



BILL HANSEN

Hoping to make 78 RPM a publishing success are publisher Dan Santoni (left) and layout artist and designer Adam Hoffman.

New spin for music Magazine lets the artists do the talking

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Cynicism may be viewed as the bane of all artistic expression and, darn, if Dan Santoni allows such skepticism to seep into his new publication, 78 RPM.

Geez, that's no fun. The magazine debuts this month and will provide a forum for all types of artists to articulate a viewpoint of their work and on the arts in general. No thumbs up or thumbs down, no star or rose ratings — just the words from the artists themselves.

"For one, I'm an artist myself. I know what it is like to put your artwork into a show or a band (dealing with club owners," said Santoni, 21, who is a photographer. "I want to give the artist an opportunity to speak freely for themselves instead of someone else doing it for them."

In a prototype issue, 78 RPM features interviews with a person who makes jewelry out of recyclable materials, an avant-garde photographer as well as local musicians Brothers from Another Planet and national music sensation Fishbone. The articles are either in-depth autobiographical pieces or a Q&A format.

THOUGH SUCH articles would seem cursory and a one-sided exercise of ego, Santoni said the magazine's mission is to delve deeper into motivations and psyche of the artist. Too often, he feels, those interpretations are left to outsiders who can only surmise to what threshold a person seeks to achieve with his craft.

What may separate 78 RPM from other art publications could be the artists themselves. Instead of covering trendy designers and pop art, Santoni sees his task as bringing to the surface those artists submerged in their own obscurity. The publication will be highly visual, relying on artists for its attitude rather than its staffers.

At least that was the initial source of inspiration for Santoni: The idea for an arts magazine developed a year ago through a conversation among co-workers in the Sam's Jams parking lot in Ferndale where he worked.

The discussion centered on the history of Detroit music. More precisely, the emergence of such innovators as Iggy and the Stooges and the MC 5 and how their influences still permeate music today.

"We were wondering what's around now that's like that," Santoni said.

GOOD QUESTION, and the answer usually takes a considerable amount of research and commitment. The group decided to pool their resources: several are writers and photographers themselves.

But several meetings in the planning stages digressed into what Santoni described as "a real mess" with 14 people voicing varying opinions on what direction the publication should take.

Others began to fall off. Finally, Santoni and a few others carried on with their original premise.

In December, the 38-page publication will debut on newsstands and through mail subscriptions. The price is tentatively set at \$2.50 a copy.

A benefit, "Mural of Reality: An Establishing of New Foundations," Nov. 5 at Industry in Pontiac raised an estimate \$1,100 for 78 RPM. The start-up costs have been offset through contributions and \$1,500 out of Santoni's own pocket.

"We're trying to fill a new niche, especially in Detroit," Santoni said. "It might be a risk, but I feel it's worth doing."

IN CONCERT

Monday Dec. 9

- **Baked Paradoxals**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. 465-5050
- **Mr. Picasso Head**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747
- **Paradise Valley Jazz Jam**
Featuring Dwight Adams at Alvin, 5758 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

Tuesday Dec. 10

- **The Wishing Field**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8555
- **Assembly Required**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747
- **Chisel Bros. with Thornetta Davis**
Alvin, 5758 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

Wednesday Dec. 11

- **The Attic**
With Sunrise Highway at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8555
- **Dr. John**
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. 846-1920
- **Harambe**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747

Thursday Dec. 12

- **Hope Orchestra**
3-D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. 589-3344
- **Vauca-Ville Rage**
With Dadalove and Sturvey Turtle at Paycheck Lounge, 2932 Caniff, off Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. 874-0254
- **Y.M.I.**
With Missionary Slew at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8555

- **Semiritana**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. 465-5050
- **Goodfellows Benefit**
With Twigg Barbat, Civilians, Thunderharp Choir, Stewart Francke Band, Park the Arms and The Generals at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Admission is \$8. Proceeds benefit the Goodfellows, which provide clothes, toys and other assistance to underprivileged children. 961-MELT

- **Trinidad Tripoli Steel Drum Band**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747

- **Acoladama**
Blondies, 2119 W. Seven Mile, between Telegraph and Southfield, Detroit. 535-8108

- **Weather Vanes**
With Happy Accidents and The Splitters at Alvin, 5758 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

- **Jazz Grand Blues Jam**
Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. 581-3650

Friday Dec. 13

- **Chisel Bros. with Thornetta Davis**
New Detroit Bar & Grill, 655 Beau-

lien, at East Fort. 963-3355

- **Spanic Boys**
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. 846-1920
- **Gary Richrath**
Todd's, 8139 Seven Mile, one block east of Van Dyke, Detroit. 366-70210
- **Blues Fast**
With Willie D. Warren, Uncle Jessie White, Jeff Maylan and Louisiana Heat at Alvin, 5758 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

- **Strange Bedfellows**
Lilly's, 2130 Jacob, Hamtramck. 875-6555

- **Trauma Kamp**
Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, near Alexandrine, Detroit. 831-8070
- **3-D Invisibles**
Paycheck Lounge, 2932 Caniff, off Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. 874-0254
- **Mother Mercy**
With Troy Jackson and Dear Abby at Blondies, 2119 W. Seven Mile, between Telegraph and Southfield, Detroit. 535-8108

- **Hannibals**
With Seating Zak at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8555

- **Social Fabric**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. 465-5050

- **Frank Allison and the Odd Box**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747

- **Blind Dog Blues Band**
Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. 581-3650

Saturday Dec. 14

- **Hannibals**
With Weeping Rachel at Lilly's, 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. 875-6555

- **Sweet F.A.**
The Ritz, 17180 Frasco, 10 1/2 Mile and Gratiot, Roseville. 778-8150

- **Loyal Cole**
With former Go-Between members Robert Forster and Grant McLennan at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets for the previously scheduled show at Clubland will be honored. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. 961-MELT

- **Mule**
With Ugly Stick at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, near Alexandrine, Detroit. 831-8070

- **Rhythm Corps**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8555

- **Strange Bedfellows**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. 465-5050

- **Spanic Boys**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747

- **Blues benefit**
With Blind Dog Blues Band, Bluesmatics, Alligators, Marc Falconberry, Buddy Folsa, Howlin' Pambles, John "Hard Dog" Jones, Robert Jones, Jean Morgan, Motor City Shakers, Pit Vipers, Harmonica Shah, Mister Bo and Mojo Hand at Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. 581-3650

- **Frank Allison and the Odd Box**
Alvin, 5758 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

Cosmic 'ole' for Banditos

By Joseph S. Hoffman
special writer

It's reggae. No, it's rock. No... now wait a minute, it sounds more like spiritual speed metal.

It's the Cosmic Banditos, a local group with a singular and diverse sound.

Their stage performance is a high-energy excursion that has to be seen to be appreciated.

"Our music is like that played by the monks in Tibet. You know, the ones way up in the mountains who sit around and play horns and drums. They will sit and play for hours, some in monotone, and they all come up with different stuff. Well, we're like that," said the band's raucous drummer, Scott Goldstein.

Although none of them resemble monks, many of the group's lyrics have a religious undertone.

Much of this pious influence comes from Matthew Ruffino, the group's Rastafarian devotee who grew up in the Farmington Hills.

"I sing a lot about Jah (short for Jehovah), who is the man/women creator or God, and about salvation," he said.



Members of the Cosmic Banditos are Scott Coltran (from left), Matthew Ruffino, Charles LeVine and Scott Goldstein.

DREADLOCKS askew and forever smiling, Ruffino, the band's mainstay guitarist/vocalist, said the band has gone through many changes since its birth in early 1989.

Scott Coltran, who commands rhythm guitar and who lives in Farmington, said the band used to play hard-core rock, but that their sound has now taken on a psychedelic folk and blues style.

"We don't think of ourselves as a band, we think of ourselves as a family. This gives our music the kind of precision we could not get any other way," Ruffino said.

All of the band members hail from suburban Detroit except Charles LeVine, their bass player, whom Ruffino met when he lived in Atlanta for a short time.

In a time when many bands choose

to portray a sardonic nature to today's youth, the Banditos sing more on a positive metaphysical note.

The Banditos have a wide range of influences.

"Everything from Bob Marley to Black Sabbath from Pink Floyd to the Bad Brains have been this band's influences," LeVine said. "It's hard to pinpoint exactly."

REVIEWS

PROFILE: THE ULTIMATE SPARKS COLLECTION

— Sparks

Well, it's about time. Sparks, one of the best and brightest bands of the '70s (their best period) who still had more than a few bright spots during the '80s and may surprise us all in the '90s, have released this double retrospective of their brilliant career as rock's "weird guys."

First, there was Ron Mael, the group's songwriter and keyboard player, with a penchant for playing in his minimalist style as his brother (and resident heartthrob) Russell danced around, singing in his falsetto voice, which often disguised the fact that, hey, these guys are writing some of the smartest, cleverest lyrics around, bar none.

Even today, songs such as "Hasta Manana," "Monsieur" and "Achoo" easily stand up. Did I fail to mention they wrapped those lyrics around some of the catchiest rock of the era? If so, take it from me: they did. And it still holds up extremely well.

The L.A.-based band had to go to England to become stars, with hits such as "This Town Ain't Big Enough

for the Two of Us" and "Something for the Girl with Everything" and many, many more, including their biggest U.S. hit, "Cool Places," a song with Sparks fan extraordinaire and Go-Go Jane Weidlin.

In fact, my only complaint with this double-set is that it leans too much on the band's later work and not enough on their earlier stuff. For example, I would have loved to hear "Whippings and Apologies" or the hilarious "BC."

The CD has 40 cuts, seven more than the tape, including rare B-sides like "Barbecue" and "Lost and Found." The tape includes some unreleased gems too, though, such as the original version of "Like Girls," which was virtually destroyed with over-production on the "Big Beat" album.

Sparks may be an acquired taste, but it's one far more worthwhile than such and such dark beer, as far as I'm concerned.

Eclectic? Undoubtedly. Essential? Surely. Rocking? One listen and you'll never have to ask again. Highly recommended.

— Steve O'Leary