

LET'S GO! STREET SCENE

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MUSIC NOTES



CHRISTINA FUOCO

Hey, Rob, look who is No. 1

I have a bone to pick with White Zombie singer Rob Zombie. I happen to like Hootie and the Blowfish.

At White Zombie's State Fair Coliseum show on May 21, Rob Zombie blasted critics who said it was a fluke that his band's latest album "Astro Creep: 2000" debuted near the top of the Billboard charts. Obviously, he said, his band has talent. If a month or so later, "Astro Creep: 2000" is still in the top 10 above acts like Boyz II Men and Sheryl Crow.

"And what about Hootie and the Blowfish?" he said. "Does anybody even like them?"

Suddenly, the spotlight shined on me — or so I felt. My pal Tony, who doesn't like Hootie either, lifted my arms in the air and waved them like he was trying to get Rob Zombie's attention. Tony, the large ex-Marine, then said, "Great. I'm going to be beat up trying to protect you." Hey, I was all ready to hide in a corner.

Before I go off defending Hootie's honor, I have to admit that I didn't really like Hootie's album "Cracked Rear View" the first umpteen times I listened to it. A friend of mine told me recently that he didn't like Hootie and the Blowfish because their songs didn't build up to anything. I guess that's one of the reasons "Cracked Rear View" didn't appeal to me at first.

But after traveling on an all-day British Airways flight from London to Detroit in March, listening to the same BA radio show playing "Hold My Hand" over and over again, something clicked and I realized Hootie and the Blowfish had something special. (Then again, I may have just been sick of hearing British pomp rock like Supergrass, Blur, and Gethse in England.)

It's not the music or the vocals that build up. It's the stories. They're great storytellers. Hootie and the Blowfish's simple, homespun stories reminded me of home.

A couple days after I returned from Europe, Hootie was in town to play with Todd The Wet Sprocket. Almost effortless, lead singer Darin Rucker's emotional, bass vocals filled the State Theatre. The effect was overwhelmingly soothing; the music filled up my entire body and pretty much healed my jet lag. I knew I was home.

Hootie and the Blowfish's music is fresh. Although I crave hard rock bands and endless riffs of noise, it's refreshing to listen to bands like Hootie and the Blowfish, Todd The Wet Sprocket and singer Sarah McLachlan — no matter what Rob Zombie says.

I say, "Go for it, Hootie." And the next time you see Rob Zombie, remind him whose album hit No. 1 of the week last week.

You can write Christina Fuoco at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, Mich. 48150, or via e-mail at CFuoco@aol.com. If you have a touch-tone phone, you can call her at (313) 953-2047, mailbox no. 2130.

STREET BEATS

O' Seasons O' Castles
— Katell Keineg

Keineg is of that new and literary breed of musicians, led most conspicuously perhaps by Kate Bush and Sinead O'Connor, that has emerged over the past few years. As regards her uniquely soulful lyricality, she may be the most impressive singer/songwriter to emerge in many a year.

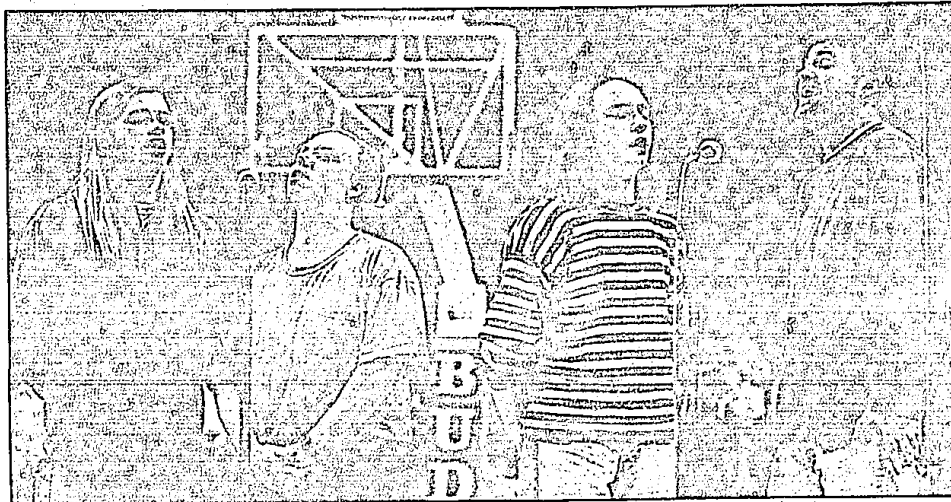
With a vocal quality that suggests a hint of the rasp of Sade, Keineg sings of rebirth ("Heist"), savoring life ("Cut") and the promise of the future ("Destiny's Darling").

Her "Partisan" has become something of a staple on WDET of late and the odds are very good that this latest import from the Emerald Isle may just blossom into the "next big thing" in short order.

— Mark E. Gallo

Have a listen

To hear music by the Verve Pipe (message 2), Mystery Machine (message 3), Moby (message 4), The Impacts (message 5), Spank (message 6), and The Laughing Hyenas (message 7), you can call the Street Scene Music Line at (313) 953-2025 on a touch-tone phone. Fast-forward to the corresponding message by pressing 33. To repeat a message, press 4.



FLIX PHOTO

Heading to the studio: The Verve Pipe — Brad Vander Ark (from left), Donny Brown, A.J. Dunning and Brian Vander Ark, who sang at a Detroit Pistons game as the 1993 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' Band of the Year, will head in the studio with ex-Talking Heads member Jerry Harrison as producer. Percussionist Doug Corella is not pictured.

Verve Pipe recruits hot producer



If ex-Talking Head Jerry Harrison's success with rockers Live is any reflection on what he can do for The Verve Pipe, the East Lansing band is in good hands. Harrison will produce The Verve Pipe's debut for RCA.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Former Talking Heads guitarist/keyboardist Jerry Harrison, who produced Live's triple platinum album "Throwing Copper," has signed on to work with The Verve Pipe when they record their debut for RCA this summer in California.

"I was a big Talking Heads fan for years," said singer/guitarist Brian Vander Ark. "I'm not a huge fan of Live, but I like what he's (Harrison) about. I like the melody and how he works against the heavier guitar stuff. He has a real melodic touch and a real pop sensibility."

The East Lansing band is scheduled to work on the album at The Plant in Sausalito, Calif., July 17 through the end of August. The so-far unnamed album, due out early next year, will have less "studio trickery" and harmonies, with more guitar, Vander Ark said.

"All the four-track demos I've been doing have really, really, really heavy

guitars with drums up the middle," he said.

The Verve Pipe's new direction is what attracted Harrison to the project, drummer Donny Brown said. The first meeting didn't go so well, however.

"He came out to see us, and he just missed the show because Live was playing in Milwaukee that night," Brown said.

Knowing that his band's manager, Doug Buttemann, had given Harrison copies of The Verve Pipe's independent releases "I've Suffered A Head Injury" and "Pop Smear," Brown asked Harrison what he thought of their music.

"He gave me some pretty stark opinions," Brown said. "He wasn't that crazy about it."

But Harrison changed his mind when he heard demos of new songs "Photograph," "Myself," "Cows," and "Drive You Mild," that The Verve Pipe recorded in Milwaukee with producer Mike Hoffman.

"It was enough to get Jerry to come out and see us again. He really liked it, and he said he would work with us," Brown said of the band's show at Brownie's in New York in late April.

The Verve Pipe has sold 25,000 copies of 1991's "I've Suffered A Head Injury" and 1993's "Pop Smear." The single from "Pop Smear," "Senator Speak" became a radio hit on WHYY. The band is anxious to release new material.

"We're dying to have an album out," Brown said. Besides their two independent releases, The Verve Pipe appeared on Madaket Records' "Aware II, The Compilation" with Hootie and the Blowfish and Better Than Ezra.

This week, The Verve Pipe gathered a national press attention with a mention in the current edition of "Rolling Stone" magazine. Within the last year, the 1993 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' Band of the Year has also been featured in "Musician," "Insider" and "Billboard" magazines.

Last week they kicked off the Pine Knob Music Theatre season by opening WHYY's "Planet Fest," which

also featured No Use For A Name, Bush, Letters to Cleo, The Ramones and Duran Duran.

Brian Vander Ark

The band — which also includes lead guitarist/background vocalist A.J. Dunning, bassist/background vocalist Brad Vander Ark and percussionist/keyboardist Doug Corella — will make a quick jaunt around the state before heading to California.

The Verve Pipe performs Saturday, July 1, with the Freddy Jones Band as part of the AWARE festival at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac, (810) 335-4850. Doors open at 2 p.m. for the all ages show. Tickets are \$10 in advance and go on sale Saturday, June 3, at Ticketmaster outlets. For information about The Verve Pipe merchandise, write them at P.O. Box 4711, East Lansing, Mich. 48826-4711; or via e-mail at vervepipe@worldcom.

Mystery Machine: kicking it into gear

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

At first, Luke Rogalsky, the lead singer/guitarist of the ethereal Canadian rock band Mystery Machine, comes across as snotty when he describes why he likes to play small towns.

"Usually, it's a good opportunity to meet people," Rogalsky said. "They're open to appreciating you, and they're excited to have their mundane lives interrupted by something."

But, actually, Rogalsky and the rest of Mystery Machine — guitarist Bean (that's it — just Bean), bassist Shane Ward and drummer Jordan Pratt — can relate. The band hails from Chilliwack, B.C., Canada, a suburb of Vancouver with a population of 61,000, according to the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce. (Everyone in the band except for Pratt now resides in Vancouver.)

The song "Just a Sec" on Mystery Machine's latest album, "10 Speed" (Nettwerk), also sets the record straight. Written by Rogalsky's hometown friend, "Just a Sec" echoes the feelings that he had growing up in Chilliwack.

"It's about the frustrations with small-mindedness and the claustrophobia of living in a small place like that," he told Canada's "Chart" mag-



azine. "That song really affected me — its emotions, and the fact that I can relate to it."

"10 Speed" is the second full-length album from Mystery Machine, which used the same formula of fuzzy guitars and Rogalsky's smooth, hypnotic vocals to record the follow-up to "Classified." It was recorded by Glen Kelly (54:40) and mixed by Ken Lomas (Rod Hot Chili Peppers, Danzig). Three songs, "Sinker," "Brand New Song," and "Pound for Pound,"

were re-mixed by Chris Shaw (Weezer, Soul Asylum, Public Enemy). Although guitarist Norm Thody appears on the album, original axeman Bean has rejoined Mystery Machine.

"We are now anxious to play new '10 Speed' songs everywhere soon," said Rogalsky. "Our rocket pads and skin-tight jumpuits should be ready. Also, as a result of Bean's one-year meditation in the Himalayas of Nepal and Tibet, a different guitar player

plays on all tracks except for three. "However, Bean is now back on board and is seemingly more in touch with his inner self as a result of his trip."

Mystery Machine plays with Daytona and The New Ministers at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 1, at The Shelter below St. Andrews, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$8 in advance. Must be 18 or older to attend. For more information, call (313) 961-NELT.

Mysterious: Canada's Mystery Machine crosses the border to visit Detroit's Shelter below St. Andrews' Hall June 1.