

# Street

(F)05B

## STREET CRACKS



Good humor: By day he's a carpenter, but at night Jim McLean of Westland uses his time making people laugh.

## Jim McLean builds way to headliner

BY BOB SADLER  
SPECIAL WRITER

If James Brown lays claim to the moniker "hardest working man in show business," the Jim McLean isn't far behind.

Perhaps he could be a nominee for the title "Hardest working comic in Detroit." This guy has his feet wet with enough projects to make your skin wrinkle.

When reached by telephone Wednesday night, he had just finished teaching a class on comedy in Royal Oak.

"I'm pretty pleased with the progress of the students," said McLean of the class, organized through Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle. "It reminds me of my experiences coaching soccer."

Wait a minute? Coaching soccer? What similarities could comedy have with the world's most popular sport? McLean, who lives in Westland, has coached in various youth soccer programs for eight years. He also played the game in high school, but had his dreams of playing at the next level squashed during a tryout at Scholcraft College.

"I was told the only way I'd ever get in a game was if six guys broke their legs," McLean admitted.

For the past five years, McLean instead has gotten his kicks on stage by night. He has honed his observational style to a razor's edge in that time and is now known in the business as a solid "middle" — the guy who comes out between the emcee and sets the table for the headliner. On more than a few occasions McLean has outshined the higher paid performer who followed him. This has led to some headlining in the metro area as well as lucrative gigs doing sets at private parties.

Less financially rewarding are the more than 40 charity benefit sets McLean admits to performing annually. However, the 31-year-old sees every time out on stage as an opportunity to improve and build additional exposure for his talent.

By day, McLean does carpentry work to pay the bills. Considering himself an expert on working with wood (not to be confused with his comedy audiences), this comic has had some interesting day jobs, including a part in the finishing touches at the new Second City in Detroit.

See MCLEAN, 6B

## At The Mike

■ **ANOTHER ITALIAN STALLION** ... Fresh from his blistering screen appearance in "Demolition Man," Sylvester Sta (oops) Rocky LaPorte (sorry this guy isn't in the movie) appears at Chaplin's East Oct. 19-23 and Chaplin's West Oct. 26-30. Call 792-1902 for reservations at East and 633-8866 at West.

■ **MR. GREEN JEANS (NOT) ...** The extremely funny Fred Greenie brings his hilarious act to Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle Oct. 26-30. Call 542-9900 for reservations.

—Bob Sadler

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

- Christina Fuoco's interview with the reggae band Universal Xpression.
- Lisa Rudy's gastronomical excursion to Union Street.
- John Monaghan's look at the latest offering on the alternative movie scene.

Major league:

**Detroiters Majesty Crush — Hobey Echlin (from left), David Stroughter, Odell Nails and Michael Segal — recently released their major label debut, "Love 15."**



## Majesty Crush: 'Love'-ly start



A record deal with Dali and having its own EP "Fan" as the cover story of the influential Cleveland-based "Alternative Press" magazine is helping to launch Majesty Crush on its musical way to stardom.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Interested in music at a young age, a teenage David Stroughter rode his hopes regularly from his Southfield home to Play It Again records in Royal Oak to flip through new releases. Not having MTV or many magazines to count on, he would rely on album covers to describe the band's sound.

Earlier this year when his band, Majesty Crush, was designing the album cover for the recently released "Love 15," he took those instincts to heart.

"Imagery, I think, is really important. In record shops, you want to make sure what you're buying is what you expect," said Stroughter, a 1984 Southfield High School graduate.

They chose pastel-colored bubbles to cover "Love 15," the band's first release for the Elektra Entertainment-supported Dali Records.

The quartet's record is a journey through soft-spoken Stroughter's stripped emotions.

"This is real to me; this is the stuff I dream about," Stroughter said. "People who are blessed with certain gifts, beautiful people, or people things come easy to, don't

have a need to stop and admire other people because they're too busy admiring themselves. We're singing siren songs to people who are pretty much misfits, people who just ache."

Seemingly, the shy Stroughter has seen intense pain himself. Speaking about his music career, he briefly mentions drug rehabilitation and

### STREET BEATS

stints at several European colleges. Finally, he settled back in Detroit and formed Majesty Crush with guitarist Michael Segal, bassist Hobey Echlin and drummer Odell Nails.

Majesty Crush's first gig was an opening spot with Capitol recording artists Mazzy Star, who later toured with the Cocteau Twins.

"(Mazzy Star lead singer) Hope Sandoval liked the band and she gave me the confidence only on. I figured I can do this," he said.

Besides Sandoval's blessing, meeting Diana Ross when he was 12 helped push his career along. He grew up with her children.

"I met her and when I shook her hand, I got paralyzed the moment. I was like 12 years old, but I remember her," Stroughter said. "I was

just an insecure little kid."

Last year at Pine Knob Music Theatre, he got a chance to relive the moment. Backstage at her Pine Knob show, Ross's sister reintroduced the two.

In the early days of Majesty Crush, a still insecure Stroughter relied on his performance rather than his singing to entrance the audience. To polish his image, he studied many of his idols.

"I admire people like Nick Cave, even though I've only seen footage of him, Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd. He writes so imaginative. I think it's an important thing," he said.

Two years ago, the band released its own EP, "Fan," which received substantial coverage including a cover story on the influential Cleveland-based magazine "Alternative Press."

Their deal began rolling after their artist and repertoire representative stumbled upon "Fan" at Kim's Underground, a New York City record store.

"All these people started hearing about us," he said.

Offers came pouring in from Dali and other major-label subsidiaries. Majesty Crush avoided the deals that seemed half baked.

"Dali took so much time with us. They took us to dinner," he said. "They also have great bands like Kyuss, this rock band, and Ultramarine. We met with Kyuss and Ultramarine and they had nothing but good things to say about Dali."

"They drove a hard bargain and

we signed in January."

He's also impressed with the label's commitment to its bands. "They don't put something out just to see if it sticks to the wall; they'll do whatever it takes. They'll work the record for a year."

Now the band is working on letting the United States know what Majesty Crush is all about.

"Not many people are aware that we exist," Stroughter said. "For the next couple months, we're going to try to attract attention in college towns to get opening slots next year."

As part of that plan, the band will play New York's legendary CBGB club with Luscious Jackson and Feed, the new band of Psychedelic Furs frontman Richard Butler, as part of the College Music Journal music conference on Nov. 5.

Within the next couple months, the band's distributor WEA (a conglomerate of Warner Bros., Elektra, and Atlantic records) will decide if they'll distribute elsewhere in the world. Stroughter is hoping that they don't.

"We're hoping not in England. They (WEA) have Prince, Fleetwood Mac and 300-400 other bands, so a band like us that's just starting out could get lost in the shuffle," he said.

Majesty Crush will perform at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, on Saturday, Oct. 23, with special guests Big Block and Peon Rocket. For more information, call 961-MELT.



Devoted: Depeche Mode — Alan Wilder, David Gahan, Andrew Fletcher and Martin Gore — will perform at The Palace of Auburn Hills Oct. 22-23.

## Depeche Mode does it with 'Devotional'

BY KYLE GREEN  
SPECIAL WRITER

LONDON — Reunited after nearly three years without touring, Depeche Mode's "Devotional" tour is packed with impressive material and surprises which could astonish even the most devoted fans.

In late July, the synthesizer kings reclaimed their throne in London as 16,000 subjects paid homage to them. (The band will bring the extravaganza to The Palace of Auburn Hills on Oct. 22-23.)

The separation from the stage has allowed each member to develop musi-

cal individuality resulting in a personal evolution which is easily reflected in their performance.

No longer relying solely on keyboards and drum machines, Depeche Mode does not simply mirror its recorded material. Now with backup singers, drums and guitars as well as a string quartet, the band's sound has progressed into a solid musical mass.

Billed as the only United Kingdom performance in advertisements on underground station walls and on the side of London's famed double-decker

See DEPECHE, 6B

## IN CONCERT

Monday, Oct. 18

**PRIMUM**  
With the Melvins at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. SOLD OUT (funny alternative rock)  
961-5451

**MYSTERY MACHINE**  
With D.O.A. at Bonnie's, 21139 W. Seven Mile, Detroit. (etheral alternative rock)  
535-6108

Tuesday, Oct. 19

**DAN FOGLEBERG**  
With Beth Nielsen Chapman at the Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Lapeer Road, Auburn Hills, (adult contemporary)  
377-0100

**THE VEE VANIAN AND THE PHANTOM CORDS**  
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (punk)  
334-1999

THE AFGHAN WHIGS

St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit.  
POSTPONED  
961-MELT

**TOWER OF POWER**  
With Brothers From Another Planet at The Majestic, 4140 Woodward, Detroit. (brass/alternative rock)  
99-MUSIC

**JONATHAN RICHMAN**  
Ain't, 5756 Cass, Detroit. (rock)  
832-2325

**PRIMUM**  
With the Melvins at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. (funny alternative rock)  
961-5451

**THE JAKS**  
With Zug Island Quartet at Blind Pig, 206-

208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.  
996-8555

**BEN MOORE AND THE BLUES EXPRESS**  
American Made Gnt, 31630 Plymouth Road, Livonia. (blues)  
513-5911

Wednesday, Oct. 20

**BILLYDOD**  
Fox Theatre, Woodward, Detroit. CAN-CELLED  
645-6666

**TEARS FOR FEARS**  
Fox Theatre, Woodward, Detroit. MOVED FROM OCT. 19. (poppy rock)  
645-6666

**FRANK ALLISON**  
Shadows Coffee, 2917 Trowbridge, Hamtramck. (acoustic)  
873-2233

**GEORGE HOWARD**  
With Straght Ahead at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, Royal Oak. (jazz)  
645-6666

**THE BATTERS**  
With Mommy Heads at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.  
996-5555

**USMA JAZZ**  
Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (jazz)  
334-7411

Thursday, Oct. 21

**MADONNA**  
The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Lapeer Road, Au-  
See IN CONCERT, 7B