

# STREET BEATS

## A bit of Wisdom goes a long way as an alternative

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Believe it or not, David Wisdom is a throwback to who the guy spinning the records had total control of the show.

One can detect that listening to his show, "Night Lines," heard late night Friday and Saturday on CBE-FM 92.9, The Vancouver, British Columbia, based DJ mixes old with the new, avant-garde and mainstream.

For instance, a number by the Pines could be followed by one from Canale Francis. "Night Lines" is definitely Wisdom's show.

Which is saying a lot in these sad days of computerized playlists compiled by men more concerned with market share and Arbitron ratings.

Perhaps, that is the reason Detroit area listeners cling to DJs like Wisdom and his CBE-FM weekday cohort Brent Bambury ("Brave New Waves") not to mention "The Cutting Edge's" Greg St. James as purveyors of the new music faith. Except Wisdom tends to be a bit acerbic about it all.

Yes, Wisdom gets a lot of response from this area. In fact, he receives more phone calls and letters from Detroit than any Canadian city.

Yet, Wisdom isn't all too sure why. One possible reason bothers him.

"What people are telling me when I ask them they listen to the show, they say Detroit radio is lousy," said Wisdom, who was visiting in Windsor recently. "I say, 'Is Detroit radio really lousy?' ... I'm afraid of why some people like me."

"I think there is a certain sector that doesn't like black music. That doesn't make me happy."

WISDOM SAID he's picked up on that from letters he has received. Some have stated they "hate that rap stuff."

Such candor is not unusual for Wisdom, who speaks in careful, analytical tones.

Wisdom is not bashful commenting on the current state of commercial radio, which he believes is only concerned with making a buck. He's also critical of the stagnant music industry.

"I don't think we're in the golden age of music at the moment," he said. "I think music should be different and noticeable. There doesn't seem to be many bands doing anything different."

"I think the real smart guys who want something different are guys doing dance music."

It's hard to argue about music with a guy named Wisdom, whose record collection is so massive he can't even count it all. Estimates range in the low 10,000s to 90,000. His main hobby is collecting 45s.

Wisdom has also been involved in a number of projects and programs, including Variety Tonight, the Los Angeles Summer Olympics and Gaberlous. He's also co-authored a chapter on the history of Canadian popular music in Canada for "From Sea to Sea."

CANADIAN MUSIC is something Wisdom also feels strong about. Content regulations — playing a certain percentage of Canadian artists during the hour — doesn't bother him. In fact, he feels its important.

Wisdom feels too many bands resist the idea of conforming to American standards in order to get signed.



David Wisdom has all-night music and banter for the week-ends with his progressive pop, rock and comedy of "Night Lines" on CBE-FM.

## IN CONCERT

### • MOL TRIFFID

Mol Triffid will perform Monday, Oct. 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • VUDU HIPPIES

Vudu Hippies will perform Monday, Oct. 8, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • AUSSIE ROCKILL NIGHT

Disorderly, Laughing Hyenas, Lubricated Goat, Monster Truck Five, Urrest and Wig will all perform Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 9-10, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • WAH WAH NIGHT

Enemy Squad will perform on Wah Wah Night Tuesday, Oct. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • LUBRICATED GOAT

Lubricated Goat will perform Tuesday, Oct. 9, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • IMITATION OF LIFE

Imitation of Life will perform Wednesday, Oct. 10, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, east of I-75. For information, call 365-3223.

### • MARS NEEDS WOMEN

Mars Needs Women will perform Wednesday, Oct. 10, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • RHOME AND THE FREEDOM BAND

Rhyme and the Freedom Band will perform Wednesday, Oct. 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • ELVIS HITLER

Elvis Hitler will perform with guests, Blue Nimbus, Thursday, Oct. 11, at 3-D Club, 1811 N. Main, north of 12 Mile. Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.

### • 27 VARIOUS

Two Tube Artists, 27 Various, will perform with guests Baby Flamehead and Opossums Thursday, Oct. 11, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Assembly Required will perform Thursday, Oct. 11, at Rick's Cafe, 611

Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • PYLON

Pylon will perform Thursday, Oct. 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • GENERALS

The Generals will perform with guests, Concrete Blonde, Friday, Oct. 12, at Finney's Pub, 3955 Woodward, near Alexander, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

### • TRINIDAD TRIPOLI STEEL BAND

Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band will perform Friday, Oct. 12, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • GENE LOVES JEZEBEL

Gene Loves Jezebel will perform with guests, Concrete Blonde, Friday, Oct. 12, at the Latin Quarter, 3007 E. Grand, Detroit. For information, call 373-3777.

### • C.J. CHEWIE

C.J. Chewie and his Red Hot Louisiana Band will perform Friday, Oct. 12, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • HUNTER

Hunter will perform Friday, Oct. 12, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • FUN CLUB

Fun Club will perform Friday, Oct. 12, at Lili's 21, 2920 Jacob, off Jos Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 873-6555.

### • JIMMY BONES AND THE GRAVE ROBBERS

Jimmy Bones and the Grave Robbers will perform Saturday, Oct. 13, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3223.

### • DYNATONES

Dynatones will perform Saturday, Oct. 13, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • BUSHMASTERS

Bushmasters will perform with guests, Happy Accidents, Saturday, Oct. 13, at Finney's Pub, 3955 Woodward, at the corner of Alexander, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

### • SUN MESSENGERS

Sun Messengers will perform Saturday, Oct. 13, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

## Nothing cloudy about Nimbus sound



Lee Micallef takes his music to the stage with his group Blue Nimbus, which includes Michelle Fields, Kevin Copeland and Shelly Lankford.

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Hey, it took Nixon time to go public with his tapes. Lee Micallef has just followed suit.

The versatile musician has been recording since he was 11, mostly in his Livonia home. Micallef estimates he has more than a dozen self-made tapes, trying to produce at least two a year.

"It can happen when you're riding a bike and a phrase just clicks," he said. "You write it down instantly. Then you go and elaborate on it."

If this story sounds a bit familiar, it is.

Warren Defever of Livonia had been a basement recording artist until British independent label 4AD got hold of the tapes and turned them into an international release, "Livonia," by his Name is Alive — Defever's group.

WELL, MICALLEF has formed his own group — Blue Nimbus. The band includes bass player Michelle Fields of Farmington Hills, rhythm guitarist Kevin Copeland and drummer Shelly Lankford, both from Livonia.

To take his music to the stage just seemed natural.

"It's the freedom of movement," said Micallef, whose band has performed at area clubs such as Finney's, Majestic Theatre and Paycheck's. "What I love is the stage before you go on — it's magical. There are such great expectations. Hopefully, we can deliver the show."

THE SOUND Blue Nimbus delivers definitely possesses a "new wave" flavor with a heavy lean on the keyboards. However, some stinging guitar riffs and some angst-ridden lyrics prevent it from being technological drivel.

Micallef describes it as sometimes aggressive, sometimes moody and sometimes funky.

Overall, the music appears to be a form of rebellion to the three-chord heavy metal riffs Micallef constantly heard in high school.

BLUE NIMBUS is starting to make its move in other ways. The band is featured on "Industrial Chaos," a compilation CD on Nebula Records.

Also, Blue Nimbus will release its

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Pylon will perform Thursday, Oct. 11, at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor.

## COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 albums on WHFR-FM 89.3, campus station of Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn

- 1 "Goo," Sonic Youth.
- 2 "Ritual de lo Habitual," Jane's Addiction.
- 3 "Brick by Brick," Iggy Pop.
- 4 "Stray," Atter Camera.
- 5 "Never Enough" (12-inch single), The Cure.
- 6 "Songs from Another Season," David J.
- 7 "Reading, Writing and Arithmetic," The Sundays.
- 8 "Last Scream of the Missing Neighbor," Jello Biafra.
- 9 "Bosanova," The Plores.
- 10 "Wrath of Christian," Wrath of Christian.

## LOCAL

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

- 1 "I Won't Forget You," Screaming Karas.
- 2 "Anything at All," Thrifty Forest Animals.
- 3 "Lonely Ones," Standing Shadows.
- 4 "Thaw," Culture Handits.
- 5 "Can't Be Alone With You," Cat's Meow.
- 6 "I Could Dury You," Phineas Gage.
- 7 "Calling Your Name," Jimmy Lifton.
- 8 "Wandering," Blue Nimbus.
- 9 "Dirty Rascal," Wrath of Christian.
- 10 "Better Things to Do," Intolerance.

## REVIEWS

### AND THE HORSE THEY RODE IN ON—Soul Asylum

Soul Asylum's "And the Horse They Rode In On" is one of those cooperative efforts between a small, independent label and a huge record conglomerate. In this case, it's between Minneapolis' Twin/Tone label and A&M Records.

What this situation usually means is that the small label finds the band, nurtures it, has faith in it. Then, just when the band seems to be getting popular, the larger label jumps into to "help" (read: Grab some of the profits for themselves).

Nonetheless, it is still sort of heartening that Soul Asylum will get all the benefits and exposure that come with having a major label backing. This will change Soul Asylum's outlook on its song, "Nice Guys (Don't Get Paid)."

Major label backing also means a better choice of producers. So, for "And the Horse..." Soul Asylum hired Steve Jordan, producer of Keith Richards' solo album.

FOR A major label release, "And the Horse They Rode In On" is a strange brew. It seems to be going in several directions at once, with no distinctive sound joining all of the songs.

Some of the mellower songs like the aforementioned "Nice Guys (Don't Get Paid)" are so overpro-



duced — for lack of a better word — laid back, they almost sound like they could have been made by Steely Dan.

Others, like "Spinin'," seem to be sort of a punk/heavy metal hybrid. Their song "Brand New Shine" almost sounds like a rockabilly tune. And still others, like "Gullible's Travels," are firmly entrenched in college/alternative guitar rock territory.

Since Soul Asylum has been around since 1983, and presumably knows what sort of music it'd like to play, its lack of focus can be attributed to a desire not to be pigeonholed. Or perhaps, it still hasn't found its niche yet.

THERE ARE some high points on the album. "Easy Street" is a R&B-style rave-up that could be a hit. And even though we said "Nice Guys" sounds like Steely Dan, it's still a pretty good song.

At best, "And the Horse..." is an eclectic release, chock-full of musical ideas. At worse, it's a confused mishmash of sound.

— Jill Hamilton

### NATIVE PLACE — RAILWAY CHILDREN

For every worthy new band deserving of radio air play, there are those smarmy, synthesizer simps that always seem to get the nod instead.

Railway Children may be in the latter category.

Railway Children are new music, all right, but in the radio programmer's sense of the term. They have so much commercial appeal written all over them they should sell ad space on their drum kit.

They seek not to offend, relying heavily on the big synthesizer guitar sound and lightweight lyrics to carry them through.

In their better moments, Railway Children sound like a poor man's sky. Any semblance of a hook or catchy melody are overshadowed by some rather insipid lyrics — even by pop's forgiving standards.

Guitarist and vocalist Gary Newby goes to wretched excess with themes of idyllic life where "It's Heaven" and "You Can Hide Away."

In "It's Heaven," we hear Newby plead, "Dear Angel/They've taxed the words of love/I've waged a war in my head. I don't think you know what you've done/One and one and you makes two."

Then, because this is supposed to be dreamy, atmospheric music — at least that's what they told the key-



board player anyhow — there's a few references to the weather.

In "Every Beat of the Heart," Newby croons "That's some angry sky behind me" while in "Blue Sky."

Well, you get the picture: A multitude of teenage girls with braces are supposed to go ga-ga over this.

All this gushing is made doubly worse by Newby's attempt to sound emotional when singing this drivel. Also, Newby's attempt to rhyme on time lends itself to some awkward phrasing. The line "In a native place you can hide away" in the chorus of "Native Place" sounds more like "In a native place you can hide away."

Judging by this effort, "Native Place," the Railway Children are on a box car going nowhere fast.

— Larry O'Connor

### THEN AND NOW — ASIA

From the lack of musical growth department

It's game time. Take a copy of Asia's new Album "Then and Now," play it through once or twice and tell me which are the new songs and which are the old songs.

And no peeping at your old record collection.

Part greatest hits package, part comeback album, "Then and Now" features four new Asia songs and six tunes from its previous albums, but telling them apart would take a true Asia enthusiast.

Here's a hint. Songs one through four on side two — Asia didn't even have the courage to put its new material first.

OK, maybe Asia had some great harmonies. And maybe it had some decent pop hits in the early 1980s. And maybe it had some truly decent album covers.

BUT THAT doesn't justify the members repackaging all their old hits under the guise of "reintroducing" themselves to their fans.

John Wetton, Geoff Downes and Carl Palmer return this time with Pat Thrall (replacing original guitarist Steve Howe) and basically



rehash the same basic Asia sounds — lush harmonies, heavy production, echoed vocals.

Nice work, if you can get it, but why waste the bucks on a four-song album?

Bzzzzz. Game's over.

"Days Like These," "Praying 4 a Miracle," "Am I In Love?" and "Summer (Can't Last Too Long)" are the new songs. Kind of sound like B-sides to old Asia singles — albeit with a tad more guitar work.

For die-hard Asia maniacs only.

— Gerald Frawley