

STREET SCENE

Listen up
British bands,
we want fun
not attitudeCHRISTINA
FUOCO

Being a big fan of the Manchester music scene and having just returned from there, it hurts me to say this — the Stone Roses and Oasis need a few lessons in stage performance. I'm not a performer or stage veteran, nor do I claim to be. But I feel justified in giving the Stone Roses and Oasis a few tips. First a little background.

The Stone Roses had no firm plans on coming to Detroit so Memorial Day weekend I hauled myself out to Chicago to see the Stone Roses perform as part of the Q-101 "Jamboree" radio festival at the World Music Amphitheatre, an outdoor venue nearly twice the size of Pine Knob. I loved the Stone Roses' self-titled album and the song "I Wanna Be Adored" and "Do I Wanna Be?" so naturally I was looking forward to this. For a month I lived, breathed, and slept the Stone Roses so much so that I kept forgetting that bands like Collective Soul, Sheryl Crow, Bush, Sponge, Duran Duran, Faith No More, Flaming Lips were also on the bill.

The weather was 50 degrees and raining. Mud-covered lawn patrons buried patches of sod at the pavilion. Through my years of concert-going, I have learned how to emerge sod-free from the grass wars. Well, OK, embarrassment had something to do with it too. At Lollapalooza a few years

ago, I went backstage to talk to Soundgarden when one of the band members so kindly informed me, "You have a big glob of sod on your forehead" and flicked it off me. How humiliating.

Anyway, it wasn't a pretty sight but I was getting more excited by the minute so I stuck it out for the Stone Roses. Their set started out fine, actually, with their hit "I Wanna Be Adored." As soon as the song was over, the Stone Roses copped an Oasis attitude. The singer hung his head down, turned around and got a sip of water, dawdled around the stage a while and broke into the next song. The cycle repeated itself throughout their set.

We're ever so honored to have you in our presence, almighty Stone Roses.

Because Oasis did the same thing when I saw them at St. Andrew's Hall in mid-March, I have this feeling that English bands don't know how — or don't have any desire to — to play up to American audiences. So I'm going to help them out. Here we go:

■ There's no need to still be bent out of shape because we whooped you in the Revolutionary War so get over it and get those silly frowns off your face. Stop looking at your shoes while we're at it.

■ We don't go to your concerts to worship your every move like British fans and tabloids so don't be so condescending. We'd like to have fun with you.

■ The United States is a hard country to break and your kindergarten temper tantrums aren't helping. Pretend you all get along.

■ This is specifically for Oasis, you don't need to open up your show with the song "Tonight I'm a Rock 'n' Roll Star." We're pretty much prepared for that attitude anyway.

And Oasis wonders why fans have been known to shout "England sucks" at their concerts?

■ The bottom line is you just wanna be adored? We want to be entertained — then we'll adore you.

All of you who have never gotten ahold of me on the phone or in person, will be happy to know that I'll be readily available on Sunday, June 18, when I guest bartend at Lili's, 2530 Jacob, Hamtramck. No, I don't know how to mix drinks that well but Lili's has assured me that "real" bartenders will back me up. It should be a lot of fun so stop by and feel free to bother me. For more information, call (313) 875-6555.

If you have a comment or question for Christina Fuoco, you can write her in care of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, or call her by using a Touch-Tone phone by dialing (313) 853-2047 mailbox number 2130. You can also send her e-mail at the address CFuoco@aol.com.

Have a listen

To hear music by Clutch (message 2), Wilco (message 3), Big Chief (message 4), Ekonoct Hookah (message 5), Malissa Ferrick (message 6), Les Toitilles (message 7), Tearjerkers (message 8) you can call the Street Scene Music Line at (313) 654-2028 on a touch-tone phone. *Fast-forward to the corresponding message by pressing 33. To repeat a message, press 4.*

Clutch brings out the silly in rock

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO

STAFF WRITER

Clutch singer/songwriter Neil Fallon stands outside St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit, smoking a cigarette near his band's "tour camper." A line of fans snakes around the hall and through the parking lot hoping to get tickets to see underground rock's burgeoning stars. Having shed his glasses and sprouted hair, Fallon stands unnoticed only a few steps from the crowd. A homeless man approaches him, unaffected, Fallon puts his cigarette out and heads into the hall.

An hour later, Fallon is stalking his prey on stage. He rocks back and forth as if he's ready to lunge at the crowd of mostly sweat-drenched teenage boys. Other than looking like a group of average, self-admitted "red-necks," there's something almost scary about the melodic hard rock band from Maryland.

Listen hard, however, and those fears are dispelled. "Like a fly to doo-doo/You need me like a bird needs wings/O little bunny fufu/Who needs to buy the field mice," Fallon screams during the slow groove of "El Jefe Speaks," off their adrenalin-charged debut "Transnational Speedway League: Anthems, Anecdotes and Undeniable Truths" (EastWest/Atlantic).

Welcome to Fallon's metaphorical playground. Fallon, who ironically has a degree in English from the University of Maryland, mercilessly harasses his platmates with his preschool lyrics. He just can't take playing in a rock band too seriously.

"I never expected to be in one. The guys asked me, I got in the band. Being on the road and playing with rock bands, it can just be so silly. Personally, I can't take it seriously. Watching MTV, there's a lot of bands that take it seriously. We're making fun of that," Fallon said via telephone from his Denver-area hotel room.

Clutch's silliness prevails on their self-titled sophomore effort (EastWest/Elektra). Wrapped around references to mythological characters, he pays tribute to American pop culture.

In "Rock 'n' Roll Outlaw," a tongue-in-cheek look at road life, Fallon sings "So now you know not to get the Weeble Wobble but not rod gang... (it's) no fun to crack the axle, but it's got to be done because whenever you wobble the weebles you know they get ticked off."

"Big News 1," the opening track of

■ **Being on the road and playing with rock bands, it can just be so silly. Personally, I can't take it seriously. Watching MTV, there's a lot of bands that do take it seriously. We're making fun of that.**

Neil Fallon
Clutch singer/songwriter

Clutch's self-titled sophomore effort, ends with "come down to the locker of Davy Jones." Other songs make references to "red rover red rover," "knick, knackpaddywack," "Howdy Doody" and the "hokey pokey."

In a weird sort of twisted way, Fallon is making good use of his degree.

"I can stretch and say I've been published." Fallon was finishing up his degree at the other U-M when he was approached to join Clutch. He didn't have any other future plans, so he joined. A few days after graduation, he and bandmates guitarist Tim Sult, bassist Dan Maines, and drummer Jean-Paul Gaster were touring Europe with Biohazard.

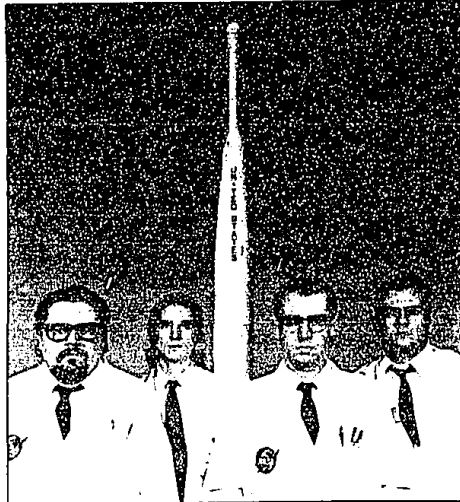
Their first visit to Detroit in the summer of '91 spelled out their future in the city. Dan Kotwicz, a bartender at the Shelter at the time, fell in love at first sight.

"Dan was at the very first Detroit show. That was at the University of Detroit Grounds (Coffhouse). That was the summer of '91. There was about 20 people there. He's been there ever since. He's responsible for a lot of our Detroit fan base by playing in his bar and pushing it."

Radio eventually locked on to "A Shogun Named Marcus" and the rest is history.

"It's because of the radio. If you can get played on the radio in the city, that can work wonders for a band. There's three cities — Detroit, Phoenix and New York that play us on the radio. Those are our biggest cities."

Clutch's visit to the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre in Pontiac on Thursday, June 22, with Tad, is their first since the release of "Clutch." Where "Transnational Speedway League" carresses the grooves and explodes into melodic tirades, "Clutch" is a



Rocket scientists or rockers? Maryland melodic rockers Clutch — from left, guitarist Tim Sult, bassist Dan Maines, singer Neil Fallon, and drummer Jean Paul Gaster — punches it into automatic for a show at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre in Pontiac on Thursday, June 22.

more even-keeled produced effort. Jackhammer guitars, as in "Transnational Speedway League's" "Shogun Named Marcus," have been steam-rolled into a slow grind.

"We get, I think, bored with ourselves and we like to change the sound," Fallon said.

In recording "Clutch," the band called back Larry Packer, who produced their debut 7-inch "Pitchfork" released in 1991.

"We wanted Larry for several reasons," Maines said. "We wanted to be more relaxed about it. We figured recording it with Larry would help us make the purest record possible. On the first album we had to fly to the west coast and everything. Being a new band it was very distracting. On

this album we had a green light to try any ideas we wanted."

While Clutch had their die-hard fans in mind, they didn't make any sacrifices for them.

"We always do what we want to do first. There's records we sold because people were asking for them. We do try to please people but that's just on the merchandise aspect," Fallon explained.

"Artistically, we're on our own little Cloud Nine."

Clutch performs with Tad at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac. Tickets are \$10 in advance for the all ages show. For more information, call (810) 335-4850 or (810) 645-6666.

Wilco gets an unexpected warm reception

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO

STAFF WRITER

When former Uncle Tupelo member Jeff Tweedy kick-started his new band Wilco, he prepared himself for a long, uphill battle. He soon realized, however, that his fears were unfounded.

"The response has been really positive," Tweedy said via telephone from Pittsburgh where Wilco was performing.

"Things are going good," Tweedy added with a sly laugh. Wilco, which is radio speak for "will comply," emerged as media darlings from the South by Southwest music conference in Austin, Texas. At a show that followed, the band tightened the screws of their credibility when members of the Jayhawks and Soul Asylum hopped on stage with them.

If that's not enough, Wilco will be a part of this year's H.O.R.D.E. festival the Black Crowes, Sheryl Crow, Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makars. Blues Traveler, and Morphine, which comes to Pine Knob Music Theatre on Sunday, Aug. 20. Wilco will give fans a sneak-peek of what to expect at Pine Knob with a headlining show at 7th House in Pontiac on Thursday, June 15.

"We're bemused that we're even on that thing," Tweedy said with a sly laugh about the H.O.R.D.E. festival. "It should be interesting. We kind of did it because we haven't really ever played in front of festival kind of audiences."

Tweedy and songwriting partner Jay Farrer formed Uncle Tupelo nearly 10 years ago in St. Louis. Together they produced four albums together — "No Depression" and "Still Feel Gone," which carry strong punk in flavor. "March 16-20, 1992" and "Anodys."

Toward the end of the "Anodys" tour in 1994, Farrer announced that he was leaving the band. "It was quite a shock," Tweedy admitted. "Even though Jay had his reasons for leaving, both personal and creative, we were really thrown for a loop. It took us a little while to find our footing again."

Later last year, Tweedy and fellow



Rising from the ashes: Wilco — from left, drummer Ken Coomer, guitarist/vocalist Jeff Tweedy, fiddle/mandolin/banjo player Max Johnston, guitarist Jay Bennett, and bassist/vocalist John Stirratt — picks up where the now-defunct Uncle Tupelo left off. The band plays the 7th House in Pontiac on Thursday, June 15, before hitting the second stage of the HORDE Festival on Sunday, Aug. 20, at Pine Knob Music Theatre.

Tupelo guitarist/bassist/drummer vocalist John Stirratt, drummer Ken Coomer, and stringman Max Johnston re-entered the studio to record "A.M.," their debut for Reprise Records.

The chameleon-like nature of Wilco is well represented on the album switching gears seamlessly from knee-slappin' roots rock ("Casino Queen") to pure country ("It's Just That Simple" and "That's Not The Issue").

The first single "I Must Be High" qualifies for sing-along status: "You always wanted more time to do what you always wanted to do now you got it and I must be high to say goodbye. You never said you needed this you're (ticked) that you missed the very last kiss from my lips and I must be high to say goodbye."

Some of the lyrics are silly and endearing at the same time. For example on "Passenger Side," Tweedy

sings: "For the last couple of miles you've been swerving from side to side. You're gonna make me spill my beer if you don't learn how to steer." "Casino Queen" takes a humorous look at the frustrations of gambling. "I've been gamblin' like a fiend on your tables so green. I always bet them black, black jack, I'll pay you back. The room fills with smoke and I'm already broke and the dealer keeps on jokin' while he takes my last token."

With Wilco, Tweedy and the band, which also includes guitarist Jay Bennett, there's a much stronger feeling of cohesiveness.

"It's a significantly different feeling as a band. We're more unified as a band. We felt like we were more like sidemen. Everybody feels like this is our band. That makes things smooth."

And Tweedy gets to showcase more of his talent.

"We play a lot more songs than I sing. In Uncle Tupelo, I was only singing five or six or seven songs a night, and I was doing mostly back-up singing. That's the difference with Wilco. There's a lot of songs that I had on records that I wrote that we never played live. We do more of that."

Tweedy said that when Wilco plays live, the renewed sense of enthusiasm is evident.

"Uncle Tupelo was kind of serious on stage, we tend to be less serious." Wilco plays the 7th House, 7 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, with special guest Outrageous Cherry at 8 p.m. Thursday, June 15. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For more information, call (810) 335-8100. Tickets for the H.O.R.D.E. Festival are \$25.00 for pavilion and lawn. Showtime is at 8 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 20, at Pine Knob, I-75 and Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. For information about that show, call (810) 377-0100 or (810) 645-6666.