

# Street

MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 1994

## MUSIC NOTES



CHRISTINA FUOCO

## 3rd Matinee: It feels right

**C**ontent with his family life, ex-Mr. Mister vocalist Richard Page was taking care of his baby when he got an unexpected phone call. Patrick Leonard, who has produced albums for Rod Stewart, Madonna and Roger Waters, asked if he'd be interested in collaborating with him.

"He just wanted to know what I was doing," Page said. "I said, 'I'm changing a diaper.' We got together the next Monday and wrote about 12 songs in two weeks, or some ridiculous amount of work."

"I thought I should be doing this, and I thought it felt right." The result is "Meanwhile," the 11-song debut album from 3rd Matinee on Reprise Records. The album is much more adult-oriented than Mr. Mister. However, Page finds it difficult to categorize. "It doesn't easily fit a format; you've got 11 different songs with 11 different sounds," said Page who serves as lead guitarist and vocalist. "There's an apparent eclectic quality to what we do, but that's because we're interested in more than one brand of music, one kind of sound."

Leonard's projects have spanned the spectrum of musical genres. He's had his hands on most of Madonna's recordings, including her current hit "I'll Remember." Rod Stewart's "Unplugged" album, and Roger Waters' "Amused to Death." To him, working on his own project was no different than working with other artists.

"I produce, play keyboards and write songs and people call it different things, but to me it's all the same," said Leonard, who is 3rd Matinee's keyboardist and background vocalist.

He does feel that he has more freedom with his own projects.

"I guess the difference is I don't have some dominating force that's going to have the final say over everything," he said. "I started out making records with my own bands. I've always written music and made records and recorded my own stuff since I was a little kid. It's more comfortable for me to do it for myself."

Collaborating initially two years ago, Leonard felt immediately comfortable with Page. Their admiration is mutual. Page called him an "inspiration."

"It's nice to have compatibility; we're very close in what we believe we should be doing," the soft-spoken Leonard said. "We both have families and they're important to us. I consider it a gift almost to have someone who is complimentary and completes the vision and at the same time it's a person that you like."

If you have a question or a comment for Christina Fuoco, call her at (313) 953-2047, mailbox number 2130 on a touch-tone phone, or write her at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

## STREET SOUNDS

### Picture This

— Debbie Davies

No, there aren't a lot of well-known women blues players, so what. Debbie Davies doesn't think that should be an issue. She deserves your ears because she's one of the finest contemporary blues guitarists and singers out there. Period.

Having just released a criminally overdue debut for Blind Pig, "Picture This," some of the guitar goddess states that she's held her in good stead in Southern California for the past decade should be a sign pointing to the groundwater of the blues and rock mainstream, if there's any justice.

Three years with Albert Collins certainly brought her some of that attention, but she was scoring all the composition back when she was lead burner for Maggie Mayall and the Cadillac, and blew Mick Taylor off the stage and down the block back around 1985 or so.

The new CD, which will doubtlessly be featured for much of her show, is a scorching mix of hearty originals (of which "24 Hour Fool" is the stand-out), classic cuts from Freddie King and Don Nix, one of the year's best in the form of her version of "Dolbert McClinton's" "Better Off With the Blues" and a smattering of obscure gems and more representative sampler plate of Debbie Davies you won't find.

— Mark Gallo

## Sponge soaks in a potential hit

**■** The Detroit-based band Sponge will release their major label debut CD on Tuesday. Beginning next week, fans outside of Michigan will get to see what the buzz is all about.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER



Since last winter, rumors have been flying around Detroit about Sponge's record deal with Columbia/Chaos Records.

One popular story was that the much sought-after Detroit band decided to sign with Columbia only after they were promised an opening spot on the next Soul Asylum tour.

"That's really interesting; I've heard one or two different things," said vocalist Vinnie — no last name, just Vinnie.

His favorite story is that Columbia Records president and chairman Don Ienner knew all the lyrics to a song so that was reason enough for Sponge to join the company's roster which also includes Alice in Chains, Pink Floyd and Fishbone.

There is some truth to that one.

"He did know the lyrics."

The real story is rather uneventful. Sponge just thought they were getting a good deal. Part of the agreement is the Tuesday release of the 10-song CD "Rotting Pi-

natina." Filled with dirge-like guitar and Vinnie's laid-back yet emotional vocals, "Rotting Pi-

natina" is co-produced by the band and Tim Patalan of The Loft recording studio in Sa-

line. Tim Palmer of Mother Love Bone, Pearl Jam and Tears for Fears

has mixed the record.

"This [the release of "Rotting Pi-

natina"], of course, kicks a lot of other things into play."

Touring, interviews and more

touring is part of the plan to continue the buzz about Sponge. It's not

that they haven't been busy already.

Two weeks ago they did a gig at the

New Music Seminar in New York,

ironically with Wig, an Ann Arbor-



based alternative rock band which will release their major-label debut in early October. Sponge, which has received a fair amount of press abroad, also played the 89X Birthday Bash at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre in late June with the Afghan Whigs, Beck and The Odds.

The real promotional campaign begins next week when Sponge kicks off a four-week tour of the south and southwest with Rust, Inch and Failure.

"After that, God only knows."

Uncertainty is a feeling with which Sponge is familiar. A majority

of the band learned the in and out of the music industry as a part of the hard alternative rock band Loudhouse who was signed and subsequently dropped by Virgin Records. Putting that rocky relationship behind them, he and the rest of the group — guitarists Mike Cross and Joey Mazzola, bassist Tim Cross and drummer Jimmy Paluzzi — are ready to trust Columbia.

"I guess I have a better feeling just because of the support we've gotten. They've done a great job so I have a lot of faith."

Detroit seems to believe in

Sponge as well. The quintet has played only a handful of unannounced shows the past few months and garnered a considerable following. Vinnie said he won't be disappointed if the rest of the nation doesn't catch on to the band as quickly.

"We have plenty of time to get the name out. This is just the beginning."

For more information about Sponge, write P.O. Box 05401, Detroit, MI 48205.

## Tour turns into 'Paid Vacation' for Marx

**Making his**  
**Marx: Sing-**  
**er/songwriter**  
**Richard**  
**Marx**  
**will play**  
**Pine**  
**Knob Music**  
**Theatre Aug.**  
**6 in support**  
**of his latest**  
**release,**  
**"Paid Vac-**  
**ation."**



BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Singer Richard Marx has learned during his summer tour that whatever you dream the most, turns out to be the most fun.

Before stepping out to promote his latest album "Paid Vacation" he rejected the idea of touring "about 10 times." He wasn't up to the grueling, marathon world tour that accompanied the release of his previous albums. Eventually, however, he gave in, feeling he had to do it out of necessity.

"I don't trust my record company to promote my record," said the Chicago resident. "I don't think that any record company is really going to put weight behind the project like I could."

Now that he's performing live, he has found it to be revitalizing.

"It's really fun; I don't know if it's because I didn't want to do this tour, but I've never had this much fun playing live," Marx said. "It's possible that it's because I know it's such a short tour and I can already see the light at the end of the tunnel."

At the end of this tunnel, Marx will return to where he feels the most comfortable — In the studio. For his

follow-up to "Paid Vacation," he may bring his father, Dick, along with him again. Their recent collaboration was a number one for them. The single "Now and Forever," the theme from the film "The Getaway," features a string arrangement by the elder Marx. Dick Marx and a 60-piece orchestra joined Richard Marx on three dates this summer as well.

The million-selling artist is also planning on producing albums by other musicians — preferably up-and-coming singers.

"It's all unknown people. I like producing them because they don't carry any baggage with them. They're more willing to try things."

Among his subjects are an Italian girl who he calls "one of the greatest singers I've ever heard in my life." He's also looking forward to producing a rhythm and blues singer. "I can let all my R&B demons come out then."

Richard Marx performs at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 6, at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township, Mich. Tickets are \$24.50 pavilion, \$12.50 lawn. For more information, call (810) 377-0100.

## IN CONCERT

Information on limited engagements only should be submitted two weeks in advance to Christina Fuoco, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by fax at (313) 951-7278. To ensure publication, the venues' addresses and phone numbers with area codes must be included.

### Monday, Aug. 1

**NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**  
With The Escapees and Hootie & The Blowfish at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (old school rock, Punk and Country perform downstairs at the Shriner. (alternative rock) (313) 951-4217  
**THE OFFSHORE BEAT**  
The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Carleton. (deathrock) (313) 977-0100

### Tuesday, Aug. 2

**THE TEMPLEFOLKS**  
Meadow Brook Music Festival, Walton Road-

wood and Adams Road, Rochester. (Motown) (810) 377-0100

**INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNICAL VIDEO APPRECIATION**  
3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (video) (810) 889-3344

### Wednesday, Aug. 3

**LOWDOWN**  
Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township. (rock) (810) 377-0100

**BLUES BOYS**  
Big Fish, 700 Town Center Drive, Dearborn. (blues) (313) 536-6350

**THE OFFSHORE**  
With Big Fish at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (alternative rock) (313) 951-4217

**NINA HAGEN**  
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. Rescheduled from July. (punk) (810) 334-1999

### Thursday, Aug. 4

**SPIN DOCTORS**  
With The Gin Blossoms, Cracker and Vini at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township. (rock) (810) 377-0100

**VIDEO APPRECIATION**  
With Hammer River Men at 3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (810) 889-3344

**CHICKEN WING**  
With Dear Abby at Giff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (810) 334-2202

**KEEFER BIRD**

Featuring James Walcott, Bobby East, Greeny Carter and Jeff Fowles hosts blues jam at Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw St., Pontiac. (blues) (810) 334-7411

### Friday, Aug. 5

**JACKSON BROWNE**  
With John Hiatt at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township. (rock) (810) 377-0100

**ROCKY GRAY**  
Sings Pete Townshend's songs at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. (rock) (313) 300-7000

**LIVE MORGAN**  
"The Alley" outside Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (reggae, dancehall, calypso) (810) 334-1999

**BILL BIRD**  
Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. (jazz blues) (313) 862-8310

See IN CONCERT, 9A.