

ART ON THE EDGE



Classy: Greg Darby of Canton put his designer/craftsman skills to work to create this mahogany curio cabinet for the CCS Student Exhibition May 13-29.

CCS exhibits future of art

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

If you want to see what you'll be driving in five years or the art you'll be displaying on your walls, visit the 1994 Center for Creative Studies' College of Art and Design Student Exhibition May 13-29 in the Kresge-Ford Building, 201 E. Kirby, Detroit.

The show, highlighting more than 2,000 works, spans a spectrum of artistic disciplines ranging from glass to painting.

"This is a sneak peek of art and design of the future; this is the next generation of painters, sculptors, commercial artists, ceramicists and industrial designers," said Ann Marie Allotta, CCS director of public relations. "They're trend setters at the peak of creativity in their young professional lives."

Many collectors come to the exhibition for that reason, to snatch up the work before the show opens, and the opening on Friday the 13th is one of the hippest parties of the season.

You won't be able to snatch up Robin Scharding's installation piece, but it will give you the opportunity to travel back to the days of Vietnam. Walk into the huge military tent, once inside, was through two big black books symbolic of the Vietnam memorial wall in Washington D.C.

The graduating senior assembled them after de-bossing names from the wall with emulsion coated zinc plates then exposed and placed into some what diluted acid which etched away the unexposed areas, leaving the names raised. Each plate was then run through a printing press twice. Integrated with the pages of names are photographs, some by Scharding, others actually shot on site. A projector focuses on slides obtained from Time and Life magazines.

"I wanted to build an environment that documents the veterans of Vietnam, talk with them, interview them. It's my personal tribute to the men and women who served there," said Scharding, who spent three years intensively conducting those interviews and photographing the veterans.

"When you hear that 58,183 died in Vietnam or that over 2,000 were left behind as prisoners of war or missing, the numbers just don't have impact that they should. Therefore, I felt that if I could share a photograph and a thought from some of the people who served, the numbers would then become real people one by one."

From the onset, the installation presented hurdles. It was no easy task, says Scharding, to find a tent since the army changed its palette from camouflage green to Desert Storm brown, but the thesis project was something she felt compelled to accomplish.

The women, she discovered, touched her most deeply because they have been even more overlooked than the men. Scharding says, that almost 20 years after the war ended, the Department of Defense still doesn't have specific figures on the number of women who served in Vietnam nor have they documented their experiences.

See EXHIBIT, 7A

A photograph of Marty Cothran of the 67th Evac. Hospital in Qui Nhon is in Robin Scharding's installation piece.



Heavy weights: The Brand New Heavies — Simon Bartholomew (from left), Andrew Levy, N'Dea Davenport and Jan Kincaid — perform at Industry May 13.



Heavies solidify soulful groove



The Brand New Heavies realize that their jazzy soulful sound is a hard pill for Americans to swallow. Slowly but surely, however, the proverbial black sheep of traditional R&B are inching their way into radio.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO

The Brand New Heavies are all about having fun. It doesn't take long to figure that out while listening to "The Heavies' latest soulful release "Brother Sister."

Kicking off the album by singing "Let's all just have a good time," it's apparent that vocalist N'Dea Davenport has finally found her niche.

"When I started looking around for a solo recording deal, it was very difficult for an African-American female who wanted to make live music," Davenport said. "After (Delicious Vinyl records President) Michael Ross played me tapes of The Brand New Heavies, I wanted to collaborate with them because their live sound excited me and was very similar to the music I'd been making. Two days later, I flew to London, and I've never really come back."

That was in 1991. For the next few years, Davenport appeared as a special guest with The Heavies in live shows and their first two recordings — "The Heavies' self-titled debut and 1992 follow-up "Heavy Rhyme Experience: Vol. 1."

With Davenport recently joining the group as a full member, the

band recently released "Brother Sister," an album which has made it a musical heavy weight. Often a predictor of things to come, the band's first video, "Dream On Dreamer," from "Brother Sister" has been added to MTV's "Buzz Bin." ("Buzz Bin" veterans include Green Day and Counting Crows.)

STREET BEATS

"MTV was ready for us," said bassist Andrew Levy from his band's rehearsal space in the U.K. "We have good relations with certain people at MTV. Sheri Howell at MTV respects our music. She knows it takes initiative from a major network."

"Respect" is probably an understatement of Howell's feelings for the band's music.

"I've known them for years. That first record was such a unique record at the time," said Howell, director of talent and artist relations at MTV. "It's a perfect blend of all different types of music. It's jazz. It's funk. It's rock. It's everything."

Wanting to share her enthusiasm for The Brand New Heavies, Howell arranged for the band to appear in MTV's Spring Break shows and

"Yo! MTV Raps." It wasn't until the release of "Brother Sister" that her co-workers caught on to The Heavies' groove.

"When this record came out, it was funny," she said. "You know how you sit through one too many recording sessions? I heard all these different mixes as they were coming out. When the album was finally done, I knew it was going to be good by what I heard."

Drummer/keyboardist Jan Kincaid feels the same way about "Brother Sister."

"We've solidified our grooves for the new album," Kincaid said. "We like to smash the formulas every once in awhile. That's one of The Heavies' important roles."

It's not that the band's first two albums weren't successful. As Levy said, "It's a strange package for America." Stripped-down soul and jazz acts like The Brand New Heavies and Jamiroquai don't seem to fit well with Americans. Tukka Yoot, rapper for the jazzy Ua3, said that may be due to the differences in soul styles in the United States and Great Britain. Here vocal stylings are more important where in Great Britain the stress is put on music.

"Soul in England has more flavor to it," Yoot said after a recent Detroit performance. "All these artists are coming up (in the United States like) Jade, B. Kelly. They all have similar sounds."

The Brand New Heavies' sound runs the gamut from '70s smooth-tup funk to the sharp-edged hip-hop driven grooves of the '90s. That's

the sound that founders Levy, guitarist Simon Bartholomew and Kincaid have been striving for since their early teens.

"At the age of 15, we were very passionate about dance and soul music and we got so into it that the only thing was to try and play it ourselves," Levy said.

After playing clubs and parties for several years, The Brand New Heavies officially formed in 1986 releasing their first single in 1987. Featuring vocalist Linda Muriel, the single was followed by a major-label deal that sidetracked the band for a year. "It seemed the label was really confused as to what we were doing: was the height of the acid house movement," Kincaid said.

In 1991 the band hooked with the Atlanta-born Davenport, who Levy said enhances The Heavies' sound with her spontaneous vocal melodies and harmonies.

"It's nice actually. She's great at (improvising) vocal melodies and lyrics and stuff like that. It's great when we jam the music, there's a song already made," he said. "That's what The Heavies are about. That's what most bands would like to do."

Brand New Heavies performs with Sounds of Brass on Friday, May 13, at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. Tickets are \$11.50 in advance, \$14 the day of show. Must be 18 to get in. The show was originally scheduled at the State Theatre in Detroit. For ticket exchange information, call (810) 334-1999 or (810) 645-6666.

Soul makes its music work

Blue Eyed Soul lead singer Michael Welchans wants people to expect something different when they come to his band's shows.

"We're going to make your head pop up and down a little bit," he said. "We're going to make your butt move back and forth." But he is quick to add that "the music also has substance."

Most of Welchans' lyrics "tend to be on the personal side, but I try to keep them vague enough so people can have their own ideas about them."

The Canton native writes about things that are important to him "because then it seems genuine to other people."

"The songs I write tend to be on the serious side, sometimes dark, kind of moodily dark," he said. "But it's not my personality — I'm usually a pretty happy person."

Welchans added that the music usually dictates the mood of the song. Sometimes he can't think of anything else because it is the only thing that fits with the music.

Livonia native and lead guitarist Christian Draheim characterizes the music as having "the hook and groove of Motown and the mood and color of '60s psychedelic rock," but the music goes beyond that to reflect the different influences of the individual band members.

"Some of us had really heavy influences and others had lighter and jazz stuff behind them," Welchans pointed out.

Formed in June 1993, Blue Eyed Soul is experiencing rapid musical growth which Welchans attributes to the group working well together.

"Everything we do is for the band. When we write and when we play out, we do it for the band — nobody is trying to stand out."

Welchans said it's even obvious in the way they write.

"Most of the time Chris starts things out with a groove and everyone comes up with their own part," he said. "Then we'll give each other suggestions about how to make each part better. That's how a song becomes totally ours."

Welchans talks with pride about his bandmates which includes bassist Robert Sommerville of Garden City, drummer Daniel Lago of Westland, and rhythm guitarist Allan MacLean of Canton.

Draheim wants people to appreciate Blue Eyed Soul the same way people appreciate bands like Led Zeppelin.

"I want people to enjoy the music, use it to escape, or have a good time."

See SOUL, 7A



Soulful: Blue Eyed Soul — Christian Draheim, Daniel Lago, Allan MacLean, Robert Sommerville and Michael Welchans — plays at the Studio Lounge in Westland May 12.

IN CONCERT

Wednesday, May 11
BENJAMIN BROWER
Rock's, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. (alternative rock)
(313) 990-3744

BOB BROWDER BRASS
Candy Center, 401 Depot, Ann Arbor.
(313) 769-0692

I MOTHER EARTH
Who Stuck at Thelma's, 4140 Woodward
Ave., Detroit. (rock)
(313) 963-7892

BOB BRADSHAW
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor.
(313) 763-8567

SANMARETT
Who Spongers and Inside Out at Alvin's,
8760 Case, Dearborn. (alternative rock)
(313) 832-2352

Thursday, May 12
EAT
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (alternative rock)
(810) 334-1999

LULLABOP BIBLE
Who Tied Eye Guitarily at Cross Street Station,
511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti.
(313) 485-5000

WHO WILDS
Who the Blues Inaugurates at Bully's, 4756
Greenfield, Dearborn. (blues)
(313) 840-5377

ASSEMBLY REQUIRED
Who Acoustic House, Kermic and Swiss Ball
at 89nd Pk., 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
(313) 990-9050

SEEP
Who Beyond the Light and R-World at Grit's
Club, 49 W. Saginaw, Pontiac. (rock)
(810) 334-5150

CATE CURTIS
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor.
(accountant)
(313) 653-8597

ELITE BRASS
Who Manifests at The Pit, 17580 Frantz,
Rochester. (rock)
(810) 778-6404

FILED
Play a Detroit Musicians' Alliance benefit at
Encourages, 140 Maple, Wyandotte. (rock)
(313) 263-6222

Friday, May 13
THE WILD BRASS BROTHERS
Club Haddock, 215 N. Main St., Ann Arbor.
(accountant)
(313) 663-7758

See IN CONCERT, 7A