

LET'S GO! STREET SCENE

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STREET BEATS

Grace
— Jeff Buckley

 When Julian Lennon released his debut effort in 1984, he was compared, relentlessly, and perhaps, unfairly to his famous Beatle dad. The microphone he was put under in the popular music press surely caused enormous artistic pressures, and he dropped out of musical sight shortly thereafter.

When Jeff Buckley released his debut effort a couple of years ago, there was just as much fuss made over his resemblance to his not-quite-so-famous dad, folk-rock icon Tim Buckley.

As this impressive sophomore effort makes crystal clear, though, the parallels stop there. Much like his old man, young Buckley is a masterful vocalist, with the ability to swoop and dive in vocal mid-flight, catch himself just this side of crash and burn, and reach an ear-shattering crescendo, all in the space of a single bar.

For those poor listeners unfamiliar with the great Tim Buckley, look to early Robert Plant — with whom Buckley the younger seems somewhat enamored — for comparisons. Compare him to whom you will, though (and be assured that none are necessary, only as touchstones), Jeff Buckley has a vocal presence that is undeniably powerful.

The title cut, an opus of sorts, has that same operatic folk feel that his father was so adept at, although with a decidedly '90s edge to it. The folk-rock steeped "Last Goodbye" and his version of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" are equally breathtaking.

Don't come looking for a Tim Buckley clone, though. While there are some undeniable similarities, Jeff Buckley is wholly a product of the era. If he had no famous father, he would make for just as impressive a listen. As it is, he may surpass Tim in the popularity department.

(Jeff Buckley plays with Juliana Hatfield and Cold Water Flat on Thursday, May 25, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Call (313) 961-MELT for more information.)

— Mark E. Gallo
Mark E. Gallo is a freelance music critic from Farmington Hills.

The Freedom Sessions
— Sarah McLachlan

 Canadian songstress Sarah McLachlan originally wanted to name her last album, "Fumbling Toward Ecstasy: The Freedom Sessions," but the title was too long. Now that "Fumbling Toward Ecstasy" (Nettwerk) has become an adult alternative hit, McLachlan has released "The Freedom Sessions" (Nettwerk).

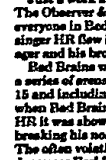
The nine-track CD features acoustic versions of "Elsewhere," "Plenty," "Good Enough," "Hold On," "Ice Cream," and "Ice" as well as her cover of Tom Waits' "Old 55." According to McLachlan, most of the songs on "Fumbling Toward Ecstasy" began as acoustic tracks. To those familiar with that album, it's interesting to see how they progressed into "electric" songs.

With mostly piano backing McLachlan on "Mary," "Good Enough," and "Hold On," there's nothing hindering the passion in her voice. The highlight of the album is the sultry, funky version of "Elsewhere" where the angel-voiced McLachlan is accompanied by an acoustic guitar and percussionist.

The CD's first track is a multimedia CD-ROM presentation. (It plays static on a regular CD player.) Behind the different icons are introductions to McLachlan's band members, sampling of songs off her albums, merchandise information, videos and footage of her trip to Thailand and Cambodia with the non-profit organization World Vision.

— Christina Fuoco

Spoiled reunion

 Apparently things weren't as great as they seemed in the Beastie Boys camp.

Just a week after band member D. Know told The Observer's Eccentric Newspapers how happy everyone in the Beastie Boys was to be reunited, lead singer Mike D was in a rage and assaulted his manager and his brother.

Red Brains was to open for the Beastie Boys for a series of arena shows, starting in Montreal May 15 and including May 18 at Cobo Arena. However, when Red Brains manager Anthony Courtney told HR it was showtime, HR assaulted Courtney, breaking his nose and seriously injuring his hand. The often volatile singer then struck his brother, drummer Earl Hoodson.

HR was taken away from the Montreal venue in handcuffs, but was later released. However, when he attempted to leave Canada and return to his Los Angeles home, he was stopped at the border for possession of marijuana. He has since been allowed to leave Canada.

Chances are that HR is pending. Red Brains, whose remaining members returned to their Woodstock, N.Y., home, is planning on rejoining the Beastie Boys' tour soon.



Seeing green: D'Green Mind" helped push Dink — Sean Carlin (from left), Jan Eddy Van der Kuit, Rob Lightholly, Jeff Finn and Jer Herring — to the forefront of the alternative music scene.

There's nothing tiny about Dink

Dink has been accused of being a Nine Inch Nails rip-off band and that it wouldn't have made it, if it weren't for the help of NIN's Trent Reznor. But it is the band's limitless sound that has helped put Kent, Ohio, on the musical map.

 BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

The polymorphous Dink has a psychic side to them. When the Kent, Ohio, band was initially approached to play the Undercurrents music festival in Cleveland, it didn't feel like being a part of the musical circus that most showcases turn into.

Record company executives told band members that conference-like shows were a waste of time. Artist and repertoire representatives — the record companies' equivalent of talent scouts — never show up at regional showcases, they were told.

But as the date approached, Dink gave in for reasons unknown. It hit the stage soon thereafter with "For Sale" written across their backs. By the end of the gig, Capitol records reps in attendance were sold on Dink.

"I'm completely an advocate of those kinds of things," guitarist/vocalist/producer Sean Carlin said in retrospect. "It changed our world playing that gig."

The record company made Dink one of their capital campaigns. To maintain the grass roots approach that Dink prefers, the band recorded and produced their self-titled debut album near their homes in Kent. But they recruited some of the industrial heavyweights to help them out — Skinny Puppy's Dave Ogilvie (Nine Inch Nails and Ministry), Michael Barbiero (Bathtub Surfers and Soundgarden), H. Bono and Critter (Ministry, NIN, Revco and the Red Hot Chili Peppers) and Sascha of KMFDM who did remixes of several tracks.

Thanks to heavy promotion on MTV and in the media, Dink's single, the safe-sex advocating "Green Mind," became one of radio's top-requested songs. With that in the bag, Dink has hit the road with KMFDM. The show comes to the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre in Pontiac Friday, May 26.

"To me, it's the ultimate tour for us so far," said Carlin, who for fun, comes up to Detroit to club-hop and check out bands. "Stylistically, we go well together. Everybody in our band is a giant fan of KMFDM."

played around with a four-track and things started happening," he said.

Strong believers in live performance, the trio added bassist Jeff Finn and Dutch drummer Jan Eddy Van der Kuit. ("You can sit in your bedroom and make great tapes or great whatever, but you gotta have a live thing to back it up," Carlin said.) Dink released a five-song, self-titled EP and sold an impressive 10,000 copies of it.

Still, Dink had plenty of battles ahead. The band were accused of being a Nine Inch Nails rip-off band. Others said that the band wouldn't have made it, if it weren't for the help of NIN's Trent Reznor, a former Cleveland resident.

"He is a friend of ours," he said. "I've known Trent for a long time; he worked in a music store with him when his favorite band was The Smiths. He's an incredibly talented guy."

"But I think at one point, we were trying to distance ourselves. (People said) 'You're Nine Inch Nails. You're this. You're that. You're a clone band.'"

While trying to separate themselves from Nine Inch Nails, Dink fought being pigeonholed by critics and fans.

Which peg?

"The biggest thing, right when we started, was people didn't know what to peg us," Carlin said. "They'd say, 'You're an industrial band. You're an alternative band. You're a hip-hop metal band.' It's a thing that I always feel that if you say it, you're automatically a slave to it. You don't have to set any kind of parameters. I think that throws people for a loop sometimes. We set no limits."

Their live shows are somewhat limiting, however.

"We use a machine — a bunch of machines — and that puts a lot of people off, especially in Midwest America," Carlin said. "It's a guitar-dominated kind of thing. There's a happy medium between the live thing and machine thing. There's the five of us up there bashing away. If you blow it, the machine doesn't stop."

"When the two things mesh, that's when it's really cool — man vs. machine. Sometimes machine wins, sometimes man wins."

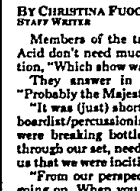
In most cases, Dink wins.

Now that Dink is safe and sound within the arms of Capital, the band is eager to help out other struggling bands. Touring allows them to see the best of each city's local scene.

"You get to go around the country, and see local bands more on the club level," he said. "We're picking up their tapes and listening to it. We're fortunate to be on a major label. Everybody's in it together. We try to help anybody else we can."

KMFDM and Dink play an all-ages show at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac, Friday, May 26. For more information, call (810) 335-4850.

Batterie Acid plays to different drummer

 BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Members of the tribal/industrial band Batterie Acid don't need much time to mull over the question, "Which show was your most memorable?"

Their answer in unison almost immediately, "Probably the Majestic."

"It was (just) sort of being a riot," vocalist/key-boardist/percussionist Scott A. Weston. "People were breaking bottles. They stopped us halfway through our set, needless to say. They blamed it on us that we were inciting the audience to riot."

From our perspective, I had no idea what was going on. When you have the stage lights on you, you can't see very often too far into the crowd."

Drummer/vocalist Sean Haezebrouck heard peo-

ple were lighting fires as well. Perhaps it was a case of life imitating art.

"We always get pretty wild on stage," Weston said. "We were lighting some of the cymbals on fire. It sounds funny, but a cymbal won't burn. It'll just burn up the flame on the cymbal. The flame won't spread, (but) the bar owners thought we were trying to set the place on fire, I guess."

Batterie Acid has been on fire since shortly after its rebirth in 1993. The band's first incarnation, created by Weston and percussionist Christian Gwizdala in 1991, didn't fare well, however.

"It was called Tribe back then; we never made it out of our basement," Gwizdala said. "We had the idea of doing this all-percussion band but we only had one percussionist. Things didn't work out."

Christian Gwizdala

cals, Levi commercials, "Stomp." A lot of that percussion stuff has really hit home now," Gwizdala said.

Unlike some of their national and international forefathers, Batterie Acid doesn't rely solely on drums.

"Most of the drum bands, it seems, coming out are just strictly drums and not much else; we use more than just drums," he added. "Our songs (have a wide) range. We do have some more of the trance drumming but we also have really really super highly structured songs that are dependent upon the vocals, the keyboards, and bass just as much as the drums."

The musical freedom is what attracts Haezebrouck and Weston to Batterie Acid.

"I feel way more comfortable with this," said Haezebrouck, who also plays in Surge to Union with Batterie Acid bandmates bassist Henry Parkie and metal/drummer Gary True. "I was originally a drummer. This is sort of like the ultimate drum band because anything goes as far as percussion."

Batterie Acid performs with Carlin, Illias and Surge to Union at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, Sunday, May 28. Forge, Walk on Water, and HAL play the Shelter. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT. Batterie Acid can be reached via E-mail at john284@delpi.com.



Explosive: The local tribal/industrial band Batterie Acid bring their craft to St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit May 28.

Have a listen

To hear music by Batterie Acid (message 2), Dink (message 3), Juliana Hatfield, (message 4), Jeff Buckley (message 5), Cold Water Flat (message 6), Trash Brats (message 7), The Exceptions (message 8), Tricky (message 9), and The Goldenstones (message 10), you can call the Street Scene Music Line at (313) 963-2025 on a touch-tone phone. Fast-forward to the corresponding message by pressing 33. To repeat a message, press 4.