

STREET CRACKS



Comedy's goddess: Judy Tenuta

Judyism lands at MainStreet

By BOB SADLER
Special Writer

She's a boiling cauldron of sexuality and wickedness. She describes herself as a "multimedia bondage goddess" and barnstorms the country in search of worship.

The religion? It's called "Judyism." And it's central object of desire is, of course, Judy Tenuta.

Armed with her religious icon of choice, the omnipresent accordion, Tenuta picks the revival tent in Ann Arbor this week. When interviewed last week, she was just getting ready to board a plane to Alaska for performances in Anchorage.

"I thought it was a joke until now," Tenuta said. "That's really nice. I'm the one who has to deal with it now."

When asked if she has a following up there, Judy laughed incredulously. "Are you serious? They're up there with their 'Eskimo Pie' saying, 'JUDY!' The captain of the Exxon Valdez is hot for me, too. He's on fire for me, but, guy, I can't stand it anymore."

Without a doubt, Tenuta is one of the top draws in comedy today. Originally, from Oak Park — Illinois, that is — Tenuta has received national attention in a family that included one sister and six brothers. After receiving her first accordion (she had to cry for it), Tenuta developed her acting, improvisational and comedic talents at the University of Illinois and at Chicago's famed Second City.

Tenuta's original comedy act included her brother Johnny, but it didn't take a great deal of time twisting to convince her to continue solo after Johnny left the act.

Since hitting the upper echelons of comedy, Tenuta has done numerous cable television specials, won the Best Female Comedian nod at the American Comedy Awards, released an album, "Buy This, Figs," and published a book, "The Power of Judyism."

All of my fans in Detroit should know that I have a new record coming out," Tenuta said. "It's called 'Attention Butt Pirates and Lesbiterians.' That should get them all very hot."

Given that album title, Tenuta's comedic flower does not wilt in the face of controversy. In this age of political correctness, she shakes the mold.

"I'm a lot more tolerant of trolls because I realize they make up most of the universe," said Tenuta when asked how she's changed over the years. "Let's face it, everybody should have a harness on and worship me. I hate everything, like... Roseanna. Why is she living? We're sick of her already."

Having mentioned the soon-to-be-former Mrs. Arnold, Tenuta reflected on what her own show might be like. She is currently working on a series development project that will be pitched to the major networks.

See TENUTA, 8A

AT THE MIKE

Talk about your strange bedfellows... Kirkland Teple is the owner of the MainStreet Comedy Showcase in Ann Arbor. He also happens to be a fine comic performer in his own right and does his sharing of touring on occasion. However, I don't ever recall anything quite like this. Since Dave got his start. Yes, you can see Dave at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak, Kirkland has been booked in his place. To witness a place of comedic history, call (810) 542-9900 for reservations.

Uncle Joey's back... Fresh from the completion of another season on ABC's "Full House" and "America's Funniest People," Dave Coullier has again come home to Detroit. This can only mean one thing — a weeklong gig at the place where Dave got his start. Yes, you can see Dave at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak, Kirkland has been booked in his place. To witness a place of comedic history, call (810) 542-9900 for reservations.

Could they make all the paid signs in the amphitheatre disappear?... Oops, the columnist has gotten on his soap box again. One of the first shows this year at Pine Knob features rock'n'roll magicians Penn and Teller. These guys are truly cool, and the laughs are a bonus. The show takes place at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 1. Tickets are available at The Palace box office, all TicketMaster outlets or charge by calling (810) 645-6666.

— Bob Sadler

Music just for a holiday weekend

■ Memorial Day week may mean barbecuing, suntanning and — for some — yard work. However, the holiday also brings an onslaught of locally and nationally recognized music acts to Detroit. Here's a look at four of them.

By CHRISTINA FUOCO
Staff Writer

The most striking thing about the band Live's first visit to Detroit was the incredibly powerful voice that came out of the diminutive, frat-boyish singer Ed Kowalczyk.

Don't expect the same when the band returns to Detroit on Friday, May 27. Live, whose average age was 19 when they released their debut

STREET BEATS

"Mental Jewelry," has grown up. Kowalczyk now sports a backward baseball hat over his long locks. Bobs top off guitarist Chad Taylor and drummer Chad Gracey. Bassist Patrick Dahlheimer — whose recent appendectomy delayed the band's tour — has gone for the scruffy look. The dramatic change in looks is as weird for the band as it is for its fans.

"I was watching some of the old videos on '120 Minutes,' they played 'Pain Lies on the Riverside,' and 'Operation Spirit,' (and) it just blew me away how young we looked," said Taylor, the 24-year-old guitarist, about the "Mental Jewelry" videos. "It was really funny. There were people who thought we were 15 and 16. Now I can see why. We just looked so young."

"I could not even relate to the person I saw in the video. It was just so strange."

Aside from looking older, the band has matured musically as well. Long gone are the slapping bass and acoustic guitars. For their new album, Live (pronounced like "Live" as in "Saturday Night Live") concentrated more on melody and achieving a denser sound.

"(There's) more electric guitar actually, really wanted to get a thicker, denser sound," Taylor said. "Mental Jewelry" was really rhythm oriented between myself, the bass and the drums. Now ("Throwing Copper") is a little more melody oriented."

Apparently, fans weren't disappointed by the musical re-routing.



Live show: Live — Chad Taylor (from left), Pat Dahlheimer, Ed Kowalczyk and Chad Gracey — plays St. Andrew's Hall Friday, May 27, with Vic Chestnut and Angel-fish.

"Selling the Drama," the Smithereens-esque first single from Live's new album "Throwing Copper," has made itself comfortable on alternative radio stations. The album itself has already reached alternative music's top 10 charts.

In support of "Throwing Copper" Live has been frequent visitors to MTV's alternative music video show "120 Minutes," and been inundated with interview requests.

"That would have to do with the previous record; we toured a lot for the last record and we seem to really connect well with people," Taylor said. "I hope to continue that. Most people can tell that we're about longevity. We're not a one-hit wonder type. They're not interested in the singles. They're more interested in the album (as a) whole."

Live performs Friday, May 27, with Vic Chestnut and Angel-fish at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the 18 and over show. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT.

The Waltons
On the other side of the border, 1993-94 has proved to be successful

for The Waltons and their debut record "Lik My Traktor."

The band won the "Best New Group" Juno Award, Canada's equivalent to the Grammy, beating out the Odds, Sloan, Tea Party and Junk-house (who will be at the Majestic in Detroit on Thursday, May 26). The Waltons gained notoriety by touring with the Barenaked Ladies and the BoDeans, and submitted their song "Simple Brain" to the film "Naked in New York."

Lead singer Jason "Walton" Plumb said the band's undefinable sound has been the force behind The Waltons' popularity.

"That's the thing about the record. It's very non-specific. You can't say that it's rock, you can't say it's country," Plumb said during the band's last visit to Detroit.

Drummer Dave Cooney added that that has a lot to do with the musical environment of their hometown, Regina, Saskatchewan.

"Where we come from, there's a real cross section of music," Cooney said. Regina has only one major radio station that plays a variety of music from Julio Iglesias to The Waltons.

Aside from the music, emotions change throughout "Lik My Traktor" (pronounced Like My Tractor) providing The Waltons' trademark pop sound. The album is lined with sarcasm ("Colder Than Ice"), angst ("Slide"), defiance ("A Fine Line") and the innocence of youth ("The Naked Rain").

The band originally released Lik My Traktor on its own selling about 6,400 copies before being signed to Warner Bros. Records. Although the album is about two years old, Cooney said the band's sets stay fresh by realizing that it's new to some fans.

"We put on our brave new face and play it again."

The Waltons plays during the Detroit River Fest Saturday, May 28, at the River Rock, 673 Franklin, Detroit, with the Pursuit of Happiness. The Humboldt and Frank Allison & The Odd Sox. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For more information, call (313) 259-6676.

Big Block

Living among garbage and dead rats doesn't sound like the most ideal situation in which to live. However, it proved inspirational to the Detroit-based alternative pop/rock band Big Block.

"We had no money; we barely ate anything... (but) we wrote a majority of our songs in that house," said singer/guitarist Nick Lucasian.

The results of that living arrangement can be found on their single "Beautiful"/"Grounded" recently released by the Detroit-based record label Rust Belt records. Although only two of Big Block's talent. The two-guitar assault by Lucasian and fellow singer/guitarist Kenny Tudrick as well as their hook-laden lyrics are Big Block's strong suit. The band — which rounds out its line-up with drummer Scott McDonald and bassist Joe Proper — also isn't into making its fans play guessing games with lyrics.

"You can understand the songs and what we mean. I don't want a bunch of riddles," Lucasian said about his music.

Aside from the usual aspirations of making their fans happy, Big Block hopes to scare their fans a little. Guitarist Tudrick wants listeners to feel the same way he felt the first time he heard a Kiss album.

"I hope we scare some people," he said. "When I put my first Kiss record on, I was scared. I thought I'd go to hell. I just thought I was not gonna wake up the next morning."

But the band, which doesn't try very hard for any kind of attention, has one real goal in mind.

"We're the band for the slacker generation. We want to restore faith in rock'n'roll. That's our goal," Tudrick said.

Big Block performs Saturday, May 28, during Clutch Cargo's 12th anniversary concert at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac, with The Verve Pipe, Cathouse, Crossed Wire, Speedball, Breach, The Exceptions, Trash Brats, Walk on Water, Caelum Bliss, Pitbull, Spank, Mustard Plug and Tick Wenzel. Call (313) 961-MELT for more information.

See HOLIDAY, 8A



Rave: The Goldentones surf into industry in Pontiac for their third annual Beach Rave on Sunday, May 29.

Information on limited engagements only should be submitted two weeks in advance to: Christina Fuoco, 95231 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by fax at (313) 591-7279. To insure publication, the venues' addresses and phone numbers with area codes must be included.
Tuesday, May 24
SALY IN PEPA
With R. Kelly at Fox Theatre, 2111 Woodworth Ave., Detroit. Sell out (rap) (810) 645-6666
Tuesdays at the Palace
With Youth Corps and Hama Way at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (alternative rock) (313) 996-8555
Wednesday, May 25
SALY IN PEPA
With R. Kelly at Fox Theatre, 2111 Wood-

IN CONCERT

ward Ave., Detroit. Sell out (rap) (810) 645-6666
CUMMILLER'S DREAM
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (alternative rock) (313) 996-8555
MAY 26
Performs about the Gandy Dancer Dixieland Train from Detroit/Dearborn to Ann Arbor's Gandy Dancer, 401 Depot St., Ann Arbor. Reservations required. (422) (313) 769-0592
BAMBI WILKETT
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (Latin American) (313) 763-8587
MELANIE HILL
Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (jaz) (810) 334-7401
THE WILD SHEEP RIDERS
Lakepointe Yacht Club, 37604 Ann Arbor Road, Livonia, (country) (313) 591-1868
Thursday, May 26
ACQUA VIVA
With Junkhouse at Majestic, 4140 Woodworth Ave., Detroit. (roots rock) (313) 963-7680
MAY 26
Holds record release party at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (313) 996-8555
MAY 26
With Corrosive and Barron at Grit's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (810) 334-3150

THE DORISSTRA
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (acoustic) (313) 763-8587
COMESTRABLE ENSEMBLE
Performs at St. Andrew's Hall's Dams Road, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (313) 961-4427
WEDNESDAY WORKSHOP
With New Duncan Imperials and Twitch at Avin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. (weird) (313) 632-2525
DANIEL STEPHEN HAZLETT
Espresso Theatre, 2454 Orchard Lake Road, Keego Harbor, (acoustic) (810) 662-3262
VEVO IMPERIA
3-0, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (alternative rock) (810) 569-3344
See IN CONCERT, 8A