



Named after a character in one of Dr. Seuss' books, Southgoing ZAK has been playing together for three years, but things only jelled musically about a year ago.

## The yak on Southgoing ZAK

By Jill Hamilton  
staff writer

Southgoing ZAK is a band that takes its name seriously. They are named after a character in one of Dr. Seuss' books and, at past concerts, the band has been careful to pay tribute to the good actor.

Dan Bellus, vocalist for the band, doubles as the "Seuss-erator" in what is called "Uncle ZAK's" Dr. Seuss storytime sing-a-long. For the sing-a-long, audience members gather around the stage, sitting in a circle on the floor, while Bellus reads selections from the classic "Green Eggs and Ham." He reads from a page in the book, then holds it up so everyone can see the pictures.

"Like in kindergarten," said Bellus.

The ZAKs spice up their version of "Green Eggs and Ham" with the music from Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians' "What I Am." The song and the story seem made for each other. Sam I am, what I am — you get the picture. Anyway, during the chorus of the book — "I do not like you Sam I am, ect. . . ." — the song suddenly erupts into a thrash version.

Kindergarten this ain't.  
So far the band only has one Seuss song in their repertoire.

"WE'RE PROBABLY going to do more Dr. Seuss songs, but none of them seem to have the same energy as 'Green Eggs and Ham,'" said Bellus.

But, with the Seuss gimmick or not, Southgoing ZAK is a band to be reckoned with. Their six-song cassette is one of the best releases of the year, filled with eminently listener-friendly tunes.

It also lacks problems that usually plague local recordings like hurried vocals, hissing and muddy sound. The band recorded the tape at the tiny White Rose Studios. Bellus is from Chelsea and learned about the studio from fellow Chelsea-ites in the Holy Cows and Opossums.

"It's like a little house in the country, but he's (the studio operation) got all this equipment in his basement," said Bellus. "We spent 23 hours in there that weekend." The work paid off. In addition to help to make an excellent sounding tape, the equipment in the studio allowed Bellus to do some interesting tricks like singing backing vocals for himself.

Although most of the members of the band — John Marshall (backing vocals, rhythm guitar and harmonica), Per Bioland (lead guitar, backing vocals), Mike Hestator (bass guitar, rhythm guitar) and Jon Youtt (drums, juze harp) —

(Southgoing ZAK's) six-song cassette is one of the best releases of the year, filled with eminently listener-friendly tunes.

have been playing together for three years, things only jelled about a year ago. At the time, everyone in the band was sharing the singing chores. As Bioland puts it, "We needed a real voice."

THINGS STARTED changing when Bellus answered an ad that the band had put in a music store. "I went in and jammed with them," said Bellus, a part-time student at Eastern Michigan University. It was a pretty daring move because, at the time, Bellus had never actually sung in front of other people.

"I had never been in a band before, never did anything musical before," said Bellus. "I was really nervous, definitely nervous. John (Marshall) sang a couple and I just tried to sing like he did."

He pulled it off. "They called and I was in." Since then, things have been going more smoothly for

the band. The balance of power extends to songwriting. Bioland, Marshall and Hestator all work on writing the band's songs.

"Usually, one person will write a guitar line and lyric and take it to the band and explain how they want it to sound," said Bioland. "The person writes it has 'veto power' over changes."

So far, the system seems to be working. In the past year, the band has come up with almost three hours of original music and has garnered gigs in Ann Arbor, Toledo, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids.

THEY ALSO have a manager — a friend — to handle all the band's bookings. Why, there are even plans for a ZAK T-shirt in the works.

Right now, the band is taking a month or so off to work on writing more songs. After that, they're going to top right back on the club circuit for some more live shows.

About playing live, Bellus said: "We're just there to have fun. We're not there to try and impress anyone." Whether they were intending to impress anyone or not, they've ended up doing just that.

But, we still don't know why they chose the name of the Southgoing ZAK instead of the Northgoing ZAK.

## IN CONCERT

● **INDEPENDENT LABEL**  
Independent Label will perform Monday, Dec. 17, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **HAVOC**  
Havoc will perform with Dwight Carroll and Final Warning Monday, Dec. 17, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland. For information, call 522-0245.

● **SECOND COMING**  
Second Coming will perform Tuesday, Dec. 18, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0900.

● **GOOH BKWAD**  
Goon Skwad will perform Tuesday, Dec. 18, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **GLASS ALLEY**  
Glass Alley will perform along with Fast Action and Symphony of Steel will perform Tuesday, Dec. 18, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland. For information, call 522-0245.

● **INCURABLES**  
Incurables will perform Wednesday, Dec. 19, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0900.

● **BORAX**  
Borax will perform Wednesday, Dec. 19, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **TIN PAN ALLEY**  
Tin Pan Alley will perform along with Sweet Life and Black Ashe Wednesday, Dec. 19, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland. For information, call 522-0245.

● **THE DIFFERENCE**  
The Difference will perform Thursday, Dec. 20, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **THE MOVEMENT**  
The Movement will perform Thursday, Dec. 20, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0900.

● **ORANGE ROUGHIES**  
Orange Roughies will perform with guests, Happy Accidents, Thursday, Dec. 20, at Club 9-D, 1815 W. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.

● **FATHEALERS**  
Fathealers will perform with guests, Destruction Ride, Thursday, Dec. 20, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **EZ BANG**  
EZ Bang will perform along with Havoc and Stark Ravin Thursday, Dec. 20, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, Westland. For information, call 522-2540.

● **SWEET TEAZE**  
Sweet Teaze will perform Friday, Dec. 21, at Key West, 24230 W. Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 592-0900.

● **GRANFALLOON**  
Granfalloon will perform with Seagun and Burni Weeny Sandwich in

a CD release party Friday, Dec. 21, at Paycheck's, 2322 Caniff, Hamtramck. For information, call 874-0254.

● **FRANK ALLISON & THE ODD SOX**  
Frank Allison & the Odd Sox will perform Friday and Saturday, Dec. 21-22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **DETROIT BLUEBAND**  
Detroit Blues Band will have a record release party 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, Dec. 21, at Moby Dicks, 3452 Schaefer Road, Dearborn. The will also include Redford Steve and Detroit Special and Harmonica Shah. For information, call 581-3656.

● **CULTURE BANDITS**  
Culture Bandits will perform with guests, Standing Shadow, Friday, Dec. 21, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

● **FAIR GAME**  
Fair Game will perform along with Moxey and Roulette Friday, Dec. 21, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland. For information, call 729-2540.

● **EARTH COMMUNITY CONCERT**  
Earth Community Concert will take place 7:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. Friday, Dec. 21, at Birmingham Unitarian church, 651 Woodward, north of Loos Fine Road. Performers include: Mark Lindquist, classical guitar; Cear, brother and sister folk rock duo; Danielle Double You, spoken performance; Frank Pahl, one man band; Vudu Hipples, folk rock; and Weeping Rachel, power-folk band. Admission is \$5. Proceeds benefit Saint Dominic's Soup Kitchen. For information, call 548-7235 or 541-8853.

● **HOLY COWS**  
Holy Cows will perform with guests, Opossums, Friday, Dec. 21, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**  
Strange Bedfellows will perform Friday, Dec. 21, at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-9760. The group also performs Saturday, Dec. 22, at Alvin's in Detroit.

● **STEVE KING & THE DITTLES**  
Steve King & the Dittles will perform Saturday, Dec. 22, at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 547-6470.

● **THE 3 WISEMEN**  
The 3 Wisemen, featuring members of the Idiots and Sensitive Big Guys, will perform with guests, The Swinging Ricards, Saturday, Dec. 22, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

● **FLOOR 9**  
Floor 9 will perform with guests, Freemasons, Saturday, Dec. 22, at Club East, 2945 John R., near I-75, Madison Heights. For information, call 589-3344.

● **TRACER BULLET**  
Tracer Bullet will perform along with Concrete Hat and Smash Alloy, Saturday, Dec. 22, at Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland. For information, call 729-2540.

## Gift-giving ideas with a local spin

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Give the gift of (local) music. At least, give it a listen. The holiday period is marked with a few releases by area musicians and groups. Record stores, such as Sam's Jams in Ferndale and Livonia along

with Schoolkid's in Ann Arbor, have special local music bins.

Other stores, such as Harmony House, for example, mix local releases among national products — fitting since a good deal of this locally produced music is superior to some of the sap being released by major labels.

Here's a quick rundown of what's out there.

● **Live at Legs**, John D. Lamb — A live recording is a rather heady venture for any local musician. In Lamb's case, this cassette is an excellent forum for the singer-songwriter who's become a regular at places such as Alvin's. The spark

of a live setting and Lamb's emotional, sometimes gravelled voice provides an unbeatable combination.

● **"From Can to Can't"**, The Handbals — Byrds-like guitars along with some rather willowy vocals mark this latest release from the

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## COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 albums receiving air play on WJFR-FM, campus station at Henry Ford Community College.

1. "Mixed Up," The Cure
2. "Bona Drag," Morrissey
3. "Live," Ministry
4. "Red Hot + Blue," Various artists
5. "Greatest Hits, So Far," P.L.L.
6. "Ritual de lo Habitual," Jane's Addiction
7. "Around & Around," Crinkle
8. "Too Dark Park," Skinny Puppy
9. "Brick by Brick," Iggy Pop
10. "Look in Your Mind," The Incubates

## 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 WDR-FM 90.9.

1. "Skull and Crossbones," Knaves
2. "Hammer of Rain," Hanabialis
3. "Pluckavage," Wrath of Christians
4. "Go Easy," Haggar Kwana
5. "Thinkin' About You," Walkin' Stiek
6. "Whipping Boy," Blue Nimbus
7. "Crystal," Chas Reaction
8. "Crash of Fate," Inside Out
9. "Fragrance of Christ," Vampire Records
10. "The Hello, Hello, Hello Song," Andy Breckman

## REVIEWS

### AN EMOTIONAL FISH — An Emotional Fish

The latest band from the currently fashionable hotbed of music — Ireland — An Emotional Fish come from the guitar-based camp, which, in the wake of the unmentionable U-know-who-2, include the likes of Something Happens, Power of Dreams and The Slumping, as opposed to the raggle-taggle, diddley-ey merchants like Hothouse Flowers, Waterboys and Energy Orchard.

With the dramatic and, excuse the pun, emotional vocals of Gwyneth Whelan and the driving bass playing of Eada Wyatt, an Emotional Fish stray into the INXS territory and sometimes wallow there a while. . . . Lyrically, they explore alienation and human torments. Witness this from "Lace Virginia": "See it's a land of make believe, telling stories of little broken boys from little broken homes/who have broken every single rule."

The lead off track, "Celebrate," is a wonderful song with one of the more memorable introductory bass lines this year. It is quickly joined by a strong and punchy guitar before heralding the arrival of those vocals delivering some marvelous lines.

"Blue" has a haunting melody line and fine guitar work, but backing vocals from Jill Turner, tend to steer the sound dangerously close to Ster-



fab Sprout. This seems to occur whenever Turner's vocals are used, as in "Julien."

It is around this time in the order of the songs that Whelan's "emotional" singing degenerates, irritatingly, to breathless, throaty growls, ala Mr. Bono Vox of the aforementioned unmentionables.

Perhaps there is more to this, as Emotional Fish's first Irish idiom was given by UP's (oops, I did it!) Mother Records.

Style is changed somewhat on "Colors" when Whelan comes across as Lou Reed, with a spoken/sung vocal.

The CD version contains a bonus track called "Move On" which features some exemplary guitar work but once again suffers by the end of the song when Whelan has degenerated into "screams."

"An Emotional Fish" is an intelligent recording but with a multitude of reference points, contains only a handful of identifiable "Emotional Fish" moments. — Cormac Wright

### Red, Hot + Blue — Various Artists

This is a fine and long overdue tribute to one of America's greatest songwriters. It's . . . Well, it's a few lines from Cole Porter, it's great; it's grand; it's a wonderland!

Twenty performers organized by producer Steve Lillywhite reuniting and often pump up — the Cole Porter songbook. The combination of performer and song is often uncanny — Debbie Harry and Iggy Pop doing "Well, Did You Ever," David Byrne galloping through "Don't Fence Me In," and the Gypsy band, Les Negresses Vertes doing "I Love Paris."

Red Hot is a slick, well-packaged benefit for AIDS research. The CD comes with two booklets containing, among other things, a list of musicians, a brief Porter biography and a 12-point list of what can be done to fight the deadly disease and dispel the myths surrounding it. "All people with AIDS are innocent," the booklet says.

Porter (1893-1964) wrote mostly for theater productions and, later, movies. His songs were adapted by pop and jazz singers like Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra.



Porter wrote about love and romance, and some songs, "Love for Sale," for example, were banned for supposed explicit lyrics. He accurately depicts both the joy and pain that love inspires. In "Ev'ry Time": "Ev'ry time we say goodbye/I die a little/ev'ry time we say goodbye/I wonder why a little/Why the gods above me/Who must be in the know/I think so little of me/They allow you to go."

Porter's work and that of his contemporaries has been neglected by rock and rollers, however. That's unfortunate, k.d. Lang, The Jungle Brothers, Nonah Cherry and others here prep Porter ripe for interpretation. The red and white versions don't always work, and there is some uninspired stuff here. But it's the exception.

Buy this. Then try Ella Fitzgerald's Cole Porter Songbook. — Brian Lipschit

### GHOST OF A DOG — Edie Brickell and New Bohemians

Perhaps you were lured into buying this group's first album "Shooting Rubberbands at the Stars" on the strength of their first single "What I Am." The song was a nearly perfect pop ditty — quirky, catchy and a bit silly. The rest of the album was sort of a let-down. The songs were bland mid-tempo numbers, seemingly indistinguishable from each other.

Perhaps your disappointment was so great that you swore off Edie and Co. forever. Perhaps your anti-Edie resolve was strengthened by hearing their wretched Bob Dylan cover.

If that's the case, then give Edie another chance because "Ghost of a Dog" is a much better record than its predecessor. There's no instant hit like "What I Am" but overall, the album is much more diverse, enjoyable and, well, mature.

As on the last album, Brickell writes most of the songs and lyrics. (See "Too Dark Park," "Skinny Puppy" and "Brick by Brick," Iggy Pop.) If that's the case, then give Edie another chance because "Ghost of a Dog" is a much better record than its predecessor. There's no instant hit like "What I Am" but overall, the album is much more diverse, enjoyable and, well, mature. As on the last album, Brickell writes most of the songs and lyrics. (See "Too Dark Park," "Skinny Puppy" and "Brick by Brick," Iggy Pop.) If that's the case, then give Edie another chance because "Ghost of a Dog" is a much better record than its predecessor. There's no instant hit like "What I Am" but overall, the album is much more diverse, enjoyable and, well, mature. As on the last album, Brickell writes most of the songs and lyrics. (See "Too Dark Park," "Skinny Puppy" and "Brick by Brick," Iggy Pop.) If that's the case, then give Edie another chance because "Ghost of a Dog" is a much better record than its predecessor. There's no instant hit like "What I Am" but overall, the album is much more diverse, enjoyable and, well, mature.



Edie Brickell & New Bohemians

Her whimsical songwriting ability that was only hinted at on the last album is fully explored on this one. "Chiff Chiff" for example, is a silly little tune that sounds like a children's song. "A lady with a baby/with only one shoe/walks by/where's his other shoe?" asks Brickell.

Most of the music on the album is acoustic which suits Brickell's light wispy voice. The album sounds more like an album than a collection of separate songs (if you can understand that).

"Ghost of a Dog" finds the band making more diverse and interesting music. The songs range from the requisite pop tunes like "Mama Help Me" to more exploratory, soul-searching numbers like "10,000 Angels." Overall, it's a fine sophomore effort. — Jill Hamilton