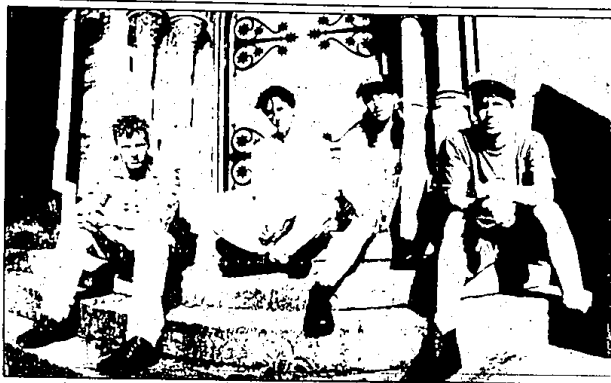


Falling Joys get a 'Wish'



A combination of talent from Pete Velzen (from left), Pat Hayes, Suzie Higgle and Stuart G. Robertson have made Falling Joys a hot property in Australia.

Falling Joys' lead singer and songwriter Suzie Higgle paints in rather wide strokes on the band's Network debut, "Wish List." Instead of banal "boy meets girl," the Australian songstress opts for a more surreal approach on the age-old theme.

On "Tunnel Vision," one of many deliciously orchestrated pop songs on the quartet's latest release, Higgle sings "Still inside liberty-shake yourself from under me cross your fingers that's all right. Show me something I can't fight."

Higgle pleads guilty to being somewhat all over the canvas.

"That's what I try to do," said Higgle, whose band performs Tuesday at The Blind Pig in Ann Arbor. "Some people make the point a bit I try to paint a picture without

being too specific."

YET COMBINED with some doleful guitar and basslines, the Falling Joys songs seem to be melodic in scope. This knack for writing pop songs extends back to Higgle's youth.

She fondly recalls writing a book and learning to play guitar at the age of 9.

"It was only a children's book." Things didn't really take hold until much later when she met up with Falling Joys guitarist and vocalist Stuart Robertson at an Australian television network.

band released a pair of singles, "Burn So Low" and "Nearly a Sin," and was signed by Australia's Volition Records.

The band's 1989 EP, "Omega," was No. 1 on Australian alternative charts. "Wish List" is the Falling Joys' first full-length studio album.

Although "Wish List" comes across as a crystalline LP, the Falling Joys are said to have more of an edge performing live. That no doubt, was a trait picked up from performing before sometimes hard-to-please Aussie audiences, who like a little verve to their music.

Although it's a large country, it's small in a way in that you only have a few times to impress

people. You have to impress them up front in order to bring them back."

Larry O'Connor

SEEING THE SHOW

Who: Falling Joys

Where: Blind Pig

208 S. First St., Ann Arbor
Call 99-1455 for information

When: Tuesday, March 5, 9:30 pm

Monkeys score with 'Five Star'



The Junk Monkeys are putting recollections of \$20-a-night motels behind them and reveling in the release of their second album, "Five Star Fling," on Metal Blade Records.

By Larry O'Connor
Staff writer

If anything, a record deal can make a guy a tad sentimental. The Junk Monkeys are no different.

Three of the band's four members, Dave Bertman, Devin Perry and Dave Boettcher, sit around in the old firehouse in Dearborn, reminiscing like Dean Moriarty and Jack Kerouac discussing old travels.

Like the time in Galveston, Texas, when, low on money, band members played for beer on the beach for college students on spring break. Then there was that season in Georgia. The Junk Monkeys pulled up at some club only to find out nobody at the bar knew they were supposed to perform.

Then there was Philadelphia, where when someone tried to break in the van with the band still inside. All boutique wasn't any kinder or gentler.

For a week, we stayed at this one place for \$20 a night, and I said, "I'm not Dave Bertman. They never changed the sheets. At 4 o'clock, we have people hanging at our door asking us if we wanted to buy a rock 'n' roll car stereo."

Things were somewhat scary then, but these are merely recollections to be pasted in a scrapbook of rock 'n' roll hard knocks.

The Junk Monkeys are older and, oh, so much wiser now. A record deal can do that to you as well.

Fortunately, such maturity is reflected in "Five Star Fling," the band's second release on Metal Blade Records, a subsidiary of Warner Bros. The 10-song collection of fiery pop songs is by far the Junk Monkeys' most focused effort to date.

THE QUARTET plays a searing brand of garage rock 'n' roll. The Junk Monkeys remarkably have not deviated from their original vision, being a loud and raucous outfit with pop songs that cause abrasions, not a subtle for sounds. Things are more refined on "Five Star Fling," a rock-solid album front to back.

It didn't seem to me we had a vision when we started out, added some songs of Dave Boettcher. We just wanted to be unique and make sure there weren't 1,000 of us all ready in the bars.

For the first time, the Junk Monkeys recorded all the songs, "Five Star Fling," without trying them out live. Included on the LP is a protracted and spirited version of The Who's "Quick Time."

The other nine songs were written by Bertman, and—interestingly—can be traced to a scrapbook of rock 'n' roll hard knocks.

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IN CONCERT

- INKS**
INKS will perform with guests, Soup Dragons, Monday and Tuesday, March 4-5, at The Palace of Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$20. For information, call 377-0100.
- THE ATTIC**
The Attic will perform Monday, March 4, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- POETRY SLAM**
Poetry Slam will perform Tuesday, March 5, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.
- FALLING JOYS**
Falling Joys, a band on IRS Network Records, will perform Tuesday, March 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$14. For information, call 996-8355.
- S.R.P.**
S.R.P. will perform Tuesday, March 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 992-0090.
- BIG DAVE & THE ULTRASONICS**
Big Dave & The Ultrasonics will perform Tuesday, March 5, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- C.J. CHENIER**
C.J. Chenier and the Red Hot Louisiana Band will perform Wednesday, March 6, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$10 at the door. For information, call 996-8355.
- BLAKE BABIES**
Blake Babies will perform with guests, Pinhead, Wednesday, March 6, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.
- GENERIC**
Generic will perform Wednesday, March 6, at Hamtramck Pub, 2044 Canfield, 115. For information, call 365-1929.
- THE CHISEL BROTHERS**
The Chisel Brothers will perform with The Chisel Brothers on Wednesday, March 6, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- JOHN AND DAVE**
John and Dave, two members of the Lexington Hawks, will perform Wednesday, March 6, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- SPANKING BOZO**
Spanking Bozo will perform with guests, Thrif, Thursday, March 7, at Alex's 5750 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 932-2355.
- LUNA PARK AND RAW**
Luna Park and Raw will perform with guests, Southsong Zak, Thursday, March 7, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8355.
- HAPPY ACCIDENTS**
Happy Accidents will perform Thursday, March 7, at Club 3D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344.
- CAPTAIN DAVE**
Captain Dave and the Psychedelic Lounge Cats will perform with guests, Sludge Butts, Thursday, March 7, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.
- ROOSEVELT 'BUDDA' BARNES**
Roosevelt 'Budda' Barnes will perform Thursday, March 7, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- LA TRINITY**
La Trinity will perform on reggae night Thursday, March 7, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- ASSEMBLY REQUIRED**
Assembly Required will perform Friday, March 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8355.
- THE GRIMS**
The Grims will perform with guests, Standing Shadows, Friday, March 8, at Funes's Pub, 2565 Woodward, near Alexander, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.
- INCURABLES**
Incurables will perform with guests, Snitter, Friday, March 8, at Hamtramck Pub, 2044 Canfield, near 175. For information, call 365-3829.
- BUGS BEDDOW**
Bugs Beddow will perform Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, at Elwood Bar & Grill, Woodward Avenue, across from the Fox Theatre, Detroit. For information, call 346-2847.
- ONIX**
ONIX will perform Friday, March 8, at Alex's 5750 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 932-2355.
- STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**
Strange Bedfellows will perform Friday, March 8, at Lulu's 21, 2339 Jacob Hamtramck. For information, call 879-6522.
- INSPIRAL CARPETS**
Inspiral Carpets will perform Friday, March 8, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 996-8355.
- JUICE**
Juice will perform with guests, Brian Tabb, Friday, March 8, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.
- NOTHING FANCY**
Nothing Fancy, featuring former members of Jugglers and Thieves, will perform Friday, March 8, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

CUTTING EDGE

TOP HITS

- Best-selling records of the week
- All the Man That I Need, Whitesnake
- Game Make You Sweat, U.C.A. Musical Factors
- One More Time, Timbaland
- Where Does My Heart Beat Now, Celtic Storm
- The First Time, Surface
- Heaven, INXS
- Slow Motion, Shy
- Somewhere, Ralph Tresvant
- All the Love, Sting

Here are 10 new songs added to the playlist on The Cutting Edge, which is heard 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. nightly on CIMX-FM 97.7.

1. Collaboration, EMP
2. A Brand-New Book, Graham Parker
3. Obsessed, The Fixx
4. Spectrograms, Charlatans U.K.
5. I Am Myself Again, Blue Rodeo
6. Looking in a Real World, Bookroom
7. Temptation, The Box
8. Little Boxes, Tragedy Hip
9. Love to Burn, Neil Young
10. Satisfaction, Rhythm Corps

REVIEWS

BILLY'S LIVE BAIT — Gear Daddies



Any true band names such as Husker Du and the Replacements are thrown about, one can legally count on a trip through power chord hell. Added to that, the Gear Daddies are from the same state as the aforementioned outfits.

And while there is a promise of "Billy's Live Bait" kicking "sonically harder" than the band's previous release, this is not realized here. Think goodness.

Cold as Her Eyes and "Time Heads" are the only full throttle rockers on this band's debut on PolyGram.

Otherwise, the Gear Daddies appear more at home strumming and twanging along without impunity on "Billy's Live Bait." This album has more of a heartland, Lake Wobegon feel to it than that of a primal rocker ripe with its country-humponit.

Many of these country bumpkin musings are endearing. The Gear Daddies don't try to overpower the listener, opting to plow slowly to a hook ridden crescendo.

On "Billy's Live Bait," the band

makes a conscious effort to tackle more universal themes. Morose "The Love Song" is focused on drunken regrets. Martin Zeller still has a few dark tales to tell.

"Don't Look at Me" is rather personally revealing, culled from bitter past experiences. "So don't look at me, I'm not the mess I seemed to be. I know looks can sometimes deceive."

I'm crying all night and I'm crying all day. I'm trying to remember what it feels like not to feel this way. I don't eat anymore. I stumble home like a drunken old whore."

Such sentiments are coupled with the relentless acoustic guitar of Martin Zeller makes this the No. 1 song on the LP.

The harmonica on "Somebody" arches with desolation and the twang on "One Voice," a rather humorous song which the main character only wants to drive a Zamboni.

In the final analysis, the Gear Daddies have cooked up one heck of a major label debut. Highly recommended.

Larry O'Connor

COMING DOWN — Daniel Ash



OK, first let's remove any pretense of objective critical reviewing of this first solo project by Daniel Ash. The album is a love letter to every musical project spawned from the dregs of Bathans, Bauhaus, Love and Rockets, David J's solo work, Jones on Fall and even Peter Murphy's solo stuff. All sound great to me.

Therefore, it comes as no great surprise that I really like Love and Rockets and Bauhaus. Love and Rockets' guitarist, singer-songwriter Daniel Ash, is the first solo recording, "Coming Down."

What is surprising is that Ash sounds so much like bandmate David J. When Lemmon and McCartney released solo albums, they sounded very different from each other, but in the case of Ash and J, they have similar voices, similar song structures and similar instrumental sounds. (Note to Beethoven: I'm not kidding.)

Anyway, "Coming Down" is a mix of covers and originals. It was inspired to be all covers, but Ash kept getting too creative and had to write some songs of his own. The covers are: "Blue Moon," "Day Tripper" and "Me and My Shadow."

No matter what song Ash is covering, it sounds like a Love and Rockets song. Me and My Shadow loses its hook and becomes an eerie day-dream meditation.

"Day Tripper," for that matter, Ash could probably make "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" sound like a trippy meditation. "Life is but a dream" is pretty deep stuff after all.

The album is heavy on minor chords, moderated vocals, dream state music. Listening to it is sort of like a drug free psychedelic trip, although the lyrics are very anti-drug.

Two versions of the songs, "Coming Down" speak about the evils of cocaine.

The overall effect of "Coming Down" is sort of a pleasant otherworldliness. The album is, you guessed it, highly recommended.

Jill Hamilton

PILLS, THRILLS AND BELLIES — Happy Mondays



With the rave raves from across the water, this album was picked as album of the year by the New Musical Express. England's fashionably influential music weekly.

Now it's riding high on the U.S. college charts.

Having heard the Mondays' first release, "Burnt Out," and being naturally skeptical of the feeble English music, I approached "Pills, Thrills and Bellies" hesitantly.

This skepticism was somewhat tempered with the opening lines from track No. 1, "Kinky Afro." Son, I'm thirty I only went with your mother once, she's dirty and I don't have a decent bone in me what you get is just what you see, yeah."

Chemically-induced whinnings of "Burnt Out" and transformed them into chemically-induced characterizations.

Add to that, some exciting screaming guitar from Mark Day and it becomes clear that they are a different breed of group from the sub-riff style of the likes of Charlatans U.K.

The album does have its quirky moments, namely "Grandbag's Funeral" is a plodding, pedantic effort basing everything on a guitar riff of questionable value. Thankfully, this is recovered by "Loose Fit," a dancey number riding on a James Brown style bass line.

Admittedly, it's highly fashionable to like this band now, but try not to let that dissuade you. "Pills, Thrills and Bellies" will earn your respect.

— Cormac Wright