

Street

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1994

STREET SOUNDS

Blonde & Blue — Angela Strehli

One of the people who put Antone's Records on the map, both as an artist and behind-the-scenes wheel, it comes as a bit of a surprise to see her now signed to Rounder Records (although finding a new Strehli disc on any label is a treat). One of the most honest singers out there, she's turned her label debut into the best thing she's ever recorded, the closest to approximating the energy and grit of the live show. Like her pal, and fellow Austin-ite, Lou Ann Barton, Strehli's got a delivery that comes from the toes and rumbles out, full bore, like a runaway soul train. Check out her take on Little Walter's "I'm Just Your Fool" for sanctified confirmation. Loaded with treats from top to bottom, it's impossible to call out favorites here. Certainly, her duet with legendary soul man Don Covay on the Major Lance classic, "Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um," with Steve Cropper on guitar, is a first-rate stunner. The Sister O.M. Terrell gospel classic, "Going to that City," with Steve James sitting in on stunning National steel, is a shiver-sender, and give a wheelbarrel full of points for that amazing "Can't Stop These Teardrops" and equally hip "Say It's Not So," both from her new pen. Versions of Little Walter's "You Don't Love Me" and the Booker T/Jane Hayes composition "Never Like This Before" get an extra dose of sass and sway that fit Strehli to a Texas T, and what emerges is one of the sweetest treats of the year.

— Mark Gallo

Darkness, Light & Everything — Spiral Dance

There is something about rock music which seems to attract and repel with no regret or prejudice. That is what makes it so appealing. Spiral Dance's "Darkness, Light & Everything" (Times Beach Records, 1993) offers heart and soul on a platter without making any judgments. The easy-flowing 10-track CD grabs you by the throat, slaps you around and doesn't let go. The three-piece act has produced a solid musical experience which is easy to get hooked on and dragged along behind. Each piece is a bit of ride with some offering a flashback to the 1970s funk-filled tracks and others so concise and powerful that you cannot ignore them. Vocals are shared by Kevin Loucks and Chann Davidson which adds grainy aspect to each track while concise riffs provided by guitarist Doug Knasichuk contribute to the band's appeal. Each track twists through such subject matter as love ("Everything"), disillusioned dream ("Land of the Free"), social dismay ("Cass Corridor Voodoo Mind Jelly Warp") and self-understanding ("Rain at Hovenweep"). "Darkness, Light & Everything" is packed with powerful and clear sounds with an essence of a fuller garage-based quality. Spiral Dance may not be the next Nirvana, but who cares when one needs to strive for its own musical revelation.

— Kyle Green

CUTTING GROOVES

After 365 days of music, music, music, freelance writer Mark Gallo rates the top 15 CDs of 1993:

1. "Kiko," Lon Lobos
2. "Night Vision," Little Charlie and the Nightcats
3. "Two Sides to Every Story," James Harman
4. "True Stories," Laurie Lewis
5. "Skip Hop and Wobble," Jerry Douglas, Russ Barenberg and Edgard Meyer
6. "Old Flame," Sonny Rollins
7. "The Price of Love," The Loved Ones
8. "Live at Yoshi's," Joe Pass Quartet
9. "Two Track Mind," Steve James
10. "Filthy Rich," Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan
11. "Standards," Rob Schneiderman
12. "Real Life," Detroit Blues Band
13. "The Wheel," Roseanne Cash
14. "Crossing Borders," Kukuruz
15. "Blues Compilations" on Delmark, Alligator, Blind Pig and Rounder.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

- Christina Fuoco takes a look at new releases by some local bands.
- John Monaghan takes a look at the movie scene.

Tool: a positive in a negative

■ Tool has been commonly referred to as a "disturbing" rock band. Members of the band think people who believe that are missing the point of Tool.

By CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER



"My hands bound and my head down and my eyes closed — eyes closed wide open. Do unto others what has been done to me. Do unto others what has been done to you." Those troubling words, as sung by Tool's mohawked lead singer Maynard James Keenan, blares through the sound system at Industry nightclub in Pontiac. The song has become a dance hit with twenty-somethings at clubs like Industry and 3-D in Royal Oak. However, the lyrics seem more likely to provoke fear than fun. It tells a tale of a sexually abused man who,



Toolin' around: Tool — drummer Danny Carey (left), vocalist Maynard James Keenan, bassist Paul D'Amour, and guitarist Adam Jones — plays a sold-out show at the State Theatre on Feb. 26.

STREET BEATS

as an adult, is jailed for passing his misfortune along to youngsters. "You're breathing so I guess you're still alive. Even the scent seems to tell me otherwise," Maynard, a Scottville native, continues singing.)

Drummer Danny Carey let out a hearty yet confused laugh upon hearing that the guitar-heavy, toe-tapping "Prison Sex," not even officially released yet as a single, has become a dance hit in Detroit.

"I think it's funny. It's the last thing I would expect. But that's our straightest song on the record, so I guess that would be the one they would play," he said from the offices of his record label, Zoo Entertainment, prior to the start of the tour.

Tom Zito, who DJs at Industry, said he started playing the song when Tool first released their album "Undertow" because it "fit in."

"That's the one I started playing first. I never played (the first single) 'Sober'... I've been playing it since the CD came out, that's the song I picked, and it just fit in with the groove of one of my harder sets," Zito said.

Humor is alive

The entire album doesn't have a sobering effect, however. Although humor is hinted at in some of Tool's songs, they eventually return the band's trademark trembling undercurrent. For example, track No. 69, "Disruptor," begins with a sermon ridiculing animal activists by

telling the tale of a soon-to-be slaughtered family of carrots. "These are the cries of the carrots. The cries of the carrots. You see, Rev. Maynard tomorrow is harvest day and to them it is the holocaust." The 16-minute song turns serious, just as tribal drums join in. "This is necessary. Life feeds on life, feeds on life, feeds on life, feeds on life, feeds on life, feeds on life." As the song continues, gunshots enhance the beats.

Telling lyrics and visuals

As with the rest of "Undertow," the lyrics are graphic without being unnecessarily obscene or violent. That's just part of the disturbing picture that completes Tool.

Inside of the CD book is a photo of a nude obese woman lovingly embracing a thin, equally clothed male — a vision by which some people may be put off. Flip the page and you'll see the members of Tool in various forms of facial torture. A blurred collage of Tool's lyrics run underneath. The stop-frame animation in the video for "Sober" is nightmarish but so intriguing that it's impossible to take your eyes off it.

"It's not like we're tormentors," Carey said with a laugh. "We're not out to torture people. We're trying to capture the image (of) the song the best way we know how," Carey said.

Visually it's through the talent of guitarist Adam Jones, who used stop-action animation to tell the story of "Sober." That video, which

snagged two Billboard music video awards, was so successful that the group returned to the format for the "Prison Sex" video, which will be released shortly after Tool's sold-out show with Failure at the State Theatre on Saturday, Feb. 26.

"It's just such a great medium to work through. You can be really creative. Our guitarist Adam, he's the main guy behind the artwork and stuff. It's a good venue to express himself," said Carey, who previously played with Green Jelly and Carole King.

Both videos took about two months to finish, although the filming of the "Prison Sex" video and their headlining U.S. tour were held up due to the California earthquake in January.

Finally success

The "Sober" video may be intriguing, but it wasn't interesting enough for MTV to add it to its rotation soon after its release. The driving force behind Tool's popularity was their spot in the Lollapalooza tour, during which the band split time between the main stage and the side stage.

Even during the early part of the tour, it was obvious that something was brewing with the then-relatively unknown band. Although they played the same time as main-stageers Arrested Development, it was impossible to even see Tool because so many people were packed in front of the small area around the side stage.

"I was surprised when all of it

started happened," Carey said in retrospect about Tool's success. "Everybody I talked to said how much they see our video on MTV. (But) it's a lot better than most of the other bands I've ever seen. That's the reason I play this music, I suppose. There's just not that much to choose from that's really valid. I don't like very many bands, so I'm glad I'm playing with something like Tool."

The band, he has said in previous interviews, is his and the rest of his band's tool for "digging within oneself and using the pain to the fullest extent." He just hopes that Tool fans see his band — which also includes bassist Paul D'Amour — for what it is.

"(It's about) changing, moving on and growing," Carey said.

As long as Tool is provoking some thought, Carey said it's OK. However, he hopes that people don't view his band as "negative."

"In some way I guess that's OK as long as the people don't dwell on it. ... We're not out to disturb or depress people. Our band is a very positive thing. We're not a negative band. We don't put out a negative energy. We're dealing with things that a lot of people deal with."

Tool performs with special guest Failure on Saturday, Feb. 26, at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Doors open at 7 p.m. for the all-ages show. The show is sold out. For more information, call 313-961-5451.



DAN BROWN GRAPHICS

Coffeehouse rock: The Meat Puppets — Cris Kirkwood (from left), Derrick Bastron and Curt Kirkwood — play an acoustic set at R&J Coffee Shop in Royal Oak in support of their latest release, "Too High To Die."

Items should be submitted two weeks in advance to: Christina Fuoco, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by fax at (313) 591-7279.

Monday, Feb. 21

MARY MCQUEEN AND JULIE KOVACH
Four Green Fields, 3333 N. Woodward Ave., Royal Oak, (acoustic)
810-280-2902

Tuesday, Feb. 22

THE BLUEBROS
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
313-996-6555

WED C

Four Green Fields, 3333 N. Woodward Ave., Royal Oak, (roots rock)
810-280-2902

CHISEL BROS. AND THORNYETTA DAVIS

Host R&B/Blues jam session at Alvin's, 5750 Cass, Detroit.
313-622-0569

ALLSTAR BROWN
With Roger Houghton and Charlie Whalen at The Ark, 637 1/2 Main St., Ann Arbor.
216-1-1451

DAVID BOWIE VIDEO APPRECIATION NIGHT
3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak.
810-569-3344

Wednesday, Feb. 23

ROD STEWART
The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Lapeer
Auburn Hills.
810-377-0100

IN CONCERT

BLACK SABBATH
With Motocaddy and Morbid Angel at State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit, (metal)
313-961-5451

JOHN DENVER
Part of the Ameritech Variety Series at the Fox Theatre, Detroit.
810-645-6666

ZUG ISLAND QUARTET
With The Jaks at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
313-996-6555

MARY MCQUEEN AND DON ELLMAN
Dunrobin Grill, 222 Sherman Drive, Royal Oak, (acoustic guitar and violin)
810-544-2881

UP FOR GRABS...

...are six copies of "Too High To Die," the latest CD from the Meat Puppets. Send a postcard with name, address and telephone number to: "Street Scene," Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Entries must be postmarked by Thursday, Feb. 24. Winners will be announced in the Monday, Feb. 28, edition of Street Scene.

do a private acoustic show at R&J Coffee Shop in Royal Oak. The quiet, down-home diner is the last place

See PUPPETS, 6B

2 IGUANAS FROM EARTH
The Silo Bar, 41270 Hayes, Clinton Township.
810-286-7788

Thursday, Feb. 24

WOLLY COWS
With Ten High at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
313-996-6555

MARY MCQUEEN
Hoop's, 2705 Lapeer Road, Auburn Hills.
(acoustic folk/rock/blues)
810-373-4744

2 IGUANAS FROM EARTH
Dunrobin, 1815 Sherman, Pontiac, (acoustic)
810-333-2233

ALBERT YOUNG BAND
Ann's, 5750 Cass, Detroit, (blues)
313-887-5569

See IN CONCERT, 5B