



Many punk groups have disappeared, some have mellowed and some have died, but Social Distortion is cranking out the same amplified snarl.

## Social climbers

### Distortion outlasts its punk beginnings

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

A chunk of his left ear is chewed off. A scar on his left hand reminds him of a self-inflicted knife wound. He's been in jail and through treatment for drug and alcohol abuse.

The punk lives, which is quite remarkable 10 years later. Many played the part of the anarchic, venom-spewing musician, but Mike Ness of Social Distortion lived it.

Ness' career was marked by a long list of bar brawls and run-ins with the law.

Then the punk met the Godfather of fate. Ness got clean, put Social Distortion on the road again and signed a record deal with Epic.

Amid the skeletons of the punk

#### Seeing the show

**Who:** Social Distortion  
**When:** Tuesday, October 30  
Doors open at 9:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Blind Pig  
208 S. First Street, Ann Arbor  
Call 996-8555 for more info.  
Tickets are \$10.50 in advance.

movement, Social Distortion is cranking out the same amplified snarl that put the L.A.-based group with the ranks of the Sex Pistols, Clash and the Ramones.

Many have disappeared, some have mellowed and some have died like Sid Vicious. Yet, one of the

punk period's most virulent outfits continues — on a major label no less.

"Yeh, it's weird for a band of our caliber to be signed to a major label," said Ness in a telephone interview. "Out of the hundreds of bands that came out of Orange County, Calif., ... I don't know what to attribute it to. All I ever wanted to do is be in a band. I don't question it. I'm just grateful."

NESS HAS said thanks — not by turning gratuitously sentimental — but by being the truculent front man that brought Social Distortion out of the Los Angeles punk scene and into the forefront.

The band released "Prison Bound" (Restless/Enigma) in 1988, marking a comeback of sorts.

Until then, Ness' life remained a sordid tale of drugs, alcohol and bust-ups. His most notable bar bout took place outside of a Costa Mesa club when his left ear was bitten off. Ness' wild mood swings could partly be attributed to a heroin addiction, which he kicked nearly five years ago.

In the recovery process, Ness learned a true rebel didn't need to be high on smack or stumbling drunk to be an outlaw in the eyes of others. "Prison Bound," in part, chronicled those self-discoveries. But Ness wasn't happy with the outcome, deeming the 1988 release as "too mellow."

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## Playing it hot with the Chili Peppers

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Before he talks, Chad Smith wants to know one thing: "Did my mother call you?"

Well, errr, she did. But any mom would want to brag about her son who's a drummer with one of those long-haired, funk-punk ensembles whose last record went gold, whose collective mugs are plastered on every music magazine and whose videos radiate on MTV.

The drummer of the Red Hot Chili Peppers breaks out in laughter. The past year, well, has been a rock'n'roll odyssey for the Bloomfield Hills native.

Smith, 28, a 1980 graduate of Bloomfield Hills Lakewood High School, toiled as a drummer with several local bands, most notably with Detroit rock'n'roll war horses Toby Redd from 1984-88.

*'I've played in lots of bands and stuff and I paid my dues, to use a cliché. I wasn't like, "Wow." But, in a way, it was like that. I was ready for it.'*

— Chad Smith

But like many a local rocker, Smith grew tired of the smoke, haze and general malaise associated with the bushes of the local beat. He scrambled.

Smith loaded up the truck and moved to Beverly Hills (actually Los Angeles) to attend the Musician Institute. He found hills, swimming pools and movie stars.

But, better yet, Smith heard about some well-known outfit looking for a

drummer. He tried out and "got the gig."

A month later, the Red Hot Chili Peppers were in the studio recording what would be their most successful album to date, "Mother's Milk." Then Smith and the group were whisked off on a year-long tour, including stops in Europe and Japan.

EVERYTHING HAPPENED fast. Smith could handle the pace.

"I've played in lots of bands and stuff and I paid my dues, to use a cliché," Smith said. "I wasn't like, 'Wow.' But, in a way, it was like that. I was ready for it."

The question, though, was more like were the Red Hot Chili Peppers ready for Smith? After all, his prior experience was with straight-ahead hard rock bands: The Chili Peppers — albeit quite loud — are a funky, punky outfit appealing to more of an alternative/college crowd.

Smith was venturing into uncharted territory. He heard of the band, but wasn't particularly a big fan of theirs.

"I just went in and jammed and rocked out," Smith said. "They just started laughing hysterically. They couldn't figure out if I was good or just wild."

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## IN CONCERT

### • SOUL ASYLUM

Soul Asylum will perform with guests, Drivin' N' Cryin', Monday, Oct. 29, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$11.50 in advance. For information, call 996-8742.

### • CONDITIONZ

Conditionz will perform with guests, Virus B23 and Church, Monday, Oct. 29, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • GOON SKWAD

Goon Skwad will perform Monday, Oct. 29, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • CULT HEROES

Cult Heroes will perform Monday, Oct. 29, at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SOCIAL DISTORTION

Social Distortion will perform Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SKIN YARD

Skin Yard, Toxic Shock/Sub Pop recording artists from Seattle, Wa., will perform with guests, Vertigo and Just Say No, Tuesday, Oct. 30, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • JUICE

Juice will perform Tuesday, Oct. 30, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • TERRANCE SIMIEN

Terrance Simien and the Malet Playboys will perform Wednesday, Oct. 31, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Prizes will be awarded for best costume. For information, call 996-8555.

### • TRIP SHAKESPEARE

Trip Shakespeare will perform with guests, Uncle Green & Juice, Thursday, Nov. 1, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SPEAKER'S CORNER

Speaker's Corner will perform with guests, Happy Accidents, Friday, Nov. 2, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.

### • JOHNNY CLEGG & SAVUKA

Johnny Clegg & Savuka will perform Friday, Nov. 2, at Royal Oak Music Theatre. Tickets are \$17.50.

## TOP HITS

Best-selling records of the week:

1. "Praying for Time," George Michael
2. "I Don't Have the Heart," James Ingram
3. "Love and Affection," Nelson
4. "Something Happened on the Way to Heaven," Phil Collins
5. "Close to You," Maxi Priest
6. "Ice Ice Baby," Vanilla Ice
7. "Thieves in the Temple," Prince
8. "Black Cat," Janet Jackson
9. "Romeo," Dina
10. "Oh Girl," Paul Young

(Source: Cashbox magazine)

For information, call 546-7610.

### • 10,000 MANIACS

10,000 Maniacs will perform Friday, Nov. 2, at the Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$18.50. For information, call 763-TKTS.

### • POLISH MUSLIMS

Polish Muslims will perform Friday, Nov. 2, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • GIL SCOTT-HERON

Gil Scott-Heron, the minister of information, will perform two shows 8 and 11 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For information, call 996-8742.

### • DIE WARZAU

Die Warzau will perform with guests, Dessau, Friday, Nov. 2, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$9.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.

### • OASIS

Oasis will perform with guests, Stephanie and Cliff Monier, Friday and Saturday, Nov. 2-3, at the Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 662-8310.

### • THE BLANKS

The Blanks will perform Saturday, Nov. 3, in the Community Concert Series at the Art Center Music School, 3975 Cass Ave., Detroit. The show marks the fifth anniversary of the Community Concert Series and several performers such as Sean Fitzgerald & Friends, Swamp Beggars and Chris Real. For information, call 831-0264 or 588-7235.

### • THE REMAINS

The Remains will perform with guests, Hungry No Angry, Saturday, Nov. 3, at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.

### • DEREK ST. HOLMES

Derek St. Holmes, formerly with Ted Nugent, will perform along with Gary Richrath, formerly with RSO Speedwagon, Saturday, Nov. 3, at Key West Club, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0090.

### • DEE-LITE

Dee-lite will perform Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Latin Quarter, 3067 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit. There will be a special fashion show featuring Cincella's Attic and Salon Kneecap-Bashar. Doors open at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$7.50. For information, call 961-MELT.

## LOCAL

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

1. "Come in Doves," Wrath of Christian
2. "Scary, Scary," Jerry Vale
3. "Madam Frankenstein," Paul Karlie
4. "Bullfighter's Disco," Jack Habbie
5. "Heart of Love," Standing Shadows
6. "I Could Bury You," Phibes Gage
7. "This Man," Imitation of Life
8. "Don't Get Killed," Andy Beckman
9. "Ghost Ship," Gargyle Sea
10. "The Gates of Hell," Scott Cannibal

## REVIEWS

### DREAMLAND — Black Box

Every so often, in the life of an album reviewer there comes an album that truly pleases the senses. "Dreamland" by the Italian band Black Box is such an album.

Soulful singer Katrina Quinol has a refreshing exuberance in her voice. The first two tracks are entitled "Everybody Everybody" and "I Don't Need Anybody Else," and they kick off this album with spice and zeal. They're classic dance tunes. If you go to a dance bar, you're bound to hear them, and if you've been to one recently, then you already know what I mean.

Katrina Quinol was once a French model. But her musical influences are taken from English and American pop culture.

Yet the band's first hit single, called "Ride on Time," off the "Dreamland" album, was not sung by Katrina at all, but by Loleatta Holloway, who first surfaced during the American disco craze of the late '70s.

"Because 'Ride on Time' took off so quickly, we didn't have time to re-



do it with my voice," Katrina said.

The other band members are Mirko Limoni and Valerio Semplici, and oddly enough, their musical background is rooted in classical music. Though that would be hard to determine from the effusive style generated on the "Dreamland" album.

The last member of the band, Daniele Davoli, co-writes most of the music with Semplici.

There is enough variety and innovation crammed into the powerful tracks of this album for me to give it a 9.5, on a scale from 1 to 10.

They also display an ability to slow it down. "Fantasy," the only cover tune in the package, originally performed by Earth, Wind and Fire, is slowed down a bit, but still remains danceable. Also the title track, "Dreamland," is a soothing little mood piece.

This album is just plain good time music. I enjoyed it quite a bit, I think you will too.

— Joseph Hoffmann

### HEAVEN OR LAS VEGAS — Cocteau Twins

To the first-time listener, the Cocteau Twins provide a dazzling, atmospheric array of gorgeous sound. The music is accessible, but are the Cocteau Twins?

Beyond the swirling, multi-colored cover art work, little information is available about the vaunted new music outfit. This is by design, of course.

The more obscure, the more mysterious, the more from which legends are made. And, deservedly so, the Cocteau Twins have gained exalted status for their music.

At what point, though, does being coy cross into being a snob? By purposefully portraying yourself as an enigma stems from trying to hide the fact you're really quite ordinary?

Better yet, how much are Cocteau Twins really Cocteau Twins or the creation of 4AD mastermind Ivo Watts-Russell? These are not criticisms, mind you, just mere questions.

Musically, Liz and Robin are flawless. "Heaven or Las Vegas" (Capitol/4AD) is swirling, orchestral and



lovely with a brooding undertone that leaves Cocteau Twins wholeheartedly intriguing.

"Heaven or Las Vegas," the title track, shimmers with brilliance as Liz's ethereal vocals provide an equinox of tranquility. Like many of the numbers here, the sound is both surreal and uplifting.

"Potemkin" reveals somewhat of an introspective side to the Cocteau, at least the closest thing to it on this LP. The echoed nature of the music can lend itself to interpretation as far as lyrics are concerned.

And, of course, the words are not provided with the package.

In the Cocteau's mind, ours is not to ask but to enjoy.

— Larry O'Connor

### THE CRIMINAL SPECIAL — Senator Flux

Like Congress locked over a budget, Washington, D.C.-based Senator Flux appears to be in a bit of quandary.

"The Criminal Special" (Emergo) possesses those elements that made '70s psychedelia great while maintaining its "new music" sensibilities and playing such nifty instruments as the oboe and saxophone. That's a remarkable feat in itself.

While Senator Flux filibusters, though, something comes across quite clearly — these boys' vocals can be damn right annoying. Granted, a golden voice is not a prerequisite for a career in rock'n'roll. Senator Flux's David Levine and Jeff Turner tend to sing in a nasal whine, which can grate after awhile.

That coupled with some rather overblown neo-political lyrics (after all, this is band from Washington, D.C.), provide some rather monumental hurdles for Senator Flux.

All that said, this band does have some ear-catching qualities. Mainly, those can be heard in the uneven, quirky beat they lay down. The sax



and oboe also provide a beatnik feel to some of the numbers whereas scorching guitar licks help prop up songs like "Fallerness."

This group's talents are better utilized in straight-ahead pop stylings. "Post Script" and "Grey Eyed Athena" are as indelible as one could ever wish to hear.

Unfortunately, Senator Flux' songwriting tandem of Levine and Turner would rather concentrate on being musical revisionists instead of being just a good band.

Too bad, something tells us they could be.

— Larry O'Connor