

## STREET BEATS



Mol Triffid is interested in making loud music and writing dark commentaries on the human condition. Put those together and Mol Triffid is an interesting band.

## Mol Triffid: Mystical and on the dark side

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Though he sits only a few feet across the table, one has to squint to see Kurt Serbus of Mol Triffid. Only part of that can be attributed to the lighting.

A mystical haze seems to surround the frontman of one of the bands in this area making the loudest noise.

As Serbus sits in a dark corner of Club Heidelberg in Ann Arbor, he has the aura of a high plains drifter. Vultures should swirl overhead, tumbleweeds ought to be blowing through the club.

Perhaps Serbus knows something; he's just not letting on. Yes, that's it, he knows who killed Laura Palmer on TV's "Twin Peaks."

"We believe in taking peeks under rocks," said Serbus, who speaks in quiet, measured tones, a contrast to his apocalyptic yelps on stage. "Some bands would like to live under those rocks or pretend they do. We're not interested in that."

Mol Triffid is interested in making loud music. Mol Triffid is also interested in writing dark commentaries on the human condition. Put together, Mol Triffid is an interesting band.

With that, a person is handed a copy of the band's recently released 7-inch single. The song title says it all — "I Wanna See Pretty People Doir Ugly Things."

According to Serbus, he envisioned a man in his living room with the lights out watching pornography when writing the number. He creates the character in the song, screaming out in glee what transpires on his TV. The scenario is rather pathetic, but it rhymes. Music is handled by drummer

John Westerman, Sahljadk and Ball. Lyrics are Serbus' territory. The aforementioned trio composes the hard driving, metallic sound, and hands a tape over to Serbus. Then, Serbus writes the lines.

Said Ball, "There's no way of knowing how it's going to be. He is responsive to the music."

Ball and Sahljadk sit at another table across from Serbus. When the subject of influences comes up, Sahljadk mentions Jimi Hendrix and then looks over for Serbus' approval.

Some have compared Mol Triffid to Metallica, which band members disdain. The band formed in February 1989. Westerman, Ball and Sahljadk jammed together and auditioned a lead singer. Things didn't work out with the first one, so they asked a friend to join. Serbus was the frontman of choice.

Serbus' talent to rhyme in time is traced back to his elementary school days in Brighton.

"WHEN I was in elementary school, I wrote a lot of poems," said Serbus, who has a bachelor's in film and video from the University of Michigan. "My proudest moment was in the fifth grade when they changed the name of the school from West Elementary to Lindbom Elementary after our principal and they asked me to write a poem about him. (Trying to recite a verse) 'He kisses the knees of those that were scraped,' or something like that. That's all I remember."

Serbus doesn't connect emotionally with those characters he creates. He prefers style disguised as substance.

On stage, Mol Triffid's style is a buzz saw of sight and sound. Opening

recently for the San Francisco-based outfit, The Melvins, the band lit the wick for an explosive display with the burning guitar piece "Quack, Quack."

After Ball fires up his guitar Serbus lets loose with torrent of guttural screeches. He sounds as if his tortured vocal chords will need a vat of Listerine to soothe after the show.

The fact Serbus performed a 1½-hour show the night before at Club Soda in Kalamazoo make this night's performance even more remarkable.

SERBUS is only part of Mol Triffid machine. Westerman on drums, Ball on guitar and Sahljadk on bass create a metal sound as loud as two garbage trucks scraping bumpers in a back alley.

The sound isn't accompanied by a look. Unlike many metal outfits, Mol Triffid is not a hair band and the only leather they have is probably their wallets.

Aesthetically, Mol Triffid has something to offer.

"We do have artistic intentions," Ball said. "We are out to make a well-crafted piece of music."

Mol Triffid will set out for an East Coast tour in June. The band's single is receiving considerable air play on Windsor's CIAM-FM and the University of Michigan's WDET-FM. Like all bands, the No. 1 priority is to get to the top of the heap. Unlike many bands, though, his vision is not always a pretty one.

"We're not a gloom band," Sahljadk said. "We make music that makes you think and makes you laugh."

Mol Triffid will perform on Tuesday, May 22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

## IN CONCERT

- **GOON SQUAD**  
Goon Squad will perform on Monday, May 29, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **BIG CHIEF**  
Big Chief will perform on Tuesday, May 29, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **IODINE RAINCOATS**  
Iodine Raincoats will perform on Tuesday, May 29, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **JUGGLERS AND THIEVES**  
Jugglers and Thieves will perform on Wednesday, May 30, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **JUST SAY NO**  
Just Say No will perform with guests, Forced Anger and Scruffy Tearaways, on Wednesday, May 30, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7753.
- **ROBB ROY**  
Robb Roy will perform on Wednesday through Saturday, May 30-June 2, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0090.
- **THE DIFFERENCE**  
The Difference will perform on Thursday, May 31, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 995-2747.
- **CULT HEROES**  
Cult Heroes will perform on Thursday, May 31, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **VIV AKAUDREN**  
Viv Akaudren will perform with special guest, Picasso Trigger, on Thursday, May 31, at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, near 12 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.
- **HAPPY ACCIDENTS**  
Happy Accidents will perform with Ingo and the Enablers on Friday, June 1, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760.
- **SUGAR MINOTT**  
Sugar Minott will perform with guests, Chris Wayne and Little John, on Friday, June 1, at Pullum's Place, 6001 Woodward, near Burroughs, Detroit. For information, call 831-4188.
- **SUZANNE LANE**  
Suzanne Lane will perform on Friday and Saturday, June 1-2, at Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 682-8310.
- **WRATH**  
Wrath will perform on Friday, June 1, at Blondies, 21139 W. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.
- **ALLISON'S GHOST**  
Allison's Ghost will perform with guests, Red C, on Saturday, June 2, at the Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 833-9550 or 833-9700.
- **SPEAKER'S CORNER**  
Speaker's Corner will perform on Saturday, June 2, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75.
- **THE JUDDS**  
The Judds will perform with special guests, Highway 101, on Saturday, June 2, at the Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston. Tickets are \$20 for pavilion and \$15 for lawn. For information, call 625-0511.
- **TRINIDAD TRIPOLI**  
Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band will perform on Saturday, June 2, at Pullum's Place, 6001 Woodward, near Burroughs, Detroit. For information, call 831-4188.



Sugar Minott will perform with Chris Wayne and Little John on Friday, June 1, at Pullum's Place in Detroit.

## TOP HITS

Here are the top 10 selling records of the week:

1. "Vogue," Madonna.
2. "Nothing Compares to You," Sade.
3. "All I Wanna Do," Heart.
4. "I Wanna Be Rich," Culloway.
5. "Hold On," Wilson Phillips.
6. "Sending All My Love," Lincor.
7. "Poison," Bell Biv DeVoe.
8. "How Can We Be Lovers," Michael Bolton.
9. "What It Takes," Aerosmith.

## LOCAL

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

1. "I Wanna Love You," Waytons.
2. "Work," Babylon Hotel.
3. "Elsewhere," Hannabals.
4. "Lover's Lane," Love Kings.
5. "Waste Time," Shooting Club.
6. "Never a Change," Vires B 23.
7. "Charlie," Coppa Joe.
8. "Lazy People," Sensitive Big Guys.
9. "3 a.m.," Naiming Mary.
10. "Mona Lisa," Jack Robies.

## REVIEWS

### BASEBALL'S GREATEST HITS II — various artists



It's a new season... and a new baseball compilation album from the folks at Rhino Records.

"Baseball's Greatest Hits: Let's Play It!" is a followup to last year's popular baseball and music compilation. But as the 1989 Tigers could tell you, sequels can be disappointing.

The highlight in No. 2 is Thelma Houston's sassy "Steal on Home," the theme from the vastly underrated baseball film "Bingo Long's Travelling All Stars and Motor Kings."

This time, however, poems, interviews and spoken word recitations (none, thankfully, by George Will) share equal space with the music. Tiger fans will be glad to hear the voice of beloved broadcaster Ernie Harwell on "The Game for All America," an essay he wrote for The Sporting News some 35 years ago. The voice of former Yankees manager Casey Stengel, captured on tape during a Senate hearing, reminds us where a certain white-

haired wordsmith called Sparky got most of his material. But most of the rest of the material here is fairly thin, with the exception of "Heart" from the "Damn Yankees" soundtrack and Peter, Paul and Mary's "Right Field," written from a child's perspective, about the thrilling moment when the ball finally sticks in your glove.

Still, there's room for improvement. Where's the theme from "The Natural," where's John Fogerty's "Centerfield," where, for that matter, is Chuck Berry's "Brown Eyed Handsome Man" (...rounding third and headed for home...)?

Oh well, wait 'til next year.

— Wayne Peal

### WAR STORIES — Apache Dancers



Tom Durbin and Bernadette Colomine are the most unlikely duo since Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor teamed up for "The Theme From Green Acres."

Actually, the Durbin-Colomine combo is like the Albert-Gabor combo in that it puts together a down home country boy with a glamorous woman from another land. Durbin sings with a heavy country and western drawl and Colomine sings mostly in a foreign language that seems to be French. "Il est souvent au lit" — that's French, right?

Remembering your high school French classes will come in handy interpreting many of the song lyrics and titles like "Je n'ai besoin de personne" or a Harley Davidson? (I kissed a person on a Harley Davidson? I am a Harley Davidson? ... Your translations are welcome).

Durbin sounds like his hero, Hank Williams. He has that same sort of shaky-twangy-young-man-reach-

ingly indescribable Williams catch in his voice. Why folks, there's even a song on the album called "I Dreamed of Hank Williams."

Durbin's wailing fits strangely well with Colomine's mysterious French murmurs. The end result sounds something like Timbuk 3 — upbeat, fresh and full of jangly guitars.

The title "War Stories" refers to the little battles of living that each person faces. As Durbin puts it in the title track, "One more day, one more war."

Odd as it may sound, the strange mixture of cultures, sounds and styles on "War Stories" ultimately works. The music is quirky, original and, at times, quite beautiful.

— Jill Hamilton

### SONGS FOR DRELLA — Lou Reed and John Cale



Depending on the humor you are in, or the level to which your charity extends, this release contains the legendary Lou Reed and John Cale paying respects and tribute to the notorious and late, Andy Warhol. Or alternatively it contains the legendary etc., etc. exorcising their guilt about losing contact with the aforementioned Mr. Warhol before he died.

This work was commissioned by The Brooklyn Academy of Music to pay tribute to Andy Warhol and being that he was instrumental in the rise to fame/infamy of the Velvet Underground, there seemed nobody more suited to the cause than that band's founder-members, Cale and Reed.

What they present is a mish-mash of both rule-playing songs, where the singer plays Warhol and discusses his feelings, and observation songs where their comments about Warhol and his thoughts are revealed. Musically, it is somewhat akin to

Reed's fine 1989 "New York" album with Cale's atmospheric piano and violin thrown in for good measure. In this context the music does take a back seat, although there are some fine melodies, given the nature of the project, the lyrics must command more attention.

Here we find the strengths and/or weaknesses.

We listen to Cale/Reed's interpretation of the what was going through Warhol's mind at certain points in time and it takes on the fascination of a People magazine type inside scoop from those "who know." Enquiring minds, after all...

Whatever the drawbacks of the sometimes pretentious and sometimes overly sentimental, "Songs for Drella" does hold a certain fascination for anybody with an interest in any of the involved:

Reed, Cale or Warhol.

— Cormac Wright