

# Making melodic images

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Manchester: Smoke stacks, unemployment, undying passion for soccer teams named United and City. Perhaps, these are the first things that come to mind when thinking about the industrial port in northern England.

Gary Newby of the Railway Children protests, "I think that image is a bit out of date," said Newby, whose band performs Thursday, Nov. 15, at Saint Andrew's Hall. "I imagine some people from London still think that. But actually Manchester is quite an optimistic place at the moment."

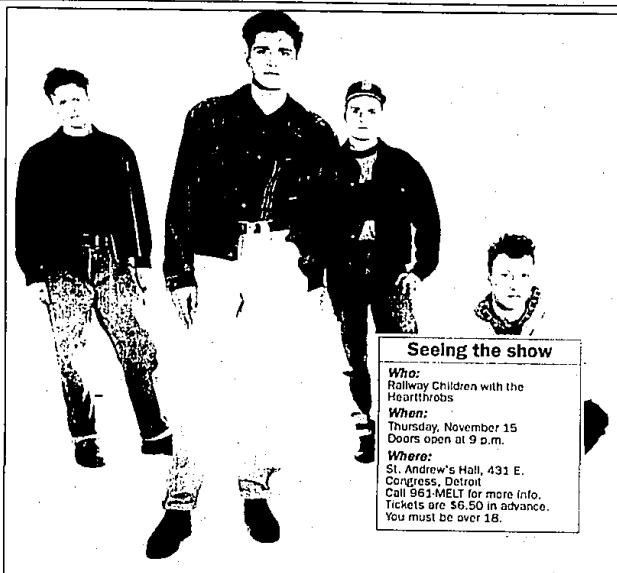
Musically, Newby has a point. The list of trendsetting groups coming out of Manchester is rather impressive, including house music faves Happy Mondays, psychedelia's new child Stone Roses, Inspiral Carpets and, of course, the Smiths and New Order before them.

The Smiths, in particular, portrayed a band in line with its city image: Gloom and doom with biting sarcasm and guitars to boot.

If anything, the Railway Children rebel against dark forecasts of life. Instead, singer-songwriter Newby sings of blue skies, youthful yearnings, counting cotton in a native place where love heals all wounds.

In essence, the kind of unfettered optimism that would make "Mr. Melancholy" Morrissey toss his cookies.

AT THEIR worst, the Railway Children invite cynicism. At their best, the Railway Children exemplify a pop band that has mastered the infectious hooks and melodies — albeit laced with some syrupy lyrics.



The Railway Children deviate from the gloom to chart their own course in the Manchester music scene with a melodic pop sound with optimistic lyrics.

Newby offers no apologies, stating "I'm just an optimistic person in general, I guess."

Such euphoria is understandable, especially since the Railway Children's "Native Place" (Virgin) has been locked into the Top-10 of the *Gavin Report* since its release.

Also, the group is embarking on its first headlining tour of the United States. But the ground work has already been laid.

The band toured here with the Sugarcubes in support of its first LP, "Reverence," which rose to No. 4 on the college album charts. "The album was praised for its in-

trospective lyrics and overall heartland feel.

On the first tour, Newby visited college radio stations. He'd perform live acoustic sets, glad-hand with the programmers and crash on the station's couch.

Undoubtedly, such a grassroots approach has bolstered reception to the group's follow-up LP.

"It was good just seeing the country and traveling across the United States," Newby said. "It's also a pain in the butt because you're flying all over the place and checking into hotels. . . I hope to not have to do that again."

## Seeing the show

Who: Railway Children with the Heartthrobs

When: Thursday, November 15  
Doors open at 9 p.m.

Where: St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit  
Call 981-MELT for more info.  
Tickets are \$5.50 in advance.  
You must be over 18.

NEWBY ALSO took a different tact with "Native Place." Whereas "Reverence" was more introspective and sometimes gloomy, he wanted a more uplifting tone to this effort. Which undoubtedly would put the Railway Children on its own peg from the rest of the Manchester music scene.

"I have a problem with this scene type of thing," Newby said. "Everywhere I go on this tour, I get asked about the Manchester scene. Personally, it's a series of groups that are working and doing what they want to do on their own."

Francisco to close out the deal.

Jellyfish itself is rather new. Manning and Andy Sturber have been performing and writing music since their high school days. The band also includes Roger's brother, bassist Chris Manning, and guitarist Jason Faulkner.

MANNING AND Sturber were in a group, Beatnik Beach, which had one album released on Atlantic in 1988. In their high school days, the duo explored every style of music from punk to bluegrass. In the process, a pattern of creativity was established.

"I write all the words," Sturber said. "We usually finish each other's ideas. That's how it usually works."

While avoiding the label of retrospective, Manning believes there is something to be said for the pop music of that bell-bottomed, flower-power era.

"There was a lot more innocence involved . . . just the pure, sugary pop that were into," Manning said. "It had more flash."

does get them attention.

"We're not trying to make a fashion statement," Manning said. "We're just having fun dressing up. We wanted to put a whole production together with colorful clothes. We just want people to say, 'Whoa, what is that?'"

Most of the garb comes from resale shops and "raiding our parents' closets," according to Manning. Many thought the band raided the musical attic for a producer, tapping the services of Albhy Galuten, "Saturday Night Fever" was Galuten's most well-known project, in addition to serving as producer for disco icons the Bee Gees.

Of course, Galuten filled hours with stories of Andy, Robin and Maurice. Right?

"Only when we asked him," Manning said. "In fact, we got on his nerves because we kept asking him about them. We're big on trivia."

Galuten was more concerned about working with Jellyfish, liking their tape so much he went up to San

*'I'd be lying to say we weren't influenced by the music we grew up with from the '60s and the '70s.'*

— Roger Manning  
Jellyfish

Yes, even their most fervent supporters say, one can detect a bit of the '60s-'70s bent to their act.

Perhaps the band's neo-psychedelic uniform of platform shoes, flowered bell-bottoms and ruffled shirts are the first tip-off. Given peace signs and Jane Fonda would probably become a groupie.

NEEDLESS TO say, their look

# Jellyfish goes pop instead of squish

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Get something straight, Jellyfish are not a '70s retrospective (Roger Manning told us so). They're not making a fashion statement (Roger Manning told us that, too). And they're not getting very much radio play in Detroit (Roger Manning told us so, but we could figure that out for ourselves because we live here and know how radio operates).

So just what is this group about anyway?

"It's definitely a force of the future," said Manning, whose band performs Thursday, Nov. 8, at Saint Andrew's Hall. "I'd be lying to say we weren't influenced by the music we grew up with from the '60s and the '70s."

Some have gone a step further, calling the San Francisco-based outfit's debut on Charisma something akin to a poor man's Beatles. Others have been more kind, lauding Jellyfish for its power pop, catchy melodies and neat arrangements.

## REVIEWS

### INDUSTRIAL

#### CHAOS

— various artists

"Industrial Chaos" is a recent project of Scott Campbell's Detroit-based Nebula Records. It is a compilation of 14 industrial dance tracks by local groups like Aural Sect, Sk Horse, Lab Animals, Blue Nimbus, Rubber and Campbell himself and national groups like Terminal White, Gaffidy and Static Effect. In all, there are 14 tracks.

The local groups are interspersed with the national groups and surprisingly (or not so surprisingly, if you follow the local scene), you'd be hard-pressed to identify which groups are local from song quality alone. In other words, we've got some talented folks in our town.

From the outside cover of M.C. Escher's topsy-turvy, which-way-is-up drawing "House of Stairs" to the first track "Hardfist" by Rubber, "Industrial Chaos" is consistent in its way of breaking traditions. Each band on the album throws out the traditional pop band set-up of guitar, bass, drums, vocalist in favor of drum machines, synthesizers and unusual or non-existent vocals.

Scott Campbell's song "Juggernaut" sets the tone for the album. Slow, deep, almost monk-like, chanting vocals boom over the back-drum of insistent, metallic drum beats.



The industrial dance noise continues with Warworld's song "Vast Waste." The Nitzer-Ebb-type buzzy vocals and the churning confusion of the rhythm adds up to the perfect soundtrack for a nightmare, which is good, if you like that sort of music.

The Dark Theater song "Undead" is an interesting mix of a sterile drum track with the almost funky sounds of an electric guitar. But, the vocals make the song. The unnamed vocalist sings and growls in a high clear voice and fuels the song with an intense passion.

Led Zep fans (and enemies) will enjoy David Kane's Decay of Western Civilization's industrial dance version of the '70s chestnut "Immigrant Song."

Other high points include Lab Animals' ominous tune "Whatever It Takes," Aural Sect's danceable "Testimony," Jimmy Lifton's "Of Mystics" (his "Wired for Sound" is also included) and the almost traditional sounding "Bed" by Terminal White.

— Jill Hamilton

### RUNNING SCARED

— Exene Cervenka

Exene Cervenka continues in the same direction on her latest album "Running Scared" that she started with her 1989 release "Old Wives Tales." It is a toned-down, folkish-sounding release, with a little bit of country, a little bit of rock 'n' roll.

There are two factors that have helped shape the music on "Running Scared" — her separation from X and Cervenka's skill as a poet.

In the late 1970s/early 1980s, Cervenka and her songwriting partner and then-husband John Doe fronted the critically acclaimed Los Angeles punk band X. Although the group is not officially broken up, it certainly seems like they are because they haven't put out an album in years and Doe and Cervenka are firmly entrenched in their separate solo projects.

After Cervenka left X, she married, moved to Idaho and had a baby. Many people think this is why she toned-down her sound so much on her solo projects as per the usual cliché of female punk rocker leaves the scene, has a baby and starts putting out dulcet albums about the joys of home and hearth. This is not the case with Cervenka.

The quieter, more folksy sounds on Cervenka's album can be attributed



to factors in the musician long before she left X. Toward the end of the reign of that band, she was beginning to incorporate more acoustic sounds into the group. And, buried under the layers of sound in X, there was always a bit of country in their music.

Songs on "Running Scared" cover a gamut of musical styles from rockers to ethereal ballads. The tunes range from the countrified sounds of "A Boy and His Sister" to a song veering toward hip hop, "Real Estate."

Although the songs on "Running Scared" musically lack the passionate edge of her work with X, lyrically, they hit just as hard. Cervenka continues to be a poetic punk, apparent in "It Fell," a song about being faithful to oneself. "The Inflation" is a tear drop finally fell on the blood-red drops of a bad spell/and when it fell and broke, lots and lots of water come out."

— Jill Hamilton

## IN CONCERT

### • LIVING COLOUR

Living Colour will perform Monday, Nov. 5, at Latin Quarter, 3067 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Advance tickets are \$17.50. Doors open at 7 p.m. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

### • BABE HEAD

Babe Head will perform Monday, Nov. 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • WATER FOR THE POOL

Water for the Pool will perform Monday, Nov. 5, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • HIS NAME IS ALIVE

His Name is Alive will perform a free show Tuesday, Nov. 6, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • POETRY SLAM

Poetry Slam will perform 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • RYTHMCFEUD

Ryth McFeud will perform Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • ALIEN SEX FIEND

Alien Sex Fiend will perform Wednesday, Nov. 7, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 981-MELT.

### • CAPTAIN DAVE

Captain Dave and the Psychedelic Lounge Cats will perform Wednesday, Nov. 7, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • ROBERT CRAY BAND

Robert Cray Band will perform with The Memphis Horns, Wednesday, Nov. 7, at Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor. For information, call 764-8350.

### • TEDDY RICHARDS

Teddy Richards will perform Wednesday, Nov. 7, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • SKINFLIP

Skinflip will perform with guests, Wishing Fields, Thursday, Nov. 8, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • MOJO NIXON/DEAD MILK MEN

Mojo Nixon will perform along with the Dead Milkmen and the Cavedogs, Thursday, Nov. 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 665-4755.

### • MEANIES

Meanies will perform with guests, Happy Death Men, Thursday, Nov. 8, at Club D-18, 1815 N. Main, near 12 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3244.

### • KNAVES

The Knaves will perform Thursday, Nov. 8, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. Proceeds benefit Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

## TOP HITS

Best-selling records of the week:

- "I Don't Have the Heart," James Ingram
- "Black Cat," Janet Jackson
- "I've Got a Feeling," Vanilla Ice
- "Paying for Time," George Michael
- "Sussie Wussie," Lisa
- "Giving You the Benefit," Pebbles
- "Everybody Everybody," Black Box
- "Love Takes Time," Mariah Carey
- "Can't Stop," After 7
- "Close to You," Maxi Priest

(Source: Cashbox magazine)

## LOCAL

Here are the top-selling records of the week, Music Scene, which is based on pop Sunday's repeated sales of pop albums on WDRB-FM 99.9.

- "This Man," Imitation of Life
- "Bullfighter," The Roots
- "Big Business," The Roots
- "How I Feel," The Roots
- "Up Tight," Paul Robeson
- "Spice," Thelma Houston
- "Blindfold," Phyllis Diller
- "Windbag," Blue Nimbus
- "Dirty Rascal," Wrath of Christian
- "America," David Byrne

## THE ONLY ONE I KNOW (EP)

— Charlatans UK

GLIDER

— My Bloody Valentine

EP's serve one of two purposes. The format allows some bands to dump excess material not worthy enough to go on an LP for the unsuspecting record-buying public. Or, it can serve as a short, creative, and perhaps an affordable, introduction to the group's music.

U2, as an example, have used EPs to display some of their more obscure and experimental material as in "Sort of Homecoming." Also, the band's live EP "Under a Blood Red Sky" became the benchmark for their soon-to-be illustrious career.

These two releases by the stately My Bloody Valentine and the up-and-coming Charlatans UK fall into a similar category.

To their credit, each stretches creative boundaries of the four to five-song EP to enjoyable lengths.

Charlatans UK are currently the rage in England. On "The Only One I Know," it is easy to understand why. Whereas many bands on a nostalgia live into the '70s, few have re-



Epic Recording artists Living Colour brings their "Cult of Personality" Monday into the Latin Quarter in Detroit.

### • JELLYFISH

Jellyfish will perform Thursday, Nov. 8, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 981-MELT.

### • RED C

Red C will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • SKINNY PUPPY

Skinny Puppy will perform with guests, Babes in Toyland, Friday, Nov. 9, at the Latin Quarter, 3067 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 in advance. For information, call 994-MELT.

### • DIFFERENCE

Difference will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • LONNIE BROOKS

Lonnie Brooks will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • HARM'S WAY

Harm's Way will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • JOHNNY O'NEAL

Johnny O'Neal will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • THE CALL

The Call will perform Friday, Nov. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • COMMUNITY GARDEN SERIES

The Community Garden Series, for Friday, Nov. 9, at 9:30 p.m. John Saxe, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

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interpreted the psychedelia, power-chord jams with the hook-ridden style of Charlatans UK.

The single, "The Only One I Know," is brimming with Procel Harrem-esque keyboards and a thunderous rhythm section capped off by some riveting guitar work. That, in a nutshell, are Charlatans UK.

While the Charlatans are reinterpreting "The Only One I Know," My Bloody Valentine continue inventing. The dissonant sounding guitar band showcases an intriguing mix of material, including a pair of instrumentals "Glider" and "Soan."

— Larry O'Connor