

# STREET SCENE

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Black Market members Mitch Purdy, drummer, James Megerian, bassist, Bob Monteleone, guitarist, and vocalist Larry Duncan have come up with "Tropical Rock," a collection of work spanning 10 years.

## Marketing rock with their reggae

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Four white musicians immersed and inspired by the joyous sounds of Jamaica, Black Market followed their muse with the most sincere intentions.

Theirs was an enthusiastic musical journey into the realm of stripped down, pure roots reggae. Even the people in Kingston embraced them for their eagerness and authenticity when the band performed there in 1982.

But Black Market changed. Some would say they were merely sidetracked. After the vibrant, undiluted reggae heard on the band's debut album, "Air Freight," in 1983, Black Market countered with a fairly straightforward rock'n'roll album "Cool & Deadly" in 1989. Did they betray their original vision, bowing to the commercial demands of radio and the club scene? Perhaps so.

Vocalist Larry Duncan prefers to think of the LP as exorcising the rock demons that lurked within.

"We had to deal with the fact that some people felt we were compromising a little bit," said Duncan in a telephone interview. "But I would say (it) was more in terms of trying to extract that album we all kind of had in us, that rock'n'roll album we had thought about."

"Instead of trying to marry the two, we tried to keep them separate."

By acknowledging their rock'n'roll influences, Black Market came clean. The challenge as the band marks its 10th year together is finding happy median of two vigorous musical forms.

"TROPICAL ROCK," the group's third re-

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— Larry Duncan

lease, offers evidence that Black Market can answer the call. The 11-song offering is part retrospective, part introspective to what direction Black Market is headed.

Some numbers date back to 1980 when the drummer Mitch Purdy, bassist James Megerian of Farmington, guitarist Bob Monteleone and Duncan formed the outfit to explore the sounds of the Caribbean, perfected by masters such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. One song, "Big Bambo," captures the mood and inspiration of Black Market who recorded the number in Jamaica.

Although "Tropical Rock" is a collection of work spanning 10 years, the hard-edged sound of Black Market is a common thread throughout the package.

"We know we're not a true, roots reggae group," Purdy said. "Even in a major reggae outfit they've always tapped into a little bit more than their own music such as jazz, soul and rock. To us, Jamaican style music has always been a hybrid."

As other reggae outfits have found, the music doesn't lend itself for commercial opportunities. Although the Black Market's first album was highly acclaimed and gigs opening up for Bob Marley's The Wailers, Steel Pulse and Third

World followed, the success didn't parlay into radio air play or a record deal.

The hard rock feel of "Cool & Deadly" helped change Black Market fortunes, at least made their music a little less alien to radio programmers and club owners.

"IF THINGS went our way," Duncan said, "we could call the shots and bring it back full circle and play the kind of reggae music we enjoy playing, which is reggae with a rock'n'roll slant to it."

For band members, though, the memories of traveling to Jamaica and performing in Kingston clubs for the first time remain vivid. Purdy recalls being nervous at first, touching down at the airport wondering if they would be accepted.

Understandably, audiences were skeptical of four white guys trying to play reggae. Black Market won them over.

"The thing they were looking for was sincerity," Purdy said. "They don't want someone to bastardize the music for profit and that's not initially what we wanted to do. We got together to play this music because we loved it."

But what would those same people in Kingston say to this reggae turned rock'n'roll turned reggae outfit?

Said Duncan, "I think they would enjoy it."

Black Market will perform three shows in the area — Tuesday, Oct. 29, at Metro Cafe, 328 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak, 542-1990; Wednesday, Oct. 30, at Juke Box, 4616 N. Woodward, Royal Oak, 549-2233; and Sunday, Nov. 2, at The New Wagon Wheel, 2959 16 Mile Road, near Rochester Road, Troy, 659-8194.

## IN CONCERT

### ● PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ JAM

Monday, Oct. 28 — Paradise Valley Jazz Jam will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

### ● HYPERFORMANCE

Monday, Oct. 28 — Hyperperformance will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### ● CHISEL BROTHERS

Tuesday, Oct. 29 — Chisel Brothers will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

### ● IBID AND THE FOOTNOTES

Tuesday, Oct. 29 — Ibid and the Footnotes will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### ● ANN ARBOR BLUES BAND

Wednesday, Oct. 30 — Ann Arbor Blues Band will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### ● THE HANNIBALS

Wednesday, Oct. 30 — The Hannibals will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### ● TRINIDAD TRIPOLI STEEL BAND

Thursday, Oct. 31 — Trinidad Tripoli Steel Band will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

### ● CAPTAIN DAVE AND THE PSYCHEDELIC LOUNGE CATS

Thursday, Oct. 31 — Captain Dave and the Psychedelic Lounge Cats will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

### ● LAUGHING HYENAS

Thursday, Oct. 31 — Laughing Hyenas will perform with guests, Hole and The Gories, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$6.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.

### ● BPOC EXPRESS BAND

Thursday, Oct. 31 — BPOC Express Band will perform at The Stonehouse Blues Cafe, 19803 Ralston, between Seven Mile and Eight Mile roads, Detroit. For information, call 893-3255.

### ● REGULAR BOYS

Thursday, Oct. 31 — Regular Boys will perform at Sully's, 4718 Greenfield, between Ford Road and Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

### ● 3-D INVISIBLES

Friday, Nov. 1 — 3-D Invisibles will perform at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.



Charlie Musselwhite will bring his harmonica sounds to the Majestic Theatre in Detroit Sunday, Nov. 3.

### ● ION'S ESCORT

Friday, Nov. 1 — Ion's Escort will perform with Pest at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff at I-75, Hamtramck. For information, call 365-9760.

### ● ROY ROGERS

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1-2 — Roy Rogers will perform at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

### ● PIT VIPERS

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1-2 — The Pit Vipers will perform at J.J.'s Pub, 32116 Ford Road, Garden City. For information, call 522-9450.

### ● RHYTHM CORPS

Saturday, Nov. 2 — Rhythm Corps will perform Saturday, Nov. 2, at The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, 10 1/2 Mile and Gratiot, Roseville. For information, call 778-8150.

### ● 17 REASONS WHY

Saturday, Nov. 2 — 17 Reasons Why will perform at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff at I-75, Hamtramck. For information, call 365-9760.

### ● DWARVES

Saturday, Nov. 2 — The Dwarves will perform at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

### ● COLORS

Saturday, Nov. 2 — Colors will perform with guests, Gangster Fun and Tom Collins & The Cocktail Shakers, at The Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 833-9700.

### ● BAD MANNERS

Saturday, Nov. 2 — Bad Manners will perform with guests, Gangster Fun and Tom Collins & The Cocktail Shakers, at The Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 833-9700.

### ● CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

Sunday, Nov. 3 — Charlie Musselwhite will perform with guest, James Wallin, at the Majestic Theatre, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 833-9700.

## It's no parking for Karma

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

Lick and stick the postage stamps. Park the Karma is well-packaged and ready for delivery to any major record company.

On this night, the cramped stage at the Exit Club is the band's mailbox.

Anyone could decipher that the four-member band buys into the theory that sexuality sells. Lead singer Lori Wyatt moves seductively throughout the performance, swaying her hips and obviously not afraid to use her femininity to draw attention.

First clue? There's the smoking rendition of Nancy Sinatra's '60s tribute to go-go footwear, "These Boots Are Made for Walking," during which Wyatt saunters up and puts her leather-clad foot on display for some sheepish-looking male.

Hasty assessments and rash judgments may be easily made here. But when Wyatt swings her long brown mane back and growls the lyrics to the band's "I Can't Live Without You" ("I want to touch you/I want to love you/I want you to make me scream"), the clear intent is to make men stand in line with polar bears for a shower under icebergs.

"I've gotten some interesting reactions," Wyatt said later. "You get your complaints. I was standing near the stage before one of our shows and some woman handed me a hate letter, saying I was harming the image of women."

"I THINK I'm an artist. I can be anything I want to be."

Who can argue with that? Then again, Park the Karma was born out of debate and division.

The band was formed earlier this year from the remains of Walk the Dogma. A rift occurred, leaving a majority of Walk the Dogma members to form the Hope

Orchestra.

Drummer Kerry Gluckman already had hand-picked guitarist Jake Smith. Smith, in turn, suggested the singing talents of Wyatt.

Bassist Raquel Salaysay recently joined on as an expatriate of the short-lived, all-female outfit The Trunchcons. Salaysay doesn't care to talk about The Trunchcons.

Park the Karma is very much a separate entity. The band fancies itself as something alternative, but actually owes more to hard-rock sensibilities.

Part of the reason is lead guitarist Smith, who never met a power chord he didn't like. He also cranks up a few windmill swings, a la Pete Townshend, for exclamation points during the live shows.

Smith estimates that he's been in more than 100 bands — he even auditioned for Walk the Dogma four years ago and didn't make the cut.

"I've never been in a band as serious as this before," Smith said.

CERTAINLY, Park the Karma has some serious objectives. The band keeps busy performing live shows in the area and plans to release a self-titled compact disc.

The eight-song offering offers a buoyant collection of scorching hard-rock numbers. A majority of the songs are written by Wyatt, who prefers metaphors to depict the human condition, such as in "Social Napoleons," a satirized commentary about posers.

Her vocal style may owe more to the hard-rock style of Chrissie Hynde and Pat Benatar than anything, although Wyatt admits her onstage persona differs greatly from her demure one off stage.

"I'm really yellow," she said. "Then this other self comes out. I'm not obnoxious in real life."

Park the Karma will have a record release party Friday, Nov. 15, at Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. Appearing with them will be Twiggy Barbust.



Singer Lori Wyatt and bassist Raquel Salaysay make up the female half of Park the Karma. Their bandmates include drummer Kerry Gluckman and guitarist Jake Smith.