



JEFF SCHULTZ

Current members of the new Strange Bedfellows are Missy Gibson, vocalist; Leonard Miller, guitarist; Mike DeMaggio, bass; and Brian Iler, drummer.

Strange Bedfellows play on through its 'changing times'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

If Strange Bedfellows were a football team, they would need Velcro name plates on the back of their jerseys.

Perhaps no local band has gone through as many reincarnations as the Bedfellows who were, at last count, a four-piece. Yet remarkably, the group has remained one of the most viable commodities on the area circuit.

So, let's meet the new Strange Bedfellows: Leonard Miller, guitarist; Mike DeMaggio, bass; and Brian Iler, drummer. Oh, and of course, there is vocalist and leader Missy Gibson who has remained through the tumult.

"Well, I guess I was never completely happy with the way the songs were sounding," said Gibson, offering an explanation for the turnover of members. "I couldn't put my finger on it initially. I wasn't happy with the intensity level."

Gibson turned up the desire fire. She met up with Iler in an art class at Wayne State University and then went about the task of finding a new bassist and guitarist.

No less than 12 people were auditioned on bass; 10 on guitar before Gibson settled on DeMaggio and Miller respectively.

INITIAL RESULTS have been quite positive. The Strange Bedfellows have virtually shed their 10,000 Maniac-ish pop away and replaced it with a full-throated, almost psychedelic, swagger. Despite their relative youth —

"I never thought about what I do on stage. I just try to tell the story."

— Missy Gibson

the oldest member clocks in at 23 — Strange Bedfellows hardly resemble a band on the inexperienced end.

At a recent show at the Cross Street Station in Ypsilanti, the Strange Bedfellows were in top form. The gig was hot and sweaty, making for what is good about rock'n'roll.

Strange Bedfellows didn't merely follow the vibe, instead creating it and stirring energy at will.

Miller's unrelenting guitar buzz deserves part of the credit. But Gibson is the focal point.

The 1986 graduate of Birmingham Seaholm commands attention, with her resonant vocals and confident persona, no doubt harking back on her experience in the theater at WSU. She uses all four corners of the stage to get the audience involved.

The blond-haired singer also bears a remarkable passion to her lyrics, singing them as she dares anyone to question their validity. They words are hers, of course.

"EVERY BAND needs an excellent front person," said band guitarist, Miller, 22, who is 1987 graduate of Plymouth Canton. "She's it. She knows how to work with the audience. She makes us comfortable on stage. She's not afraid to

bump into you or walk around you."

"I never thought about what I do on stage," she said. "I just try to tell the story. That's really important for me for the audience to touch on what I'm singing about."

Most of what Gibson sings about are little stories, gleaned from her social surroundings. Some can be whimsical, others quite poignant.

Three such tales are featured on a demo tape the band has released. Already, Chrysalis has reportedly checked out the band and other labels are said to be interested as well.

Strange Bedfellows are working a busy schedule, performing regularly in both Detroit and Ann Arbor. The eventual goal is to go on the road.

All of which is what Gibson wants. She said there is a serious about this edition of Strange Bedfellows that was lacking in previous lineups.

With the several membership changes, one could wonder if Gibson is difficult to work with. She admits as such.

"THAT IS true in a band situation," she said. "I don't think I'm a mean person or anything. I'm very demanding. I set high standards for myself and the band."

Band members concur. Iler,

who's somewhat a veteran at one year, said Gibson is not hard to work with at all.

"It's good to have a leader," said Iler, 22, who attended Berkshire Junior High School in Birmingham with Gibson. The two didn't realize it until recently. "I've been in other bands where that wasn't the case. It's a good change to have someone take charge."

"She is very demanding," added DeMaggio, 19, "but it's good because it brings out the best in all of us."

In the mutual admiration department, Gibson said her current band mates need little motivation. All three possess a limited amount of experience, banking instead on enthusiasm. Miller, who lives in Canton, played with an outfit called Barbed Wire Playpen; while DeMaggio performed on bass in a couple of metal/alash bands. Iler performed with a couple of bands in Cleveland, Ohio.

Gibson said about her new Strange Bedfellows.

SEEING THE SHOW

Who: Strange Bedfellows appearing with Thrifty Forest Animal's
Where: The Vault inside Chester's 1-75 at 8 Mile
Phone: 545-7660 for more info.
When: Thursday, April 4

IN CONCERT

● **PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ BAND**
Paradise Valley Jazz Band will perform Monday, April 1, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 833-2355.

● **RYTHMCFEUD**
Ryth McFeud will perform Monday, April 1, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **ASSEMBLY REQUIRED**
Assembly Required and Wild Kingdom will perform Tuesday, April 2, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **CHISEL BROS.**
Chisel Bros. will perform Tuesday, April 2, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 833-2355.

● **HARABE**
Harabe will perform Tuesday and Wednesday, April 2-3, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **SISTERS OF MERCY**
Sisters of Mercy will perform Wednesday, April 3, at Latin Quarter, 3007 E. Grand, Detroit. For information, call 373-3777.

● **SAMPLES**
Artists recording artists. The Samples will perform with the Hannibal Wednesday, April 3, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. \$5 at the door. For information, call 996-8555.

● **DIFFERENCE**
Difference will perform Thursday, April 4, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **LUNACY**
Lunacy will perform with guests, Trash Brats, Thursday, April 4, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$3. For information, call 994-3542.

● **BOB MOULD**
Former Husker Du member Bob Mould will perform a special acoustic show 8:30 p.m. to close Thursday, April 4, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For information, call 996-8555. Also, Ryth McFeud will perform 6:30 p.m. Thursday. No cover for the Ryth McFeud show.

● **HOOPENAKES**
Hoopenakes will perform Thursday and Friday, April 4-5, at Sally's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 844-1920. The blues-rock band also performs Saturday, April 6, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-8555.

● **STANDING SHADOWS**
Standing Shadows will perform with Dog Swing Friday, April 5, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, near Alexandria, Detroit. For information, call 831-4070.

● **SCOTT MORGAN BAND**
Scott Morgan Band will perform Friday, April 5, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **MISBONARY STEW**
Missionary Stew will perform with Figure Ground Friday, April 5, at Lili's, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-4555.

● **PET SHOP BOYS**
Pet Shop Boys will perform Friday, April 5, at Cleveland, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

● **J.D. LAMB**
J.D. Lamb will perform Friday, April

5, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 833-2355.

● **LITTLE CHARLIE & THE NIGHTCATS**
Little Charlie & The Nightcats will perform Friday, April 5, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. Showtime is 10 p.m. For information, call 996-2747. The poppy, swingin' blues band will perform Saturday, April 6, at Sally's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

● **FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD BOX**
Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Friday, April 5, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$5. For information, call 994-3542.

● **BOOTSEY X**
Bootsey X will perform with guests, Planet of Fun, Saturday, April 6, at Lili's, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-4555.

● **24-7 SPY**
24-7 Spy will perform Saturday, April 6, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

● **FRED AND PATTI SMITH AND FRIENDS**
Fred and Patti Smith along with Lenny Kaye, Jay Dee Daugherty and Scott Morgan will perform Saturday, April 6, at Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$7.50 in advance. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

● **MIDWEST PUNK FEET**
AID will headline the Midwest Punk Fest Saturday, April 6, at Latin Quarter, 3007 E. Grand, Detroit. For information, call 373-3777.

● **E.Z. BANG**
E.Z. Bang will perform with Diamond Rexx Saturday, April 6, at Blondies, 2113 N. Seven Mile, just east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 833-2355.

● **MAJESTY CRUSH**
Majesty Crush will perform with guests, Mised in Dury, Saturday, April 6, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, near Alexandria, Detroit. For information, call 831-4070.

● **TERMINAL WHITE**
Terminal White will perform along with Scott Campbell and Jimmy Boes Saturday, April 6, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 833-2355.

● **REPTILES**
Reptiles will perform with guests, Crown of Thorns, Saturday, April 6, at Club Exit, 2941 John R, near 12 Mile Road, Madison Heights. For information, call 544-1279.

● **CHISEL BROS.**
Chisel Bros. will perform Saturday, April 6, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **GANGSTER FUN**
Gangster Fun will perform with special guests, Ward, Saturday, April 6, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$4. For information, call 994-3542.

● **LEAGUE OF NATIONS**
League of Nations will perform Sunday, April 7, at The Ritz, 17581 Prasho, off Gratiot, Roseville. For information, call 778-3150.

● **THE COWS**
The Cows will perform Sunday, April 7, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

REVIEWS

EVERYBODY'S ANGEL

— Tanita Tikaram

Tanita Tikaram is what you would call an experimental artist. So far, she's released three albums in a short amount of time, "Ancient Heart," "The Sweet Keeper" and now "Everybody's Angel."

When her first album was released, she was heralded by a fair amount of the critics as a bright new artist. So what did she do with her next two releases? That's right. She pretty much released the same album. The main thing that distinguishes her three records is that they have different titles.

Tikaram's main problem is that she has a really bad voice. It's really deep and reedy. It sounds like she has something caught in her throat. The effect it has on me is similar to when I've OD'd on coffee — sort of heady and irritated.

Her voice is OK for a few songs — maybe a single every few years. But a whole album of her voice is a bit too much.

In addition to the unpleasant tone of her voice, Tikaram also has a very limited vocal range. I'd say it's about three notes. This presents a few problems when you're a singer. To overcome her limited ability, Tikaram paid a great deal of attention to elaborate arrangements. Most of the songs she arranged herself, but on "Mud In Any Water" she enlisted the help of irritating Jen-



nifer Warnes on harmony vocal arrangements. Of course, that doesn't help matters.

Also beefed up are the instrumental backings. There are a bunch of voice-enhancing instruments like plenty of saxophones, a flugel horn, trumpet and even an entire string orchestra.

The effect of all this elaborate production rignarole is not a case of gliding the lily. When you can only sing three different notes, all the horns in the world aren't going to disguise that fact.

So, what we're left with is Tikaram plodding monotonously through a bunch of well-arranged songs. In "Deliver Me," Tikaram sings, "Some times are hard, some times they drag." It's right.

— Jill Hamilton

THE FUTURE'S NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

— Rhythm Corps

Now the question can finally be answered. Is this the release that will put these homegrown rockers over the top?

Regarding the answer, let's put it this way — Rhythm Corps and producer Ben Grose have pulled out all the stops to ensure that the group has its best musical foot forward. If that alone doesn't do it, then maybe landing a solid opening slot on one of the higher visibility tours this summer will.

This follow-up to "Common Ground" has been more than two years in the making, and it shows. The music is polished, with Greg Agor's churning guitars backed by the stalwart rhythm section of bassist Davey Hombo and drummer Richie Lovin. Michael Persh's vocals are as strong and emotional as ever, and his lyrics continue to pack a substantial punch.

"Satellites," the initial single, sounded great during Michael and Davey's various acoustic radio performances, but the extra production added to the finished product really doesn't add much here. Not as radio-friendly as "Satellites," "The Right Thing" is touted as the second single. This appears to be an equally anthemic sequel to the single "Com-



mon Ground," the group's most successful track to this point.

The true gems on "The Future" are songs that force the listener to take notice. The tracks "Mother" (about humanity's inhumanity and environmental abuse), "Voice of Reason" (about race relations and today's false prophets — with a bit of self-parody thrown in), "Ivory Tower" (about finding yourself) and "International Material Issues" (grab you by the ears and don't let go until you've gotten the message).

No one has ever accused this band of not having something to say, which could be a blessing and a curse as they stand on the verge of mainstream success.

— Bob Sadler

CUTTING EDGE

Here are 10 albums in heavy rotation on "The Cutting Edge" from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. nightly on CIXM-FM 87.7.

1. "Unbelievable," EMP
2. "The Future," Rhythm Corps
3. "Out of Time," R.E.M.
4. "Unreal World," The Godfathers
5. "International Material Issues"
6. "Tame Yourself," Raw Youth
7. "Coming Down," Drake Ash
8. "They Eat Their Own," They Eat Their Own
9. "Vision Thing," Sisters of Mercy
10. "Kill Uncle," Morrissey

LOCAL

Here are the top-10 songs on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays WDTN-FM 90.9.

1. "Weight of the World," Dave Rave
2. "Abolish Fire Road," The Grins
3. "One More Night," Greenix
4. "Cartoon Life," Park the Karma
5. "Lost in Space," Grady Hazy
6. "She Said," In Arcadia
7. "New Day Now," The Gear
8. "Serenity," Thrifty Forest Animals
9. "Who Cares," Midge City Four
10. "Wild for Her," Jimmy Jones



Rez will perform Thursday, April 4 at the Redford Theatre, 17360 Lahser, Detroit.