quickly garnered his own. Word of his live performances in clubs along the East Coast, using only his guitar and voice, filtered to record executives. As a result, he was able to latch on as a support act with Sinead O'Connor. The Proclaimers, Hothouse Flowers and the Violent Femmes.

REVIEWS

OUT OF WATER

— Peter Hammill

If you're looking for a quick, easy-to-read, one word review of Peter Hammill's new release, "Out of Water," try this one — pretentious.

Still curious? Read on.

Beginning with the first track, "Evidently Goldfish," you'll soon come to realize that what you're listening is supposed to be taken seriously. You see, Hammill is making art. Note the meaningful title, "Evidently Goldfish," how clever!

This first track pretty much foreshadows the overly serene tone of the whole album. In "Evidently Goldfish," Hammill adopts a mechanical, omnipotent voice. In his best imitation of Gary Numan of "Cars" fame. The only guy who can really get away with singing this is David Bowie, and as you may have guessed by now, Hammill is no Bowie.

Hammill's pretentious airs reach their sickening pinnacle on the song "Our Oyster" where Hammill actually begins the song by (choking) talking over a backdrop of synthesizers and piano. "This one's authentic/son of a gun/soundtrack from China/in the universal tongue" he says grandly. Eeeeuuuuh!

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singing style of vocals upon hearing some of the other tracks on which Hammill makes a valiant attempt to actually sing.

Some people have voices that are so bad that they sound good — Neil Young, Bob Dylan and Gordon Gano of the Violent Femmes quickly come to mind. But, Hammill's voice lacks the distinction of these other men.

A more accurate comparison is with the annoyingly monotoned voice of Tanita Tikaram. He sounds like he is singing in an unnaturally deep voice. Perhaps he isn't singing from his diaphragm or something.

If you're looking for advice on how to allocate your album buying dollars, here you are: Save your money. Perhaps it will encourage Hammill to get out of the music business.

— Jill Hamilton

HEARTS AND MINDS

— Hearts and Minds

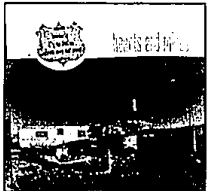
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Well, we're pretty close so far — Hearts and Minds is from Oklahoma and their music is as dusty and gritty as you'd expect. This is straight-forward rock'n'roll with a touch of twang thrown in here and there.

One of the ways for a band to find success is to work under the tutelage of an established musician — Rick James had the Mary Jane Girls, Prince had Vanity 6 — now John Cougar Mellencamp has some, arguably less sexy, interns of his own, Hearts and Minds.

Mellencamp let Hearts and Minds use his Belmont Mall Studio in Indiana and even lent some of his band members to the recording sessions.



The record was produced by Mellencamp's guitarist, Mike Wanclick, and his drummer, Kenny Aronoff, played on several of the cuts.

This works both for and against the band. Wanclick convinced Hearts and Minds to record most of their live, giving the record a natural, unaffected sound.

That's the "for" part. The "against" part is that the band sounds overly influenced by "Big Daddy" Mellencamp. Lead vocalist Bruce Henderson sounds too much like he is trying to imitate his mentor.

In the final analysis, Hearts and Minds is an instantly forgettable LP. These boys would do well to head back to the old farm.

— Jill Hamilton

IN CONCERT

- **THE ATTIC**
The Attic will perform on Monday, May 21, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **AXID**
Axid will perform on Monday, May 21, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-0555.
- **IDYLL ROOMERS**
Idyll Roomers will perform on Tuesday, May 22, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **MOL TRIFFID**
Mol Triffid will perform on Tuesday, May 22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **LUKA BLOOM**
Luka Bloom will perform on Tuesday, May 22, at The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-MUSIC.
- **JAYHAWKS**
Jayhawks from Minneapolis, Skunk from Newark and The Opossums will perform on Wednesday, May 23, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.
- **KNAVES**
Knaves will perform on Wednesday, May 23, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 992-0090. The group also performs on Wednesday, May 24, at Rick's Cafe in Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **SOULED AMERICAN**
Souled American, a band on Rough Trade Records, will perform with guests, Vegas Flat, on Wednesday, May 23, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.
- **UNIVERSAL SPECTRUM**
Universal Spectrum will perform on Wednesday, May 23, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **THE URBATIONS**
The Urbations will perform on Wednesday, May 23, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **FLASH**
Flash will perform on Wednesday, May 23, and Friday and Saturday, May 25-26, at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For information, call 681-1700.
- **VIV AKAULOREN**
Viv Akauloren will perform with guests, Unsane, on Thursday, May 24, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.
- **ASH CAN VANGOGH**
Ash Can VanGogh will perform on Thursday, May 24, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-8555.
- **RH FACTOR WITH GREG STRYKER**
RH Factor with Greg Stryker will perform Thursday through Saturday, May 24-26, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 992-0090.
- **EDDIE SHAW**
Blues artist Eddie Shaw and the Wolf-gang will perform on Friday, May 25, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **FUNHOUSE**
Funhouse will perform on Friday, May 25, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 961-MELT.
- **GEORGE BEDARD AND THE KINGPINS**
George Bedard and the Kingpins will perform on Friday, May 25, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **URGE OVERKILL**
Urge Overkill will perform on Friday, May 25, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.
- **TERMINATOR X**
Terminator X will perform with guests, Faveat Flare, on Friday, May 25, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.
- **LAB ANIMALS**
Lab Animals will perform with guests, Skin Horse, on Friday, May 25, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8676.
- **TAYLOR DANE**
Taylor Dane will perform on Friday, May 25, at Clubland at State Theater, 2111 Woodward, Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 in advance. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

LIVE REVIEW

GOOBER & THE PEAS

— 3-D, Royal Oak

If bands earned revenue on a smiles per customer basis instead of from admission charges, Goober and the Peas would top the Who's take from their latest farewell tour.

Mixing their peculiar blend of satirical showmanship, country comedy and gut-churning rock'n'roll, the hippest cackles this side of the fryer rocked a rollicking Royal Oak crowd recently at 3-D.

Underneath the cowboy hats and western ties, this band is about as country as Minnie Pearl is hip-hop.

As they take the stage and cut into Hank Williams Sr.'s "Hey Good Lookin'," a Goober neophyte may wonder if he's stumbled into a rawhide bar.

Suddenly, Goober, a tall, lean lad who could look like Bill Laimbeer dead in the eye and say "Slowly," begins to flail his boneless limbs wildly and the band kicks into "Funky Cowboy."

The guitars sing to the soulful beat, and hay files off the stage as Goober goes into his "cowboy walk" — his dancing makes Paula Abdul look like a young Shirley Temple.

— John Cortez

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SOUNDCLASH

— Renegade Soundwave

From the first few staccato, synthesized notes of the song "Blue Eyed Boy," on Renegade Soundwave's new release, "Soundclash," it's pretty apparent what the rest of the album will bring — harshly and heavily rhythmic dance tunes.

What is not apparent is any additional information about this mysterious band other than their label is Enigma Records. That's right, that's why they call it Enigma. There is no lyric sheet, no "thanks to" section, not even a listing of the names of the members of the band.

Either, Enigma is going through severe budget cuts that necessitates saving money on printing costs or (and this is infinitely more intriguing, but probably highly unlikely) Renegade Soundwave is simply a pseudonym for a really famous band! Perhaps it's Depeche Mode's answer to the XTC alias, "The Dukes of Stratophore." Well, maybe not.

Anyway, there's heavy rap music infused in this release, creating yet another sub-genre of dance music. It's sort of an industrial, technopop rap. The nameless singer talks through his vocals while the relent-

less percussion pounds away.

This usually works well, with one annoying exception, "Biting My Nails." In this extended-tune, Mr. Nameless singer repeats the phrase, "I'm just biting my nails" over and over until the song becomes immensely irritating. But, these endless loops of repetition are what dance music is all about, Right?

Renegade Soundwave is gifted at bringing in odd sonic elements into their techno-tunes. In "Pocket Porn," they graft in a tape recording of a woman speaking, adding an eerie effect to the song.

Ultimately, the moodiest spoken vocals, the repeating drum loops and the strange "found" sonic elements add up to an album with a cold, metallic feel. Renegade Soundwave comes from a place where emotions are mechanical and technology rules. Errrrrr.

— Jill Hamilton