

STREET BEATS

Daves get their Wishing Field

By Jill Hamilton
Special writer

It was sort of like the old proverb "too many cooks spoil the broth." But in the case of the Bluefields, it was more like "too many songwriters spoil the band."

And that's how the Wishing Field was formed. You see, the Bluefields as a band were doing just fine. They played a fair amount of gigs and were recently named finalists in Musicians magazine's "Best Unsigned Band in America" contest. But there was one problem — they had too many songs.

"We had an overabundance of material," said Dave Colin Richards, formerly of the Bluefields and now a singer/songwriter/guitarist for the Wishing Field. Yeah, some problem. So, the Bluefields decided to split up. Mike Campbell continued with his material as the Bluefields and Richards and Dave Stanton formed the Wishing Field. Got it? Well, it doesn't matter whether you do or not because today we're only concerned with the Wishing Field.

After the two aforementioned Daves (Richards and Stanton) formed the Wishing Field, they decided they needed a bassist and a drummer.

ENTER BASSIST Bob Okonowski, formerly of Mariner and drummer Chris Connolly, formerly of Shock Therapy (not the same guy in Premiere magazine or MTV's "The Big Picture"). Thus, the Wishing Field was born.

Although the Wishing Field has only played one gig so far, they're already showing promise of being one of the year's best local bands. How can this be?

Well, they've all been around awhile and have learned the ropes of the local music biz.

"I'm not new to the scene," said the soft-spoken Richards. "I've been playing in alternative, college-type bands for eight years."

Apparently, all of this experience has given each of the band members



The musical talents of David Colin Richards and Dave Stanton come shining through with their new band, the Wishing Field.

to figure out exactly what they want to sound like.

So what do they sound like? Well, here's a written montage to give you an idea: Vocal harmonies à la Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young in the old days. Melodic, catchy tunes. Pink Floydish aural overtones of "found sounds" like an old Timothy Leary speech. Tight, hook-laden songs reminiscent of everything from the British Invasion to REM.

Beyond that, you'll just have to see them for yourself.

Although the band has by now learned how to write songs, they still could use a little work on learning to sell themselves. They seem to be under the mistaken (and innocent) impression that if a band is good they will automatically rise to the top.

"OUR APPROACH to the business is that we try to write really good songs, something out of the ordinary," Richards said. "Our songs are sincere."

Richards takes his songwriting seriously and it shows. A Wishing Field song is a well-constructed gem about a particular mood or event. It is sincere music.

"It's really hard for a writer to sit down and analyze themselves and say what they're like," Richards said.

But, at 27, Richards realized that, hard or not, writing songs is what he wants to do with his life.

"I just want to make a living off of music," Richards said. He adds the long hours, low pay and lack of glory don't matter to him

"as long as I am content with what I'm doing."

"My friends have two kids, two cars and a nice insurance plan," Richards said.

That's fine for them, but Richards wants something more — "I don't want grown-up-dom for a little while longer."

Richards will stick with the Wishing Field which is searching for some sort of outlet for their music to be heard. Right now, they are working on a 12-14 song cassette which should be ready in December. Until then, they will hop onto the local club circuit.

So get out there and check them out.

IN CONCERT

• WONDER STUFF

Wonder Stuff will perform Monday, Oct. 1, at Neelands Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

• ABRAHAM NIXON

Abraham Nixon will perform Monday, Oct. 1, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

• WATER FOR THE POOL

Water for the Pool will perform on Monday, Oct. 1, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• BENNY & THE JETS

Benny & the Jets perform Sundays at Ashley's, Telegraph and Joy roads, Redford; Mondays at Reiser's Keyboard Lounge, Wayne and Palmer roads, Westland; Tuesdays at the Office, Telegraph Road, near Five Mile Road, Redford. For information, call 292-8236.

• WAH WAH NIGHT

Wah Wah Night, featuring House of Large Sizes, will take place Tuesday, Oct. 2, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

• DAVID BAERWALD

David Baerwald, one-half of David and David, will perform Tuesday, Oct. 2, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• ANTIETAM

Antietaam will perform with guests, Skin Flip, Wednesday, Oct. 3, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3582.

• VIRUS B-23

Virus B-23 will perform Wednesday, Oct. 3, at the Cranck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.

• OROBOROS

Oroboros will perform Thursday, Oct. 4, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3582.

• CROSSED WIRE

Crossed Wire will perform Thursday, Oct. 4, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-8555.

• KNAVES

Knaves will perform Thursday, Oct. 4, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• RED HOUSE

Red House will perform Thursday, Oct. 4, at the Ritz, 17500 Franks, Roseville. For information, call 778-8150.

• REMAINS

The Remains will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at the Cranck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.

• FRANK ALLISON AND ODD SOX

Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3582.

• DREAD ZEPPELIN

Dread Zeppelin will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

• PAUL VORNIHAGEN QUINET

Paul Vornihagen Quinet will perform Friday and Saturday, Oct. 5-6, at Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 663-8510.

• PANTERA

Pantera will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at the Ritz, 17500 Franks, Roseville. For information, call 778-8150.

• JOHNNY POWERS

Johnny Powers will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at Sally's, 4718 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

• LYZAK'S LUCKY DOGS

Lyzak's Lucky Dogs will perform Friday and Saturday, Oct. 5-6, at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, near Joe Campus, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-8555.

• DEAD MILKMAN

Dead Milkmen will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

• MATT GUITAR/MURPHY

Matt "Guitar" Murphy will perform Friday, Oct. 5, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• VOLEBEATS

Volebeats will perform with guests, Voodoo Chili, Friday, Oct. 5, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

• JUICE

Juice will perform with guests, Jugglers and Thieves, Saturday, Oct. 6, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3582.

• JOANNA CONNOR

Joanna Connor will perform Saturday, Oct. 6, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• YOUSSEU N'DOUR

Yousseu N'Dour will perform Saturday, Oct. 6, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.

• DIFFERENCE

The Difference will perform Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

• SCREAMING KARATS

Screaming Karats, Forte Vinyl Solution recording artists from Grand Rapids, will perform with guests, Culture Bandits, Saturday, Oct. 6, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

• LEAGUE OF NATIONS

League of Nations will perform Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.

He lets music do the talking

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Yousseu N'Dour needs an interpreter for interviews. But his music transcends any language barriers.

Though the Senegalese singer has recently released his first album in the United States, chances are you've heard or even seen N'Dour before.

His distinctive, haunting background vocals were one of the highlights of Peter Gabriel's megahit album, "So."

N'Dour was also the one on stage with Tracy Chapman, Sting and Bruce Springsteen during the Amnesty International Tour in 1988.

Yet N'Dour is virtually starting from scratch in the United States, despite having three albums to his credit and being something of a pop star in his native country of Senegal.

"There's no pressure on me to do that [conform to American commercial standards]," said N'Dour, speaking French through an interpreter. "It's something I want to have happen. I wanted my music to be played on the radio."

The world music he plays is called mbalax, which is described as bluesy polyrhythmic.

N'Dour's album, "Set," encompasses both a soaring spirit and gentleness. There's a passion to his singing that transcends the boundaries of an LP format.

FOR N'DOUR, he's only doing something that is natural. He's been performing since the age of 12. He was known as "Dakar's Little Prince," referring to the capital of Senegal where he grew up.

The country of Senegal is in West Africa and is approximately the size of South Dakota. French culture in Senegal is still predominant, including the language. Yet, the majority of people living there are Muslim.

Traditional music of Senegal had the biggest impact of N'Dour; that, and perhaps, Cuban music he heard in his youth.

From his debut at 12, N'Dour went on to sing in his mid-teens with Senegal's biggest group at the time — the Star Band. He formed Etolie de Dakar in 1979, which later became Super Etolie de Dakar — his band today.

An entirely new musical horizon opened up for N'Dour in the 1980s. He visited Europe, listening to Western pop for the first time. N'Dour has been trying to find the middle between traditional and contemporary styles ever since.

"In terms of harmony, I see some linkages between traditional African music and Western pop," he said. "Rhythmically, I don't feel there is [any comparison]."

While N'Dour was discovering new sounds in Europe, others had discovered him. Peter Gabriel happened to see N'Dour performing in Paris, France.

Afterward, Gabriel rushed backstage to pass along his admiration of N'Dour's work. Gabriel then showed up at one of his shows in Dakar a few months later, asking N'Dour to sing background vocals on "So."

N'DOUR'S GUEST vocals became the trademark on the LP's hit number "In Your Eyes."

Around the same time, N'Dour also performed on Paul Simon's

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Senegalese singer Yousseu N'Dour is hoping for success with the release of his first album in the United States.

REVIEWS

BONA FIDE — Maxi Priest

"Bona Fide" by Maxi Priest has the quintessential sound of pop music in the 1990s. What do we mean by this? Well, the boundaries between different forms of music are breaking down. Like rock was a distillation and interpretation of traditional blues, modern pop music is a combination of world music, rap, blues and everything else.

With "Bona Fide," Maxi Priest combines reggae, pop and soul and comes up with some top-40, radio-ready stuff. The album was produced by a Jamaican producer named Geoffrey Chung and Jazze B and Nello Hooper, the creative forces behind Soul II Soul. Presumably, Priest is trying to hit upon the same magic formula as Soul II Soul, but, frankly, Soul II Soul does a better job of merging divergent styles to come up with a unique sound.

Priest didn't write any of the songs on the album — he doesn't even share any song writing credits — so the songs run toward the generic. Most of the songs are about that crazy little thing called love except for two, "Prayer for the World" and "Peace Throughout the World."

Two of the songs "Close to You" and "You" are written by someone



named G. Benson. These sound like they could have been penned by George Benson, but for all we know, G. could just as easily stand for Gerónimo or Geraldine.

The songs are mild and good-tempered, with a touch of gospel thrown in here, a bit of dance music thrown in there. Although the songs are supposed to range from ballads to dance music, they all tend to sound the same. In other words, the ballads have a danceable drum track and the dance tunes have tender, ballad-like lyrics.

The result of all this is an album that is certainly serviceable mid-tempo pop music, but nothing particularly special. Priest's voice sounds fine, but seems to lack passion. The playing is competent, but not inspired. This adds up to an album that is OK. Not groundbreaking, not really offensive, just OK.

— Jill Hamilton

VEGETARIANS OF LOVE — Bob Geldof

He's back. He of the many titles: Saint Sir, Peace Ambassador, Pop Diplomat, Loud Mouth, Meat Head.

Take your pick. All of them have applied at one time or another. One of the original pop/punks, leader of Ireland's Boomtown Rats, whose only American hit was the controversial "I Don't Like Mondays," he shot to worldwide prominence when he organized the Live Aid concert/record/charity/multi-media event after being seriously disturbed by a BBC-TV documentary on Africa's starving.

Having spawned the multitude of "Aid" type concerts, he has tried to remove himself from this responsibility over the past few years.

"The Vegetarians of Love" is his first since the bleak solo album "Deep in the Heart of Nowhere" of three years ago. And what a change.

It is an eclectic mixture of R'n'B and Cajun influences with the odd bit of Irish diddley-eye thrown in for good measure. As such, it fits neatly into the "New Roots" movement of the moment, which shows the overriding influences of those who have adapted roots music into a contemporary style, most notably Geldof's personal musical idols, Dylan and Van Morrison.



The album has a spontaneity and an immediacy with most of the tracks chosen from 25 songs that were recorded in just five days. Geldof can even be heard calling out chord changes, and laughing between tracks.

His backing band is probably crucial to the success of this LP. If anyone is familiar with a band called The Penguin Cafe Orchestra, they will find most of the members here along with old Boomtown Rat friend and bassist Pete Briquette.

Their wonderful musicianship and Geldof's lust for life and apocalyptic lyrical ideas fuse to make this album a marvelous listening experience.

From the single "The Great Song of Indifference," Geldof uses the opportunity to exorcise the demons which have plagued him.

Anyone who had written Sir Bob off must give him some serious consideration once again.

"The Vegetarians of Love" can eat your heart out for breakfast.

— Cormac Wright

SONGS FROM ANOTHER SEASON — David J

From the opening track, the single, "I'll Be Your Chauffeur," he is ready to disregard any preconceptions that may be generated by David J's previous associations, i.e. Love and Rockets and Bauhaus.

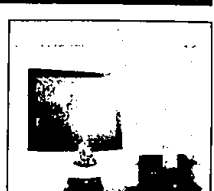
With a jaunty acoustic twist on the Beatles' "Drive My Car," David J reveals a completely different personality to that which we're accustomed.

While lyrically it is a blatant, and vulnerable, declaration of his dedication to the song's recipient, musically it is subtle and dare I say it, even laid back.

With an acoustic guitar leading the way, as it does on the entire album, backed up by some beautiful lead guitar and — don't be wary — an accordion.

Mr. J throws himself at someone's mercy: "I'll be your chauffeur, the go-for who will fetch and carry you home so as to get on this mobile sofa/I'll turn the key and let these four wheels roam."

Maybe the reasons for this solo album is revealed on the song "Sad Side to the Sandbox" when he sings "He's the lonely circus clown/with



the booze in the trailer for when he's down/ruined and blue./No one knows there's a side to the sandbox." This song has some particularly plaintive steel guitar in the best country boy tradition.

His songs range from the self-pitying "Sad Side" to the how to improve himself on "A Long Look." On the way, he addresses topics such as the throwaway "New Woman is an Attitude" dealing with the power of fashion advertising and the perennial difficulty of dealing with fame on "Stranded Trans-Atlantic Hotel Nearly Famous Blues."

If all songs are based around a gentle acoustic guitar and David J's quiet, almost whispered, vocals, there are a variety of other instruments thrown in for flavoring with the aforementioned accordion on "Chauffeur," a jazzy solo on "Fingers in the Grease."

A pleasing overall sound, some slightly pretentious lyrics, but good songs nonetheless.

— Cormac Wright