

STREET SCENE

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'Being Born' is harvest of good music

By Larry O'Connor
Staff writer

Many hours spent on the road as a rock'n'roll performer usually produces its fair share of cynicism, bitterness and caustic wit.

Then there is Livonia native Terry Farmer and The Bead Band, which capture their muse with the merry disposition of a folk troubadour.

Few outfits can match the yearning schedule of gigs The Bead Band has performed in the past two years. The group has trekked across the country, playing everywhere from Los Angeles to distant outposts in South Sioux City, Iowa, and Marquette, Mich.

On "Busy Being Born," the Bead Band's new 12-song release on Studio City, Calif.-based MCR Music, a communal, mystical spirit pervades throughout the folk-pop effort, featuring pristine three-part harmonies and an array of tight musical arrangements.

There's not about the worship of false deities. Rather it's personal reaffirmation of man's oneness with his environment and belief in the magic of the human soul.

Of course, if you don't get caught up in this microbiotic diet induced enthusiasm you'll at least appreciate the musical depth of "Busy Being Born."

Farmer, who also performed with surf music duo Jan & Dean, summons an immediate effortless feel to this release. His vocals are heartfelt, tender in songs such as the acoustical renderings of "Words of a Man."

THEN THERE are the flawless harmonies by band members David Perampala, Mike Buhagiar, Todd Glass and Ewalt Von Kusko, which seemingly sanctify the spiritual euphoria expressed here.

A majority of the numbers stay within the realm of folk, rock and pop, though the jaunty song "Larsha" has a Hawaiian Don Ho meets Musical Youth feel to it. The cello in "Words of a Man" provided by bassist Von Kusko adds a sense of classical drama.

As a songwriter, Farmer's strength (and occasional downfall) is a penchant to turn up a wealth of feelings in a simple simile. This can leave him to draw comparisons to validate the metaphor rather than

fully exploring the emotions behind them.

To this end, the atmospheric references almost become a crutch in numbers such as "Seven Days of Thunder" and "Sing for You" ("I'd call the thunder to sound for you/Dance for the rains to wash us clean").

"This is Your Ride" is where Farmer makes a statement about the need of accepting the chaotic curves of life and forging ahead. There, the metaphorical approach works splendidly. (MCR Music, 12438 Moorpark, No. 106, Studio City, Calif. 91604)

"ITCHIN'" See Dick Run: Perennial area club favorites, these pop-masters of the simple, indelible variety deal five more songs here. While true to form — impeccable harmonies, flawless instrumentation — SDR appear merely content to stay nestled comfortably in the bar band realm of influence.

The proper themes are covered: Female vanity ("Extra Mile"), misguided love ("Some Other Time") and love out of convenience ("Stay Together") as well as employment apathy ("I Hate My Job"). Of course, proving they're cognizant of the environment in which they excel, the four men outfit humorously, and aptly chronicle a typical pick-up scene in "Shiftin' Into Love Gear."

Perhaps there's something to be said for knowing your limitations and not trying to exceed them. (Elementary Records, 213 E. Windemere, Royal Oak 48073)

"Happy As Clams." Happy As Clams: Quite an ambitious progressive pop effort here as this band tries to cover a wide variety of styles (inflections of R&B and jazz are discernible), and qualify it with some social/political relevant lyrics.

"Mr. Clean" tries to burrow deep into the psyche of a homicidal mind while "Color the Sky" attempts to grapple with the ramifications of an ever-changing world.

That aside, this self-titled release is marred at times by production. For example, the drummer sounds like he's beating right on top of your chest. That doesn't lend itself to the many subtleties Happy As Clams' music has to offer. They certainly deserve to be heard.



Joining Terry Farmer, lead guitar and vocals (center), are Bead Band members Mike Buhagiar, guitar and vocals (from left), Dave Perampala, keyboard and vocals, Todd Glass, drums and vocals, and Skip Von Kusko, bass, cello and vocals.

STREET SENSE

Therapy exposes the truth

Dear readers,

The following question and response is the beginning of a two-part series on psychotherapy. This is a topic upon which volumes have been written. I hope that everyone reading it will get at least a flavor for why it has become so important a part of our culture.

Barbara

Dear Ms. Schiff,

I am a 28-year-old female. I have a wonderful, supportive husband and 2-month-old daughter.

I was raised in a family where my father abused my mother, but neither my sister nor I was ever hit. After growing up and moving out, we questioned Mom over and over again, "Why don't you leave him?" Her answer was always that she was afraid he would kill her.

Well, that's exactly what he did when she finally got up the nerve to leave. He shot her to death and then committed suicide 18 months ago. Although I remember almost nothing, I am the one who discovered the bodies.

I never went to counseling because I feel I'm a very educated, self-sufficient woman and I really don't feel there is anything a therapist could tell me that I can't figure out for myself. Although money is not really an issue, I don't need to pay someone to give advice and to tell me several hundred dollars later that I'm OK! And I don't need any more support than I already find from my friends and family.

I have three questions for you. Why can't I remember the murder scene? Obviously, it must have been so horrible that my brain is protecting itself by blocking out, but I find myself going back to that day and straining to see things. I dream about it occasionally and think about it constantly because I'm frustrated by not being able to remember it. Amnesia or hysteria (or whatever you would call it) is not something I've ever experienced and I do not like it — it's so frustrating!

What do you think therapy would have to offer someone in my situation? I've been told several times by people (most I'd consider do not know me or my situation well enough to offer advice) that I should go to counseling. What is it that draws people to therapy in threes? Are people that deficient or lonely that they need to go to a stranger to find the answers that are there for them to find by themselves, if they just look hard enough?

What do I tell my daughter when she comes of age to question how Gramma and Grampa died? I never want to hide the truth from her about anything but how can a child process this information? How do I round out the edges so that I tell the truth but so it doesn't scare her? I want her to find a grandfather who had the potential for love, not the monster he turned out to be in the end.

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IN CONCERT

Monday, March 9

- **Majesty Crush**
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. Admission is \$5 before 10 p.m., \$8 afterward. 324-1999
- **Paradise Valley Jazz Jam**
Alvin's, 3756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

Tuesday, March 10

- **Happy Accidents**
With Weeping Rachel at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-2747



Happy Accidents will perform with Weeping Rachel at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.

Rick's American Pub, 611 Church, Ann Arbor.

- **996-2747**
Judy Small
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 761-1451
- **Chisel Brothers** with Thoretha Davis
Alvin's, 3756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

Wednesday, March 11

- **George Bedard and the Kingpins**
Rick's American Pub, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747
- **Arcady**
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 761-1451
- **Thee Hypnotics**
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets \$5 at the door. 961-MELT

Thursday, March 12

- **Tracy Science**
With YMI at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8355
- **Juveniles**
With Jerry Sprague at Rick's American Pub, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747
- **Draw Weston**
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 761-1451
- **Skellon Crew**
The Ritz, 17580 Prasho, 10 1/2 Mile and Gratiot, Roseville. 778-8150
- **High Back Chairs**
Todd's, 8139 Seven Mile Road, east of Van Dyke Road, Detroit. Doors open at 8 p.m. 366-TDDD

Friday, March 13

- **Terry Farmer and the Bead Band**
Alvin's, 3756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355
- **Happy Accidents**
With Hoollopers at Finney's Pub, 3485 Woodward, Detroit. 831-8070
- **Mythic Manifest**
Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. 363-3329
- **Southgoing Zak**
With Groove Spoon at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. 996-8355
- **Mad Hatters**
Rick's American Pub, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. 996-2747
- **The RFD Boys**
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor. 761-1451
- **Granfalloon**
With Tea Party at Lili's, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. 973-6555
- **Pete Moss and the Fungus**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. 485-5650
- **Chisel Brothers**
Moby Dicks, 5452 Schaefer, Dearborn. 581-3650

Loudhouse

- With Noe Barrage and Ewan Kane at The Ritz, 17400 Prasho, 10 1/2 Mile and Gratiot, Roseville. 778-8150
- **James Wallin Band**
Murdock's, 2886 Crooks Road, Rochester Hills. 852-0559

Saturday, March 14

- **George Bedard and the Kingpins**
Alvin's, 3756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. 832-2355

REVIEWS

ROBERT NOLL/BLUES MISSION — Robert Noll/Blues Mission

Studio albums have been problematic for some blues artists. The sterile environment of the studio or an over-indulgent producer have rendered more than one release rather lifeless.

Then there is Robert Noll, the guitar-slinging ex-ante of Albert Collins' Icebreakers and Big Twist's Mellow Fellows. The Livonia native's self-titled solo release is highly representative of his vast talent as a blues guitarist. More than that, however, he largely succeeds in creating the proper mood for a quorum of blues expression.

When Noll tears into "Cool Zone," a number featuring an array of searing guitar licks, one can almost visualize the perspiration, the contorted facial expressions and, most of all, the desperation. The emotion, the soul is all there on display.

Years of performing as a sideman and as a headliner have undoubtedly served Noll well. "Robert Noll/Blues Mission" features a juxtaposition of styles throughout the 11-song release, gravitating between each with relative ease.

He handles a roadhouse rave-up such as "Hug Yer Baby" with indelible charm and can carve deep into the realm of disparity in "Fade My Blues" while "Deep Freeze" borders on Hendrix-esque psychedelic induced guitar fuzz.

On "Deep Freeze," a number recorded in 1986, Noll is backed up by both the Icebreakers and the Mellow Fellows. A majority of songs features Will Leonard on drums, Tom MacGulgan on bass and Eddie Harsch on piano and synthesizer along with the Sun Messengers Horn Section.

The diversity in musical styles is to be lauded, but it's the resonant growl and unrelenting guitar attacks in numbers such as "Fade My Blues" that reveal an artist who pours himself into his craft.

Noll may expel pain and woe better than anyone. The notes that roll off his electric guitar more than galvanize an enduring spirit.

— Larry O'Connor



Robert Noll