



Karen Monster is back as a member of the Truncheons, an all-girl band that includes Paula Boufford (from left) on the guitar, Raquel Salasay on bass and T.N.T. on drums.

## Truncheons: Not so sugar 'n spicy

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

The Truncheons are tough. The Truncheons are not to be messed with. The Truncheons strike fear into those who dare cross their path strewn with broken bones and crushed cans.

The Go-Gos giggle, the Bangles pout, but the Truncheons kneel you in the stomach and stab their cigarettes out on your forehead.

At least that's what they want the masses to believe. Really, beneath the leather and snarls are four sweet, petite women.

Why isn't that Karen Monster pondering between puffs on her Winston cigarette the possibility that she and guitarist, Paula Boufford, are really like sisters?

"Naw," said Monster, dismissing the notion, "If she was my sister, I'd probably hit her a lot harder."

Nice try. We're still not convinced. This gum-snapping, scratch-your-eyes-out image is obviously a

facade, designed to hide vulnerability and insecurity.

Why look at Monica Reynolds, Raquel Salasay, Boufford and Monster fall onto stage for the sound check before a recent show at Alvin's. They are the perfect picture of harmony, a unit of one striving toward a musical goal.

"Shut up," said Monster, calling business to order.

THE TRUNCHEONS' story is as abrupt. The band was formed out of fallout from other bands. Reynolds and Boufford were with the all-girl outfit Vertical Pillows, Salasay formerly of Plasma Bats and Monster, well, she was involved in a solo career.

The band has a video in the works and will soon head into the studio to record an EP. The Truncheons perform Thursday, Dec. 6, at 3-D Club in Royal Oak.

In this outfit, Monster comes across as the leader.

"I'm the first one to say something sucks," she said.

Together, they form one of the

most formidable all-female hard rock bands ever in the area. There was a fifth member to this equation. Carolyn Striolo of Detroit Energy Asylum is no longer around.

"We don't want to talk about it," Monster said.

Instead, the Truncheons just want to play rock'n'roll. The sound is a snarling variety, bridging the elements of the Kinks and the Ramones put forth in a rudimentary, three-chord manner.

The honest, crude-as-graffiti lyrics sung in Monster's breathy voice, in addition to some searing guitar riffs by Boufford and a thunderous rhythm section of Reynolds on drums and Salasay on bass, put the Truncheons into undisputed break-out territory.

Titles like "I Hate You" and "I Love You" illustrate Monster's knack for avoiding gray areas when writing her songs.

"I'M WORKING ON 'I Kinda Like You,'" she said with a laugh.

Lyrically, Monster articulates

feelings in the same manner one does after accidentally slamming a sledgehammer on his big toe.

On "I Hate You," a guitar-charged lament of love lost Monster sings, "I never thought it would end like this/I never knew I could get so p—d/Launch myself into hyperspace/I feel like snapping a pistol in your face/Take you right down to the riverbank/shove you right in just to show my thanks."

Imagine Belinda Carlisle or Suzanne Hoffs chewing on that.

The Truncheons don't bother. Part of the group's mission is redefining the role of the female rock band. The Truncheons are not about fashion, they don't bear dimples to mask shortcomings.

"It's more natural," Boufford said. "The edge is there, where with the (Vertical) Pillows we were pop."

For Monster, having bandmates around has its own pluses.

"Basically," she said, "you know if you mess up you have someone to cover your butt."

## IN CONCERT

### • BOVINE LOVE

Bovine Love will perform Monday, Nov. 26, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • HARAMBE

Harambe will perform Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 26-27, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • MIKE KATON

Mike Katon will perform Tuesday, Nov. 27, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • JOE AND OUT

Joe and Out will perform with guests, Voodoo Chill, Wednesday, Nov. 28, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • FAITH HEALERS

The Faith Healers will perform with guests, Mol Triffid, Wednesday, Nov. 28, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • RAILROAD JERK

Railroad Jerk will perform with guests, Peg Boy, Thursday, Nov. 29, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • TINSLEY ELLIS

Tinsley Ellis will perform with guests, The Pit Vipers, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 28, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.

### • ENEMY SQUAD

Enemy Squad will perform Thursday, Nov. 29, at 3-D Club, 1815 N.

Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.

### • VOLEBEATS

Volebeats will perform 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 29, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. The Oroburos will perform at 9:30 p.m. For information, call 996-8555.

### • FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD SOX

Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Friday, Nov. 30, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

### • ANNE BE DAVIS

Anne Be Davis will perform Friday, Nov. 30, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### • DIFFERENCE

Difference will perform Friday and Saturday, Nov. 30 to Dec. 1, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### • DETROIT ENERGY ASYLUM

Detroit Energy Asylum will perform with guests, Faithhealers, Friday, Nov. 30, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

### • PLANET OF FUN

Planet of Fun will perform with guests, Grady Hazy and the Remains, Friday, Nov. 30, at Pinney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

### • PHINEAS GAGE

Phineas Gage will perform Friday, Nov. 30, at Psyche's Lounge, 2932 Caniff, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8934.

Please turn to Page 4



Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Friday, Nov. 30, at Club Heidelberg in Ann Arbor.

## LIVE REVIEW

### GOOBER & THE PEAS

(with some guy named Dylan)

Performing in the biggest venue since their ill-fated tryout at the Grand Ol' Opry 26 years ago, Goobar & The Peas electrified a near-capacity crowd at Detroit's crown jewel, the Fox Theater Nov. 18.

From the opening riff of the rip-roarin' "Funky Cowboy" through to the Peas' final thund-

ering chords of the hillbilly classic, Eddie Money's "Shakin'" this legendary country quintet kept the audience planted firmly but attentively in its cushioned seats.

Highlights from the Fabulous Fox' finest hour (or 45 minutes) included the Peas' anthemic hit, "Hot Women (Cold Beer)," their raucous rendition of Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues," and their own touching "Let's Go Hunt Down Grandpa." The band ripped through most of the six songs on their big-selling record.

"The Complete Works of Goobar & The Peas."

Goobar thrilled a gasping crowd with his high-stepping moves, stage-jumping and patented moonwalk.

He entertained them with tales of his 36 years in the music biz, telling how he co-wrote "Night Moves" with a much younger and skinnier Bob Seger, who then rode the song to stardom while the Peas kept plugging away, pleasing dozens of fans in the Thumb area of the state.

The triumphant Fox appear-

ance might be the jumpstart Goobar needs to rejuvenate (or just *renew*) his career. It could also prove to be a major coup for Fox officials, who can rest assured that the crowds will come back downtown, if the theater draws big-time acts.

When this crowd had a chance to catch its breath after the exhilarating performance of Goobar & The Peas, another act took the stage, a folksinger from Minnesota named Bob Dylan. He

Please turn to Page 4

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

### — Gang of Four

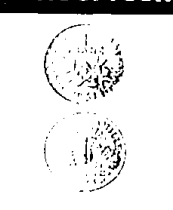
Most people may know England's Gang of Four from their 1982 semi-hit, "I Love a Man in a Uniform." Taken at face value, the quartet seemed like many of the other new wave, post-punk bands at the time — making harmless electronic danceable pop ditties.

But Gang of Four was more than just a dance 'n party band. They were more influenced by the music of the Sex Pistols and Parliament/Funkadelic than in the electronic music of their peers.

Gang of Four (Dave Allen, Hugo Burnham, Andy Gill and Jon King) was named after China's Maoist Gang of Four. In everything from their name to the content of their songs to their live shows, the band was trying to put forth their own philosophy of life.

"A Brief History of the Twentieth Century" is a 20-song greatest hits package spanning the group's earliest songs like "Damaged Goods" and "At Home He's a Tourist" from 1979 up to their later songs like "I Love a Man in a Uniform" from 1982 and "Is It Love" from 1983 (The group broke up in 1984).

### GANG OF FOUR



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

If you listen to it for the lyrical content, you're apt to get a might depressed with Gang of Four's grievous views on the world.

Musically, the album is less complex. The value of the greatest hits format would be to new fans of Gang of Four who would like to get an overview of the group's work or people who are interested in the music of the early 1980s.

"A Brief History..." works well as a period piece. Remember those days when Devo was in, new wave had just blossomed and 102.7 was the highest radio station around? "A Brief History..." will take you back to those days.

— Jill Hamilton

## WITHOUT A NET — Grateful Dead

"The Grateful Dead are like licorice," Jerry Garcia once said. "Not everyone likes it, but the people who like licorice really like it a lot."

"Without a Net," the Dead's first live release in a decade (excluding an album with Bob Dylan), is a treat for licorice-lovers everywhere. It won't be a chart-topper because (A) it's the Grateful Dead, (B) it's a triple-album or double CD and (C) it's chock full of extended jams radio won't touch — but all that doesn't mean it's not (D) fantastic. It is.

More than two hours in length and divided into two sets, "Without a Net" transforms your house into a Dead show. If you crank up the volume, kill the lights and burn some incense, all the elements are there but happy body odor.

The key to the concert, for the Dead and Deadheads alike, is the music. Most of today's mainstream and alternative stars rerun the same sets night after night like singing zombies, even bands like U2 who have good live reps. They could all take a cue from the Dead, who're kings of improv. The tunes range from average to amazing, hit and miss, but always are fresh.

The centerpiece of the set is the



16-minute gem, "Eyes of the World," featuring a stellar guest performance by sax great Branford Marsalis. Other standout long jams by Garcia and company include "Bird Song," "China Cat Sunflower/I Know You Rider" and the "Franklin Tower" medley.

Bob Weir shines on "Victim or the Crime" from 1989's "Built to Last," the tender "Looks Like Rain," and updated versions of "Cassidy" and "One More Saturday Night." The late keyboardist Brent Mydland delivers one of his best vocal performances in the album's closer, Traffic's "Dear Mr. Fantasy." As always, the thundering rhythm section of bassist Phil Lesh and drummer Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann provides the heart, soul and thunder.

If every term "lie back and groove" applies, it's here. Put it on and really disappear. Nothin' left to do but smile, smile, smile.

— John Cortez

## RUBAIYAT - ELEKTRA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY — various artists

This is an album that's just too eclectic for its own good. Under the pretentious packaging it is a collection of tunes as broad as necessary to cover the four decades of Elektra's existence, but disjointed enough to make it difficult listening.

Elektra throws a curve at traditional greatest hits packages by having its current crop of artists cover the hits of yesteryear. The artists donated their time and the project evolved into both an anniversary celebration and a charity fund-raiser.

The result is this interesting group of 39 songs, ranging from great to awful to hilarious. The last exemplified by the Gypsy Kings' Latino send-up of "Hotel California." Though sung in Spanish, it has infinitely more soul than the Eagles' version.

Some "Rubaiyat" highlights include Billy Bragg's rocking rendition of Love's "Seven & Seven," Ernie



and be covered, contribute a raw "Hello, I Love You," tipping their hats to the Kinks' contribution to the Doors standard.

As with any collection, you have to take the bad with the good. In this case, the bad includes the noise of The Big F on the MC's "Kick Out the Jams," Lynch Mob's strangling of Don Nix' "Going Down," and Fast-er Pussycat's ridiculous metal mashing of Carly Simon's "You're So Vain."

On the opposite end of the volume scale, Teddy Pendergrass' version of Bread's "Make It With You" is loaded with sap and Michael Feinstein's rendition of Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now" should be banned from elevators.

This is a compilation with a little something for everyone and a lot of other stuff you don't want, too. It's at least worth looking at in the store and if you do buy it, you'll get some use out of the programming feature of your CD player.

— John Cortez