

Nothing dead about Milkmen

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Gez, last time we checked in on the Dead Milkmen, the No. 1 man in the White House was Ronald Reagan and the band's No. 1 fan Jim Walewander was playing for the Detroit Tigers.

Since, Reagan has been farmed out to California and Walewander is telling in the minors for the Colum-

bus Clippers.

The Dead Milkmen? Unlike most dairy products, these purveyors of pastured punk seem to get better with age.

The Philadelphia foursome's latest installment, "Metaphysical Graffiti" is another dandy. The Enigma LP features such sure to bust-a-gut nuggets "Do the Brown Nose" and "In Praise of Sha Na Na."

Included in the accompanying pro-

motional package is the Methodist Coloring Book to coincide with the number of the same name on the LP. Juvenile, sophomoric, perhaps, but the crayons are nice.

"Funniest song we ever wrote?" asked bassist Dave Blood rhetorically. "Hmmm. I'd have to say 'All Along the Watch Tower.'"

But, uh, isn't that Bob Dylan's number?



The Dead Milkmen — Joe Jack Telcum, Dean Clegg, Rodney Anonymous and Dave Blood — have gotten better with age as shown by their latest installment, "Metaphysical Graffiti."

Red C mixes music and morality

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Moralism and contemporary pop music. The two seldom mix.

Red C would like to change that. In fact, the foursome has already started.

With a progressive pop sound, Red C attacks the premise that contemporary dance music must only appeal to the loins.

"It's an art form," said Tim Diaz, guitarist with the band. "There's got to be something more to offer than songs about sex or drugs."

"Everyone in the band has been raised in the church. None of us are keen on taking the words 'Pump it' and using it with sexual overtones in a song."

If Red C's convictions could off a bit strong, it's because they are. Refreshingly, though, the band doesn't resemble an outfit of traveling evangelists on stage.

Red C's music is devoid of preaching or finger-pointing. The group is not a "Christian band."

First and foremost, Red C wants to be known as a good group of musicians. After all, as Diaz points out, there are Christians who are dentists and doctors. They are not known as Christian doctors or Christian dentists.

YET MANY find Christianity and contemporary music are a major incongruity. For those who profess their faith, it's a double-edged sword.

Devout Christians want the music to reflect those beliefs 100 percent of the time. Others sometimes find spiritually-based tunes to be overbearing if not pretentious. Just ask U2.

Instead, Red C sings about how love heals all in "Circle of Love" and about falling out of love in "Falling Out of Love With Love."

Non-offensive lines, plus some fine musicianship and the velvet-smooth vocals by Susan Calloway has helped Red C rise quickly in local circles.

Red C was the house band at Midtown Cafe in Birmingham and has performed around the circuit as such places as Paychick's in Hamtramck and Alvin's in Detroit. The group only decided to play live club dates a year ago.

"We're musicians and we try to be the best we can," said Calloway, a graduate of Southfield Christian High School and a student at Oakland University. "You can't do that unless you play the club circuit."

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RED C FORMED two years ago, not with the intention of playing in clubs but just to play. Calloway met up with Birmingham Groves graduate Steve Woods at Highland Park Baptist Church. Later, they got in touch with Diaz. After a host of bass players, Red C settled on Jeff Hoffer, who is graduate Troy Zion Christian High School.

Band experience is limited, though Diaz did tour with a Christian band Morning Star at one time. All four members contribute in meshing the group's sound, which has evolved from strictly pop to a divergent mix of jazz to a gritty blues base. Calloway and Diaz write the majority of lyrics.

For most of the members, the club scene has been an eye-opening experience. Bands such as Ashcan Van

Gogh have been very helpful in the transition, said Diaz.

Though not evangelical, band members say Christian beliefs do find their way indirectly into the music.

"If you were raised in the ghetto of New York, you'd look at life differently than someone who grew up in Manhattan," Calloway said. "In my relationship with God, it influences the way I look at life."

"It's something we don't take lightly."

Red C performs on Thursday, July 14, at 3-D in Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344. The band will also appear Wednesday, June 20, at Woodward Jukebox, 4615 N. Woodward, Royal Oak. For information, call 549-2233.



Red C — Stephen Woods, Jeff Hoffer, Timothy Diaz and Susan Calloway — has a progressive pop sound that attacks the premise contemporary dance music must only appeal to the loins.

REVIEWS

TOYBOATTOY BOATTOYBOAT

— O-Positive

O-Positive is a Boston-based band that showed remarkable potential on a pair of releases, the most notably the LP "Cloud Factory" which received favorable reviews in a host of music publications and charted in the *Billboard* and *Rolling Stone*.

The beauty of O-Positive's music has always been their ability to present an echoing, atmospheric sound with a breath of passion.

Unfortunately, we don't hear enough of that on the band's major label debut, "ToyBoatToyBoatToyBoat" (Epic). Instead, what we do hear is a group that has undoubtedly turned over the reins to the producer.

The result is a radio-ready, commercially acceptable album that is certainly far from being a dud. Yet "ToyBoatToyBoatToyBoat" is devoid of some of those earmarks which brought O-Positive their following on the East Coast and beyond.



ber Dave Martin adding background noise with a saw.

The rest of the LP is crafted with pop sensibilities, breaking few traditions. "ToyBoatToyBoatToyBoat" producer Peter Walsh has worked with the likes of Peter Gabriel, Simple Minds and Love & Rockets. To his credit, he brings out several sides of O-Positive. Albeit, sometimes not always the best. Case in point: In the funk-laden "International," which is a bar-band dance number better left on the floor along with the spilled beer and cigarette butts.

Weighting pluses and minuses, O-Positive still comes out ahead. But, holding their past against them, we expect a little more.

— Larry O'Connor

STUCK TOGETHER WITH GOD'S GLUE

— Something
Happens

"Something Happens" debut album, "Stuck Together With God's Glue," on Charisma Records is something of a shock at first. Especially, if one has had a listen to their two previous, import-only releases on Virgin ("I Know Ray Harman" (EP) and "Reborn, Seen That, Done That").

Those two products featured a raw, driving guitar outfit with a knack for clever, heartfelt lyrics. Understandable since Something Happens has always been a reputed raucous act on stage, earning "Top Live Act" honors in a *Hot Press* magazine reader's poll over fellow Irishmen U2.

With this effort, though, Happens have gone from rock ally out into Pop Avenue. Those previous melodies and indelible hooks only hinted at before are refined, and in some cases, redefined.

The end result is a damn fine album that has the potential for commercial success. No matter what



musical persuasion one comes from — be it from New Music sensibilities or from straight-ahead rock-and-roll stock — it's hard to deny this foursome's due.

Tom Dunne's mellow, well-honed vocals have always had the perfect foil in Ray Harman's spirited guitar. This time Harman's guitar is tempered a bit, though its rawness peaks through on "Hello, Hello, Hello, Hello (Petrol)" and "I Had a Feeling."

Dunne helps bring this album home, milking each lyric for its worth with his smooth vocal renderings. For example, "Kill the Roses" is otherwise AOR argot until Dunne gets ahead of this manner. Along with the piano on "Parachute" the Dunne-Harman combination is as unbeatable.

Which might be said for "Stuck Together With God's Glue."

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IN CONCERT

DOOM SQUAD

Doom Squad will perform on Monday, June 11, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

TYPHOID MARY

Typhoid Mary will perform on Monday, June 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

MR. LARGEBEAT EXISTENCE

Mr. Largebeat Existence will perform on Tuesday, June 12, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

SECOND SELF

Second Self will perform on Tuesday, June 12, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

MOVING VAN GOGHS

Moving Van Goghs will perform with guests, The Hamlets, on Wednesday, June 13, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

SPYRO GYRA

Spyro Gyra will perform on Wednesday, June 13, at the Hilton, 1455 S. Phosphorus Highway. For information, call 583-9000.

SAMARITANS

Samaritans will perform on Wednesday, June 13, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

SUNGLASSES AFTER DARK

Sunglasses After Dark will perform on Wednesday, June 13, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0390.

THE HUNTUNES

The Huntunes will perform on Wednesday, June 13, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

BAD THING

Bad Thing will perform with guests, Bottom Feeder, on Thursday, June 14, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

ANNE DAVIS

Anne B. Davis will perform on Thursday, June 14, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

GANGSTER FUN

Gangster Fun will perform on Thursday, June 14, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

PASSION NOUVEAU

Passion Nouveau will perform with guests, Red C on Thursday, June 14, at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.

DEAD MILKMAN

Dead Milkmen will perform on Friday, June 15, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

THE SEEDS

The Seeds will perform with guests, Johnny Bravo, on Friday, June 15, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 585-9760.

COLLEGE

Here are the results from "Listener Appreciation Night II" on WHFR-FM 89.3, which listeners selected the top 89 songs of the 1980s. Here is the top-10.

1. "Just Like Heaven," The Cars
2. "How Soon Is Now?" The Smiths
3. "Stranglehold," Depeche Mode
4. "Headhunter," Front 242
5. "Stigmata," Ministry
6. "Love Will Tear Us Apart," Joy Division
7. "Bizarre Love Triangle," New Order
8. "Disappointed," Public Image Ltd.
9. "This Corrosion," Sisters of Mercy
10. "Bela Lugosi's Dead," Bauhaus

VIRUS B23

Virus B23 will perform on Friday, June 15, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

THE DIFFERENCE

The Difference will perform on Friday, June 15, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

SILENT PARTNERS

Silent Partners will perform on Friday, June 15, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

GEORGE BEDARD AND THE KINGPIPS

George Bedard and the Kingpins will perform on Friday, June 15, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

OASIS

Oasis with Stephanie & Cliff Monier will perform on Friday, June 15, at Bird of Paradise, 207 Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 662-8310.

TRACY CHAPMAN

Tracy Chapman will perform with guests, Johnny Clegg & Savita, will perform on Friday, June 15, at Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston. Tickets are \$29 for pavilion and \$15 for lawn. For information, call 625-0511.

SOMETHING HAPPENS

Something Happens will perform with guests, Shouting Club, on Saturday, June 16, at the Majestic Theatre, 4124 Woodward, five blocks south of Warren, Detroit. For information, call 833-9700.

SOUL STATION

Soul Station will perform on Saturday, June 16, at the Rock'n'Bowl Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, next to the Majestic Theatre, Detroit. For information, call 540-6275.

LUCY'S ALIBI

Lucy's Alibi will perform with guests, Kristin Sayer and The Universe, on Saturday, June 16, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 585-9760.

3-D INVISIBLES

3-D Invisibles will perform with guests, Zombie Surfers, on Saturday, June 16, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

TRINIDAD TROPOLI STEEL BAND

Trinidad Tropolli Steel Band will perform on Saturday, June 16, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-7758.

URIAH HEPP

Uriah Heep will perform on Saturday, June 16, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, just west of Telegraph. For information, call 592-0390.

CRO-MAGS

Cro-Mags will perform on Saturday, June 16, at Bloodies, 21139 W. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 535-8168.

LUTHER ALLISON

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8. "Disappointed," Public Image Ltd.
9. "This Corrosion," Sisters of Mercy
10. "Bela Lugosi's Dead," Bauhaus

CDs

Here are the top 10 selling compact discs at Compact Disc Station in Birmingham.

1. "I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got," Stead O'Connor
2. "Brigade," Heart
3. "Changes," David Bowie
4. "Violator," Depeche Mode
5. "Behind the Mask," Fleetwood Mac
6. "Charmed Life," Billy Idol
7. "Real Live," Van Halen
8. "Blue Sky Mining," Midnight Oil
9. "Affection," Lisa Stansfield
10. "Wilson Phillips," Wilson Phillips

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SHHH . . . — Shouting Club

The Shouting Club has never been one to knock you over with their musicianship, or for that matter, their vocals. Yet they get the job done.

For the most part, Shouting Club succeeded on their debut cassette/CD release, "Shhh . . ." (Dogbunny).

One reason why is many bands exist only to make songs (and meet girls). Shouting Club exists because of their songs.

Ear-catching numbers such as "Call," "Bible Belt," and "6 a.m." have become as much of the band's hallmarks as the group's name itself in the Shouting Club's four-year history. Yes, that's right, four-year history.

Chances are, though, you've never heard of the Shouting Club. Stand in line. The main reason for that is the four-member outfit seldom performs live. While a few groups do stand for fewer dates in the local club scene, the lack of appearances has almost been to the Shouting Club's detriment.

As a result, live performances have been spotty at best.

This is why "Shhh . . ." is more than just another record to the Shouting Club. If anything, the cas-



sette/CD is designed to validate four years of carefully crafting songs.

The product features a diverse batch of numbers, not so much by design as out of necessity. Original lead vocalist Jim Cortez left Shouting Club last year while the band was recording "Shhh . . ."

With Cortez went a good deal of cynicism that gives numbers such as "Bible Belt" and "6 a.m." lyrical bite. Cortez sings those numbers on "Shhh . . ." his voice wrenched trying ever-so-hard to feign indifference. Too bad he left. He was just coming into his own as a vocalist.

His replacement, Walt Babinski, writes more melodic, introspective pieces. And definitely, they're a bit more airy than Cortez's bad mood music.

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