

Street



Music makers: Creating the sound for Those Who Dream are vocalist Gary Hancock, drummer and keyboardist Michael Holden, bass guitarist and flutist Brooke Ann Ratliff and guitarist Jeff Jolly.

Bit of this, that makes Dreams



Take a few guitars. Blend in some drums, a little keyboard, drum pads and flute. Mix well. . . It may sound like a recipe and it is, a recipe for the sound of Those Who Dream, an alternative pop group that maintains that their unique style gives them a cleaner sound than the competition.

By KRISTEN KNUDSEN
SPECIAL WRITER

Sitting amidst guitars, drums and bass guitars, three men and a woman try to create their special music. Sounds pretty normal, right?

But throw in some flutes. Or some drum pads with keyboard effects. Add some more effects, effects off-of-tapes from the local library and you have the music of Those Who Dream.

Drummer and keyboardist Michael Holden, 24, of Royal Oak, has a simple explanation for this band's novel approach.

"After playing for so long, I was bored. I wanted to expand and I now have access to many different sounds which I couldn't get before," explained Holden, who works days in a shipping and receiving department at a Royal Oak company and gives private music lessons.

One such sound is wind blowing at the end of the song, "Stirling."

"I'd get bored, too," admits Brooke Ann Ratliff, 22, of Auburn Hills, the group's bass guitarist and flutist. "I really missed all the studio equipment I used to have, when I would go to school."

Ratliff attended the Baldwin Wallis Conservatory for three years and now works as a book keeper in Auburn Hills.

"I'd get tapes of sound effects and I'd just feed them from a tape recorder into a 4-track, just

like that Beatles album, Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," she said.

That doesn't mean, however, that Those Who Dream sound like the Beatles. Ratliff describes their sound as "alternative pop rock," and the rest of the band agrees. They are a cross between Toots & the Maytals and King Crimson — with traces of The Cure.

"We try to do things differently," said Ratliff of their music. "We have a cleaner sound than most alternative bands."

Jeff Jolly, the band's guitarist, uses a lot of effects. He's got some rack mount effects that he uses constantly and then the reverb and the echo effect that he uses give us kind of a wide, open sound."

Jolly, 30, of Royal Oak is a graduate of Michigan State University and an operations manager at a print shop in Royal Oak.

"I got a lot of space in our music," Ratliff said. "It's not like a larger, cleaner sound than your average, crunchy band."

"The special sound no doubt contributed to the band's victory at the 1991 Battle of the Bands at The Ritz in Roseville."

"We are four people that approach one song idea from four different points of view," said Holden. "Instead of confining to each other, we just play what we want to play, and that's how it comes out."

Their special sound results from a drummer with influences in jazz, Latin and classical music, a guitarist influenced by the '60s, a bassist who likes Disco House music and a singer who claims no special influence at all.

"I let the music take its course and sort of just fit the lyrics in where they go," said vocalist Gary Hancock, 28, of Royal Oak.

By day Hancock sells advertising for a Royal Oak company. He also attends Oakland Community College, where he is studying computer applications.

But even with such unbridled energy, sometimes it's hard for a band to achieve recognition.

"The whole Detroit scene is based on the techno-dance parties every weekend," said Holden, who studied music at Wayne State University. "You go out and all the dance clubs are packed — guaranteed — every weekend, where the bars are always empty."

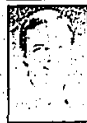
Those Who Dream aren't giving up, though. They enjoy playing and their special brand of music knows how to entertain. It seems that a challenge is what this band likes best.

"Musically, I like to challenge myself with every song," said Holden. "My most recent song, I play 12-string guitar on it, which is just something different."

"I also have a trumpet," he said, much to his bandmates' chagrin. "Surprise."

Those Who Dream will perform with Neophyte Nation Thursday, June 25, at Griff's Grill, 19 Saginaw; Pontiac, and a semi-acoustic set 8 p.m. to midnight Saturday, June 27, at Gayle's Chatter in Royal Oak.

It's Cat, Ash Can and compilations



LARRY O'CONNOR

Vocals and guitars swerve, skitter and scrape the pavement, but somehow manage to avoid their predestined crash. Confuse a Cat wear the seat belts of musical restraint.

At the same time, though, the band willingly sheds the shackles of type or structure. Melody is a dirty word around this bunch, which appears to be trying to craft its own beatnik bent borne out of suburban boredom.

In their creative nadir they can whip out a swirling dervish number, such as "Latin Libre." Cathy Connell's piercing guitar lines and Jim Miller's murmuring vocal persona make this a highlight. In "Empty," Connell's speculative guitar work is aptly showcased amid the scratchy strafe of Dave Byrd's drumming and Jerry Gabel's pulsating bass lines.

Confuse a Cat is still in the formulation stage with their sound, inciting a whole range of possible comparisons from the natty Violent Femmes to the orchestral dementia put forth by Universal Congress Of to the distorted guitars employed by Sonic Youth.

Dressed up as "Latin Libre" is with a violin or stripped down to the core as "TV Boy" is with Miller's detached vocals, Confuse a Cat succeed mainly due to their earnestness.

At their worst, they at least present a shell of a number that's worthy of further exploration. (360 Records, 288 E. Maple, Suite No. 130, Birmingham 48009)

"Out of the Ash Can," J.C. Whitelaw. The former member of Ash Can VanGogh and Birmingham resident dealt with the breakup from his longtime girlfriend and his band the only way he knew how — he locked himself in the studio and made an album.

The pain and emotional turmoil from those events are revealed in the lyrics. Ironically, through 12 folk rock-tinged numbers that are brimming with life musically and, indeed, spiritually uplifting.

Listeners are initially more likely be enamored with J.C. Whitelaw's musical adroitness. There's a lot to like.

His uncanny ability to putting forth, seemingly effortlessly, a jaunty, indelible folk rock number such as "The Thread" to using his acoustic guitar as a paint brush as he does in the riveting instrumental "Isola" is commendable.

Though it has been framed and hung on the wall with impeccable musicianship and flawless harmonies, the pain in Whitelaw's album is real and something of an evolving grief process.

He rejoices in the fruits of love in "Don't Wake Me" and speaks to the disorientation once it's suddenly gone in "Without It" and even allows himself to indulge in the bitterness. Sings Whitelaw amid the pounding rock beat in "Troubled Times": "I don't know if I'll forgive you/You left me high and dry/left my world a shambles and I don't know why/You take my best years and toss them aside."

On the last cut, "Rainbow" (Telegram Song), Whitelaw reconciles himself to the finality and to the hope enmeshed in an upbeat pop-rock number. The number, as does the album, symbolizes a personal and musical triumph.

(Meridian Productions, 31125 Froom, Birmingham 48025)

"Dostoevsky-Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overlaid?" various artists. — This compilation is of interest locally due to the contribution from this area's featured whose "Goddess of Love" is a sure breaker in a sea of aural sensations.

Side one contains some of the most brooding and cavernous musical exploration heard this side of the Atlantic from nondescript artists such as Speed of Pleasure ("Can't Sleep") and Les Boulevardiers ("Hologress") not to mention the brilliant trance-like folk number by Sean McDermott and Hugh O'Carroll. "Walden-lehlohnleight-wildlelohnleight."

Side two stays more with convention, albeit damn fine sounding. An Irish ska band? "Limbo Police" by Feres Jackson deftly captures a bit of the blue beat spirit while Feargal is the Applejack. "Talking to Yourself" is sugary pop glorious by doused with arsenic. "Goddess of Love" by the local outfit lecherous sounds laggid and detached but quickly ferments into a scalding rush of emotion wrought through Amy's vocal appeal and an exorcism of thundering guitar.

A good collection of songs from a motley crew.

(Mickey Bourkes' Fringe, 4000 Cash, 24, Dublin)

IN CONCERT

Monday, June 22

ARC ANGEL
Featuring Charlie Sexton and members of Double Trouble at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$15.50 in advance.
991-MELT

MORSEL
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti.
485-5050

PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ JAM
Avin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit.
832-2355

Tuesday, June 23

SURGERY
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$5 in advance.
991-MELT

CHISEL BROTHERS WITH THORNETTA DAVIS
Avin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit.
832-2355

Wednesday, June 24

RESTROOM POETS
With Picasso Head at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
991-MELT

Thursday, June 25

IMMUNITY
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti

Friday, June 26

DEE DEE RAMONE AND THE CHINESE WHORES
The Ritz, 17580 Frisco, Roseville.
778-8150

THE SPLITTERS
With Patient Paul at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, Detroit.
841-0800

92-93 ME
Fitzgerald's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit.
831-8070

GROVER WASHINGTON JR.
With Roberta Flack at Chene Park, 2400 Bagley, Detroit.
841-0800

CROWBAR HOTEL
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti

485-5050

FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD SOX
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
991-MELT

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
Proctor's Plaza Amphitheater, 10 Water St., Pontiac. Tickets are \$15.50 in advance.
991-MELT

THE OYSTER BAND
Avin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. Tickets are \$15.50 in advance.
991-MELT

RUSH
With Master Big at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 175 and Saginaw Road, Clawson.
377-0100

CINCYDIE
With Happy Accidents and Cylinderhead at Lil's, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.
875-6555

BRAVE NEW WORLD
With Opague at Griff's Grill, 49 Saginaw, Pontiac.
334-9292

JAMES WAILIN BAND
Moby Dicks, 5452 Schaefer, Dearborn.
581-3850

MISSED IN DIARY
With Pmme Mover at Jimmy's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit.
831-8070

CRABBY JACKS
With Acme Soul at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, Detroit.
831-8070

10 HIGH
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti.
485-5050

JAMES WAILIN BAND

Moby Dicks, 5452 Schaefer, Dearborn.
581-3850

BIG CHIEF
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit.
991-MELT

KING'S X
The Ritz, 17580 Frisco, Roseville.
778-8150

ORIENTAL SPAR
Token Lounge, 301 Road one block east of Mackdell, Westland.
522-0245

MEAT
Avin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit.
832-2355

KING SUNNY ADE
The Majestic, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$14.50 in advance.
831-8070

RFD BOYS
The Arc, 8374 S. Main, Ann Arbor.
761-1451

TRASH BRATS
Lil's, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.
875-6555

THE ATTIC
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
991-MELT



His Weirdness: "Weird Al" Yankovic, the man who crowned his way to fame with songs like "Eat It" and "Like a Surgeon," will be at The Ritz in Roseville Sunday, June 28. For ticket information, call 778-8150.