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Carl Brouse: Is anyone listening?

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

A songwriter sweats a little, bleeds a little and wonders a lot. For instance, who will perform his song, who listens to his composition and whether they will like it. Once in a while, Carl Brouse has to find out for himself.

So Brouse and noted Austin, Texas, guitarist John Reed will perform Saturday, June 22, at the Birmingham Unitarian Church as part of the La Casa folk series presented by Dave Brogren.

The session will be recorded for a live album, a long-awaited follow-up to Brouse's highly acclaimed, difficult-to-find "American Hotel." That's only part of the reason Brouse is returning to Birmingham.

"The audience he's (Brogren)

cultivated is really in tune to songwriters," Brouse said in a telephone interview from his home in New Hampshire. "It's like you're performing for other songwriters. They pick up on everything you do. They have trained ears."

Brouse describes the experience as a litmus test for his work, which is often filled with barren imagery and wanderlust, k.d. lang and the Reclines have recorded Brouse's "Wise Blood," but the song has yet to show up on an album.

HIS MOST well-known number, "American Hotel," is a rather bitter factual narrative about Stephen Foster falling out of bed drunk and accidentally cutting his throat and bleeding to death. The song is on Brouse's first album, which was released in 1983 on DTI.

"American Hotel" is up for an

award in a Billboard magazine songwriting contest.

The song came out of a conversation between Brouse and fellow songwriter Tom Russell at an art exhibit in San Francisco. The discussion turned to the tragic death of Foster, who is considered this country's most prolific songwriter with "Oh Suzanna" and "Swanee River."

"I remember what Tom said when he dropped me off that night. He said, 'If you don't write it, I will.' The next morning I wrote it in about five minutes."

"It's easy to write a love song. It's harder to find other subjects like Stephen Foster to write about. I used his own imagery to tell his life story. Those only come along once in a lifetime."

ALONG WITH telling a sad story, the song also reveals part of

Brouse's songwriting process. He remembers having an argument with Ian Tyson, with whose band Brouse performed along with Russell.

Tyson's contention was a songwriter should write what he knows.

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SEEING THE SHOW

Who: Carl Brouse and John Reed
When: Saturday, June 22, 8:30 p.m.
Where: Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 H. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills. Tickets: \$10. Call 540-9031 for information.

IN CONCERT

- **Y.M.L.** will perform Monday, June 17, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **PARADISE VALLEY JAM SESSION** Paradise Valley Jam Session will take place Monday, June 17, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **THROWING MUSES** Throwing Muses will perform Wednesday, June 19, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance. For information, 99-NUSIC.
- **THE RIEVERS** The Rievers will perform Wednesday, June 19, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **TEXAS HEAT** Texas Heat will perform Wednesday, June 19, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **THE LOVE KINGS** The Love Kings will perform with guests, Happy as Clams, Thursday, June 20, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **LA TRINITY** La Trinity will perform Thursday, June 20, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- **A QUIET STORM** A Quiet Storm, featuring George Duke, Najee, Dianne Reeves and 101 North, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 20, at Chene Park Music Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$25 and \$22. For information, call 872-1000.
- **TINY LIGHTS** Tiny Lights will perform with guests, Red C, Thursday, June 20, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **M.O.D.** M.O.D. will perform Thursday, June 20, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **TAJ MAHAL** Taj Mahal will perform Thursday, June 20, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **THE SCOUNDRELS** The Scoundrels will perform with guests, The Dileeds, Friday, June 21, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.
- **SCOTT MORGAN BAND** Scott Morgan Band will perform Friday, June 21, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **JEANNIE AND THE DREAMS** Jeannie and the Dreams will perform Friday, June 21, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **PARK THE KARMA** Park the Karma will perform Friday, June 21, at Lili's, 2390 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.
- **SPLITTERS** Splitters will perform with guests, The Februarys, Friday, June 21, at the Ham-

- tramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.
- **THE LARADOS** The Larados will perform Friday, June 21, on the Boblo Moonlight Cruise. The cruise departs the Detroit dock 11 p.m. and returns 1 a.m. For information, call 843-0700 or 843-8800.
- **VOLEBEATS** Volebeats will perform Friday, June 21, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- **TEXAS HEAT** Texas Heat will perform Friday, June 21, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **POLISH MUSLIMS** Polish Muslims will perform Friday and Saturday, June 21-22, at Galligans, Jefferson and Beaubien, Detroit.
- **DEAD HEAD NIGHT** Dead Head Night features Assembly Required with "Magical Illuminations" by the Circle of Light Friday, June 21, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.
- **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO** Meat Beat Manifesto will perform with guests, Consolidated, Saturday, June 22, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 951-MELT.
- **HAPPY AS CLAMS** Happy as Clams will perform with guests, The Pedestrians, 9 p.m. Saturday, June 22, at the Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, near Warren Avenue, Detroit. For information, call 835-9700.
- **FLOOR 9** Floor 9 will perform with guests, The Remains, Saturday, June 22, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.
- **IRMA THOMAS** Irma Thomas and her 10-piece band, The Professionals, will perform Saturday, June 22, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.
- **ROBERT PENN BLUES BAND** Robert Penn Blues Band will perform Saturday, June 22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.
- **TROPICAL CONNECTION** Tropical Connection will perform Saturday, June 22, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.
- **FULLY LOADED** Fully Loaded will perform Saturday, June 22, at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.
- **ORANGE HOUGHIES** Orange Houghies will perform Saturday, June 22, at East Club, 42 Mile and John R, Madison Heights. For information, call 544-1298.
- **CLASH OF THE TITANS** Clash of the Titans will feature bands Anthrax, Megadeth, Slayer and Alice in Chains and will take place Saturday, June 22, at The New Pine Knob Music Theatre. Tickets are \$25.50 pavilion and \$15 for lawn. For information, call 377-8200.

Pining away for more of that jazz

By Ryan Tulak
special writer

British saxophonist Courtney Pine plays a cosmopolitan style of jazz at a time when the musicians who inspired him, the Marsalis brothers, are preaching a parochial return to jazz standards.

Pine, 26, was performing in jazz-gate bands and just discovering jazz

records when he saw saxophonist Branford Marsalis and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis on British TV in 1982.

"It was just a matter of, 'Well, if they can do it, so can I,'" Pine said in a conversation with Branford Marsalis in Interview magazine.

"This jazz thing was unlike anything that my friends knew about, but it just seemed to be right for me.

And the more I listened to it, the more I wanted to play it."

The Marsalises heralded a jazz renaissance in the early 1980s with engaging covers of songs from the canons of bebop and swing. They sanctified their cause (gentlemen's wardrobes and self-righteousness).

Pine has retained the ethic of looking sharp — he appeared in an ad for the Gap in Rolling Stone this spring.

And he has retained a third Marsalis brother, Delfeayo, to produce his latest and fifth album, "Within the Realms of Our Dreams."

BUT PINE has rejected the provincial repertoire of Branford and Wynton Marsalis. He invigorates his new record with strains of calypso,

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REVIEWS

THE BEST OF THE WATERBOYS — The Waterboys

Usually greatest hits packages only deserve a cursory mention, but The Waterboys are a notable exception. And for many reasons.

First, this band's earlier work has virtually went unnoticed in the United States except by the most devoted of Waterboys zealots, including "This Is The Sea." Secondly, this compilation chronicles the evolution of a band and its enigmatic creator, Mike Scott, and his eventual reconciliation with what he called "demons . . . cursing in the cave of my skull."

The Waterboys have always been marked by transformational breakthroughs in their 10-year musical career. Band members have come and gone, most notably World Party leader Karl Wallinger and noted violinist Steve Wickham.

"A Girl Called Johnny," a saxophone-smoked number from the group's self-titled debut LP, kicks off the project.

A majority of the material is from the band's two most critically-ac-



claimed, not to mention completely divergent, efforts. "This Is The Sea" and "Fisherman's Blues."

"The Whole of the Moon," "Spirit" and "Don't Bang a Drum," off of "This Is the Sea" are the most tribally charged, spiritually rich songs ever recorded by The Waterboys. Also included is a live version of "Old England," in which Scott paints a desolate picture of a dying empire with "children stare with heroyn eyes."

This constant underlying tension has been parlayed into some of the most soulful and burning rock'n'roll of 1980s and, by contrast, later led to some stunning Irish folk ballads.

Scott's wailing of wistfulness, pain and metaphor along with Anthony Thistlethwaite's adroit musicianship (sax, mandolin and organ) have been a common thread throughout Waterboy works.

Once the band relocated to Galway from Dublin by way of London from Edinburgh, one could suspect Scott finally found an inner peace that is reflected in Cupid-inspired numbers such as "A Man Is In Love" off the band's most recent LP "Room to Roam." It should come as no surprise, incidentally, that the package includes only one song and parts of another (fragments of "In Search of the Horse") from that album. A happy and content Scott apparently doesn't make for many waves.

— Larry O'Connor

DON'T CRY TOO HARD — The Leslie Spit Treco

The Leslie Spit Treco learned its trade in the streets of Toronto, busking for coins of appreciation from passers-by probably en route to Eaton's or Tim Horton Doughnuts. But "Don't Cry Too Hard" is far from a pedestrian effort.

This and Toronto three-piece has certainly scored a silver dollar with this 12-song effort on I.R.S. Records. Plying excellent vocal harmonies — no doubt honed from its street performing days — with a rich pageantry of folk, country and rock and roll, the Treco is bound to be one of the year's best kept secrets.

"Don't Cry Too Hard" is buoyed by an unrelenting passion. Sometimes it borders on grungy with the fuzz of the electric guitar. On other occasions it can be downright soulful with Laura Hubert's evocative vocals yearning for a better time and place.

One of the highlights on the album is "Make Me Angel," which soars to considerable heights with Hubert's full range of vocal pleading. Lines such as "Make me an angel that flies from Montgomery/Make me a poster of an old rodeo" become declarations with Hubert's throaty yowl.

But the Leslie Spit Treco displays its musical dexterity, quickly bringing things to a simmer with a hushed folk ballad such as "Moon at Noon."

Not surprisingly, many of the



numbers here speak of personal liberation, a freedom that rekindles a restless spirit associated with the '60s. The Leslie Spit Treco also backs up its publicized environmental stances with some cutting lyrics in the rhythm-kicked splendor of "Heat" and "Dust."

Sings Hubert in "Heat," "Live for the gold as though we'll never grow old/Build ourselves a town and then we'll watch it all come down/Live our lives like we're never been told."

The country side of the Leslie Spit Treco is revealed in the kazoo and twang of "Talkin'," not the kind of stuff expelled from a band in the cosmopolitan hub of Toronto. Then again, the Cowboy Junkies didn't exactly come from Nashville either.

— Larry O'Connor



Irma Thomas and her 10-piece band, The Professionals, will bring their soulful, bluesy New Orleans sounds to Sully's in Dearborn Saturday, June 22.

LOCAL CUTTING EDGE

- Here are the top-10 songs on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays on WDRR-FM 90.9
1. "Dumber in Masses," Griss
 2. "Black Cowboy," Country Bob and the Blood Farmers
 3. "Nostalgic," Chala Reaction
 4. "Satisfy Me," Cait Heroes
 5. "Kilimijaro," Paines Gage
 6. "Weight of the World," Dave Rave
 7. "Running for You," Fook
 8. "Cracked Streets," Thirsty Forest Animals
 9. "Page Turner," Grady Hazy
 10. "Ripoff," Floor 9

- Here are the top-10 albums receiving air play on "The Cutting Edge," now heard daily on CIMS-FM 84.7.
1. "Out of Time," REM
 2. "Superstition," Stevie Nicks & The Bananaramas
 3. "Electronic," The Roots
 4. "Peggy Sue," The J. Geils Band
 5. "Mystery Juice," The Roots
 6. "The La's," The La's
 7. "Real Live," Slim Thoma
 8. "The Reality of My," Fishbone
 9. "Laughter and Lust," The Jacksons
 10. "Kinky," Hoodoo Gurus