

# STREET BEATS



The Feelies will be making their first appearance in the metropolitan area in two years, hot on the heels of the release of their latest LP, "Time for a Witness."

## Feelies: A feel for their music

By John Cortez  
special writer

The keepers of the crazy rhythms have returned. The Feelies make their first Detroit-area appearance in two years tonight at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor, touring in support of their fourth LP, "Time for a Witness," which may be their most focused effort yet.

It's another strong assemblage of searing twin guitars, richly monotone vocals and an explosive rhythm section. The album combines the best elements of the previous three releases, said bassist Brenda Sauter.

"There was a lesson to be learned from each album," Sauter said by phone from the band's tour stop in Boulder, Colo. "We were very aware of trying to get the feel of each song just right, to have a more saturated sound. We feel

we've come full circle." The band's debut, 1980's "Crazy Rhythms," was loaded with fantastic percussion, but much of the material was too murky and quirky to catch on at the time. The 1986 follow-up, "The Good Earth," exuded a melodic warmth but lacked clear, strong vocal and bass sounds. And 1988's "Only Life" had a clearer sound but the warmth was sacrificed, leaving the band with a slightly sterile sound, Sauter said.

Last year, the Feelies went into the studio, took the percussive feel of "Crazy Rhythms," the warmth of "The Good Earth," and the clarity of "Only Life" and came up with "Time for a Witness" although a few tracks, like "Don't It Ache" and "Invitation," indicate a move toward the mainstream, the crazy rhythms are intact.

THE BASIC ingredient to the

Feelies' sound is still tempo. They can go from broodingly slow to breakneck speed and back in a few furious bars. At their frenzied top speed, their screaming guitars and fiery rhythm section haze into one solid, endless chime the way a car's wheels appear to gently roll backward when they're actually hurtling down the highway.

The Feelies' dependence on rhythm and speed translates well into a live performance, where lyrics are hard to hear anyway. Crowd response on this five-week tour has been favorable, Sauter said, and that helps feed the often frenetic shows.

"The speed of the show depends on the audience," she said. "It's also dictated by how much we are. Some nights are incredibly fast, and some are slower then rev up at the end."

Sauter's bass and the percussion team of Dave Weckerman and

Stanley Demeski provide the soul behind the band's heart: the guitar interplay between songwriters Glenn Mercer and Bill Millon.

THE TWO guitars act as second and third vocalists for the band, often beginning and ending songs with feedback-laden solos, with a couple more tossed into the middle so no one misses the point.

And the point is that the Feelies make music that move people to move. These in attendance tonight can expect at least that. They also shouldn't be surprised to hear a few cover tunes from a variety of sources.

"Time for a Witness" includes a raucous cover of the Stooges' "Real Cool Time," and songs by acts from the Velvet Underground to Television to Jonathan Richman have been known to find their way onto the Feelies' set list.

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Chickasaw Mudd Puppies Brant Slay (left) and Ben Reynolds have found success with their brand of toe-tappin' music.



YOU BELIEVE him. In the rock'n'roll arena, Chickasaw Mudd Puppies are out of their element, sort of like a lightning bug captured in a mayonnaise jar.

There is an endearing quality to Chickasaw Mudd Puppies. Part of that is the music, which is stirring blend of blues, country and rock'n'roll.

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## Mudd Puppies rock on a wang-twang

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

To most rock'n'roll performers, interacting with the audience means saying, "Hey, I hear (fill in the city) is a real rockin' town."

Chickasaw Mudd Puppies' Brant Slay and Ben Reynolds, who've taken their brand of toe-tappin' music from sun-blasted porches in Georgia to the masses, just don't stand for such posturing.

During a show last year at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, vocalist-harpist-stomp-boardist Brant Slay suddenly stopped before launching into another backwoods groove tune.

"Anybody have any questions?" Understandably, those in attendance were a bit taken back by this Southern informality. After all, they were there to see the Waterboys, not biscuit-

and-gravy inspired wisdom from a couple of yahoos. Besides, aren't you politically correct bands supposed to come from Athens, Ga.?

But don't let the audience banter and down home props throw you a curve. Chickasaw Mudd Puppies are not a parody, but rather curators of an inventive blend of rock wang-twang.

"To be real honest, in my opinion, there are some people who have taken it that way (as a novelty)," said Slay in a telephone interview from Minneapolis, Minn. "I'm not going to sit here and analyze it."

"I'm not so wrapped up in it that if someone blows it into a novelty thing I'm going to get all upset. I could go back to painting houses and just playing and drinking on the porch instead of riding in a van for nine months and playing all over the country."

## REVIEWS

### THE BOOTLEG SERIES, VOL. 1-3, 1961-1991

— Bob Dylan

It's been a strange couple of years for Bob Dylan, even for him. He's made two albums, 1989's landmark "Oh Mercy" and 1990's lackluster "Under a Blood Red Sky."

He's moonlighted as a Wilbury. Jack Nicholson gave him a glowing introduction and a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammys, and Dylan responded with a timely tune, "Masters of War," but at an electrified doubletime with completely indecipherable lyrics. Critics mocked Dylan and his apparent decline in self-regard.

Enter "The Bootleg Series." Legend reconfirmed. One listen to these three discs makes you wonder why Dylan hasn't gotten four or five Grammy Awards. At least that many Dylan personas appear on this collection.

The boxed set looks, and sounds, like it could be a greatest hits collection. For the Dylan scholar, "The Bootleg Series" is an essential text. For the casual fan, it's like getting three great new Dylan albums encompassing 30 years of outtakes and alternate versions.

Some of the outtakes are so solid that it's unfathomable they were left off the albums for they were cut. If Dylan's recent work cast any doubts on his reputation as rock's poet laureate, this collection shreds them.

SOME WEAK links and rough

edges—including coughs, comments, premature endings and a barking dog—dot the collection, but more often than not, the presence of lyrical royalty is obvious.

Dylan's evolution as a songwriter is tracked chronologically, with the entire first volume dedicated to the pre-1964 acoustic folk singer persona who spun rhyming morality plays laced with black comedy and stinging social commentary.

Included in this segment are nine outtakes from his fabulous "Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" LP, "Let Me Die in My Footsteps" reflects young America's frustration with the Cold War in words written by a 21-year-old Dylan while most of America was doing the Twist. "I don't know if I'm smart but I think I can see when someone is pullin' the wool over me. And if this war comes and death's all around, let me die on this land for I die underground."

These early tracks display Dylan's development in storytelling and characterization, especially in songs like "Moonshiner," "Only a Hobo," and "John John Birch Paranoid Blues."

A FEW SONGS are culled from a Carnegie Hall performance, including stirring renditions of the spiritual "No More Auction Block" and "Who Killed Davey Moore?" Dylan's repulsed reaction to the

death of boxer Davey Moore after being knocked out.

From a 1962 show is "Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie," a gem that's worth the price of the set by itself. The seven-minute spoken-word poem, the only known recording of Dylan reading one of his poems in public, is a vivid, touching tribute to his folk idol.

Dylan's mid-'60s foray into pop is documented with "If You Gotta Go, Go Now" and "Sitting on a Barbed Wire Fence." The haunting, psychedelic images of 1966's "Blonde on Blonde" are ably represented on the outtake, "She's Your Lover Now," a tune recorded with the band in the mid-'60s.

Dylan's music became more introspective and less political by the time the '70s hit, but no less impactful. Three stark alternate takes from the painfully personal "Blood on the Tracks" appear here. Dylan, often prone to obscure allusion and apocalyptic imagery, shows his simple tender side in "If You See Her, Say Hello." Though our separation, it pierced me to the heart. She still lives inside of me, we've never been apart."

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise of "The Bootleg Series" is the quality of the dozen post-1979 tracks. The bopping gospel tune "Ye Shall Be Changed" and the demo for 1981's "Every Grain of Sand"



highlight Dylan's Christian period. The latter especially paints the comfort in faith during the "hour of deepest need." "In the fury of the moment I can see the Master's hand. In every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand."

FIVE TRACKS appear from the Mark Knopfler-produced sessions that yielded his best work of the '80s, 1983's "Infidels." The whimsical "Tell Me," the bluesy "Blind Willie McTell" and the paternal plea "Lord Protect My Child" all sound good enough for inclusion on "Infidels."

"Oh Mercy" provides the collection's closer, "Series of Dreams," a mystical mood piece that musically resembles another of producer Daniel Lanois' projects, U2.

Boxed sets are expensive and abundant at present, but his one should not go unacquired.

— John Cortez

## CONCERTS

● **THE FEELIES**  
The Feelies will perform with guests, Chickasaw Mudd Puppies, Monday, May 6, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$9 in advance. For information, call 996-8555.

● **BIG BARN BURNING**  
Big Barn Burning will perform Monday, May 6, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **POLTERMANS**  
Poltermans will perform with guests, Destination, Monday, May 6, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.

● **THE SKYLES BAND**  
The Skyles Band will perform Tuesday, May 7, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **TRIPLE THREAT**  
Triple Threat will perform with guests, Innocent Sin, Tuesday, May 7, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.

● **POETRY SLAM**  
Poetry Slam will perform Tuesday, May 7, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **ASSEMBLY REQUIRED**  
Assembly Required will perform Wednesday, May 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **JAZZ NIGHT**  
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac will have a Wednesday Night Jazz Series. There will be live bands as well as DJ jazz music. Doors open at 5 p.m. Admission is free. For information, call 334-1999.

● **LUTHER GUITAR JR. JOHNSON**  
Luther "Guitar Jr." Johnson will perform Wednesday, May 8, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **ALLIED STRANGERS**  
Allied Strangers will perform with guests, Bad Influence, Wednesday, May 8, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.

● **WILD KINGDOM**  
Wild Kingdom will perform Thursday, May 9, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● **FULLY LOADED/WILD WOODY'S**  
Fully Loaded will perform 6 p.m. followed by The Wild Woody's 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. May 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **NEO FOLK NIGHT**  
Brenda Kahn, Frank Allison and Greg Applegate will all perform Thursday, May 9, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **RAZZAM**  
Razzam will perform with guests, Fast Lick, Thursday, May 9, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.

● **VIV AKAUUDREN**  
Viv Akauudren will perform Thursday, May 9, at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-2344.

● **THE ATTIC**  
The Attic will perform Friday, May 10, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **HAPPY ACCIDENTS**  
Happy Accidents will perform Friday, May 10, at the Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. Cover is \$4. For information, call 485-9700.

● **LUNA PARK**  
Luna Park will perform Friday, May 10, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● **RUBBER**  
Rubber will perform with guests, Skinhorse, Friday, May 10, at Finney's. For information, call 778-6404.

Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. Cover is \$4. For information, call 831-8070.

● **PARK THE KARMA**  
Park the Karma will perform Friday, May 10, at Alvin's, 8756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

● **HAVANA 3 A.M.**  
Havana 3 A.M. will perform with guests, Flat Duo Jets, Friday, May 10, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

● **17 REASONS WHY**  
17 Reasons Why will perform with guests, The Remains, Friday, May 10, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3529.

● **TANGENT IMAGE**  
Tangent Image will perform Friday, May 10, at Lil's 21, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3529.

● **FRANK ALLISON & THE ODD SOX**  
Frank Allison & the Odd Sox will perform Friday, May 10, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **URBATIONS**  
Urbations will perform Friday, May 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● **TYKETTO**  
Tyketto will perform with guests, Kammandu, Friday, May 10, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.

● **THE HUNTUNTES**  
The Huntuntes will perform Saturday, May 11, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● **THE GENERALS**  
The Generals will perform with guests, Culture Bandits, Saturday, May 11, at Exit Club, 12 Mile Road and John R. behind the Madison Center, Madison Heights. For information, call 544-1298.

● **THE EXCEPTIONS**  
The Exceptions will perform with guests, New Da Da and The Blue Dogs, Saturday, May 11, at the Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 485-9700.

● **RATIONALS REUNION**  
The Rationals will reunite, with the Michael Katon Band opening, Saturday, May 11, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

● **LOWER TOWN**  
Lower Town will perform Saturday, May 11, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● **TINSLEY ELLIS**  
Tinsley Ellis will perform with guests, Pit Vipers, Saturday, May 11, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.

● **PEST**  
Pest will perform Saturday, May 11, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3529.

● **MENTAL LANDSCAPE**  
Mental Landscape will perform with guests, Naming Mary, Saturday, May 11, at Finney's Pub, 2965 Woodward, Detroit. Cover is \$4. For information, call 832-8070.

● **BROKEN STONE**  
Broken Stone will perform Saturday, May 11, at Blondies, 2119 W. Seven Mile, east of Telegraph, Detroit. For information, call 525-8108.

● **ROYAL CRESCENT MOB**  
Royal Crescent Mob will perform with guests, Loushouse, Saturday, May 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$7.50 in advance. For information, call 996-8555.

● **SEE DICK RUN**  
See Dick Run will perform with guests, Bang and Sometimes Why, Saturday, May 11, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazer Road, Roseville. For information, call 778-6404.



The Pit Vipers will share the stage with Tinsley Ellis May 11 at Sully's in Dearborn.

## LOCAL

Here are the top-10 songs on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4.5 p.m. Sundays on WDR-FM 90.9.

1. "Wheeler II," Grins
2. "The Lemming," Son of Sam
3. "If Tomorrow Ever Comes," Generals
4. "Social Napoleans," Park the Karma
5. "Vanished and Gone," Dave Have
6. "Dance Knight," Bruce Nichols
7. "Dance Me," Country Bob and the Blood Farmers
8. "Better Days," The Gear
9. "Anything at All," Thirsty Forest Animals
10. "For All Time," Jimmy Bones

## CUTTING EDGE

Here are 10 tracks in particular noted in heavy rotation on "The Cutting Edge," which is heard 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. weekdays on CIMX-FM 88.7.

1. "Unbelievable," EMF
2. "Losing My Religion," R.E.M.
3. "Bright Young," Jesus Jones
4. "Unreal World," Godfathers
5. "Satellites," Rhythm Corps
6. "American Music," Violent Femmes
7. "Strange Days," School of Fish
8. "Detonation Boulevard," Sisters of Mercy
9. "There She Goes," The La's
10. "Valerie Loves Me," Material Issue