

Puppets from page 4B

you'd expect to see the underground rock legends. But the show was part of their low-profile "Munchies" tour, designed to introduce their new acoustic-tinged album "Too High to Die" to the music industry.

For this show they crammed their sparse equipment in a corner near a window facing Fourth Street. Drummer Derrick Boston, who rounds out the trio, pounded away on his drums with the tips of wooden kitchen uten-

ils - while the Kirkwood brothers, whose father is a former Farmington resident, strummed on their bass and acoustic guitars.

The band was the first that R&J had hosted inside its restaurant. Kim Snell, the wife of an R&J owner, said she was surprised at how well it went.

"I think it went great; it went a lot smoother than I thought," she said. "We kind of thought we'd be mobbed with orders for cooking. The music was real good. We've

got a small place and the music wasn't too loud."

Even though they have done plenty of promotional tours, the Meat Puppets prefer to play public shows for their fans, they said.

"It's different than playing to a regular audience," Curt said. "It's an audience of talk and jabber while you're playing," Curt said.

Detroit fans won't be able to see them anytime soon. After the quick "Munchies" tour, the band jetted off to Europe to open for

longtime admirers Nirvana and Soundgarden. Subsequent gigs will be with Blind Melon in the United States. (Their tenure stops short of the March 9 Blind Melon show scheduled at the State Theatre in Detroit, however.)

Meanwhile, "Backwater," the first single off "Too High to Die," has been added to Detroit rock stations' play lists. That's not surprising, considering the fact that most critics have said that

the album will be the one to dig them out of the underground rock scene.

The album's quick success is due in part to the production work by the Butthole Surfers' Paul Leary, a longtime friend of the Kirkwood brothers.

"It's a real pleasure," Cris said. "His only thing was to make it the best. He really wanted to make the album the best Meat Puppets album."

The brothers met Leary after he

called Curt when his band stopped in their hometown of Phoenix, Ariz.

"He really wanted to meet me, so he looked me up in the phone book," Curt said. "We became pretty fast friends."

And mutual admirers.

"He told us that there wouldn't have been a Butthole Surfers, if it wasn't for us," Cris said.

Retreating to modesty, Curt preferred the more biologically correct answer.

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