

STREET SCENE

STREET BEATS

Batman Forever soundtrack — various artists

You don't have to get any further than the CD case to realize that the "Batman Forever" soundtrack (Atlantic) is a step ahead of other blockbuster movie soundtracks recently released. Some of modern rock's top names — U2, PJ Harvey, Mazzy Star, The Offspring, Nick Cave, INXS's Michael Hutchence, and The Flaming Lips — and R&B/rap acts Brandy and Method Man have contributed previously unreleased tracks to the album which will surely make this a hit.

The first single, U2's "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me" kicks off the album with its Page/Plant unplugged-sounding strings and heart-racingly dramatic guitar. Lenny Kravitz lends a hand to the "Batman Forever" soundtrack by penning the funky Brandy song "Where Are You Now?" Sullen moose-crooners Mazzy Star bring their trademark moodiness with the luscious "Tell Me Now." The incredibly talented "Beverly Hills 90210" veterans The Flaming Lips offer to "Batman Forever," "Bad Days," a twisted, psychedelic carnival-like song.

The major acts will no doubt draw listeners to the CD in turn raising the awareness of lesser-known acts like Eddi Reader, Massive Attack, and The Devlins, all of whom deserve every ounce of recognition they get.

The soundtrack only falls flat once. The monotone "The Riddler" by Method Man is too blasé to accompany Jim Carrey's flamboyant portrayal of the character.

—Christina Fuoco

Dreams Can Be Your Friend — Carolyn Striho and the Detroit Energy Asylum

"Energy" is an appropriate term to describe "Dreams Can Be Your Friend" (Mysterio Music), the latest album by Carolyn Striho and the Detroit Energy Asylum. Backed on record by a furious musical assault by some of Detroit's top musicians: Sponge singer Vinnie Dombrowski on drums, trumpeter Rayne Biggs, guitarist Wayne Gerard, Haze's Joey Mazzola on slide guitar, Romantic drummer Jimmy Marinova, and guitarist Bobby East, it's hard to go wrong.

The pop/rock-flavored "I'll Chase My Nightmares" would be the hit apparent if area radio stations started playing more local bands. The pedal-to-the-metal "Terrible Two" adequately captures her mouth-friendly sound. The short blasts of agro guitar on "Tainted Love" turns the whiny retro hit into a ticked-off ode to a former love. Her cover of Brian Wilson's "I Just Wasn't Made For These Times," recorded in memory of the MCS's Fred "Sonic" Smith, closes the album.

Carolyn Striho with special guest Patti Smith perform with a host of others at the "89X Birthday Bash" at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 24, at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac. The show is free and open to all ages. For more information, call (810) 335-4550. Mysterio Music can be reached at P.O. Box 441915, Detroit, MI 48224-1915.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie soundtrack — various artists

Recycled old go-get'em, sports bar songs like Van Halen's "Dreams," the Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Higher Ground," and "The Power" by Sade bring down the soundtrack to the big-screen version of children's television show "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers." Even Devo can't save the soundtrack with "Are You Ready?!" the band's poor attempt to delve into the techno market. They Might Be Giants' "SenSurround" is a toe-tapper, but it's uncomfortable to listen to sandwiched between Van Halen and a song called "Ayeayaiyi (Alpha Song)" by Power Jet.

The only flickering light on the album is Shampoo's "Trouble," but it's hard to get past the fact that it sounds so much like the E-2's "Love Shack." You've probably heard this song on the radio but thought the lyrics were elementary ("Uh, ho, we're in trouble. Something's come along and it's burst our bubble. Uh, ho, we're in trouble. Gotta get home quick march on the double"), but it's somehow easier to swallow once you find out it's on the "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" soundtrack.

Guns N' Roses fans might be interested, however, to know that drummer Matt Sorum performs "Go Go Power Rangers" with The Power Rangers Orchestra.

If you're really in the mood to hear songs like "The Power" for the beat itself, go to sports bar instead of buying this soundtrack. Then you can at least people watch and get a good laugh.

—Christina Fuoco

Have a listen

To hear music by Nitzer Ebb (message 2), Silverchair (message 3), Rusty (message 4), Hum (message 5), Carolyn Striho (message 6), Love Battery (message 7), Hardship Post (message 8), and Scott Fab (message 19) you can call the Street Scene Music Line at (313) 953-2025 on a touch-tone phone. Press 1 to forward to the corresponding message by pressing 33. To repeat a message, press 4.

Nitzer Ebb rides wave of change

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

The industrial band Nitzer Ebb has gone through a wave of changes since the 1991 release of "Ebbhead." The once sample-happy duo of Douglas McCarthy and Bon Harris picked up a guitar and bass, respectively, while adding stickman Jason Payne. McCarthy quit drinking 2½ years ago, and last week he celebrated the first anniversary of his marriage to a Grosse Pointe model. All that's fine and good, but most importantly, he's caught Red Wing fever.

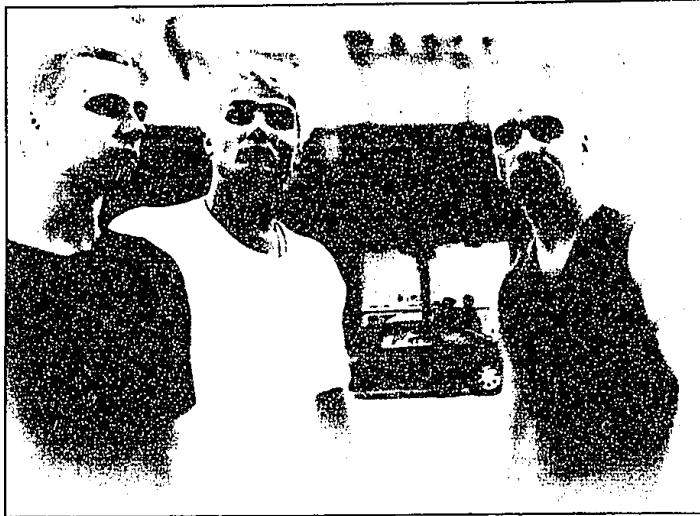
"I've been watching ESPN (and) glued totally to the television. I can't believe it," said McCarthy via telephone from the Grosse Pointe home he shares with his wife, Carrie. They're expecting their first child Aug. 17 and plan to move to New York soon thereafter.

McCarthy and the rest of Nitzer Ebb — with the addition of former Ethyl Meatplov guitarist John Napier — return to his new hometown area Friday, June 23, to play St. Andrew's Hall as part of their tour in support of their latest album "Big Hit" (DGC/Mute). The St. Andrew's Hall show is sure to jog the McCarthy's memories. The couple met there after Nitzer Ebb played there a handful of years ago.

"Big Hit" is a departure from their previous works "That Total Age" (1987), "Belief" (1988), "Showtime" (1990), and "Ebbhead." The stompy-heavy samples in songs like "Getting Closer" and "Control" have been squashed into distorted guitars and keyboards. Prior to the recording of "Big Hit," McCarthy didn't know how to play a guitar but he picked it up quickly.

"Literally in an afternoon, I could make a song and I'm not gifted by any stretch of the imagination," he said with a laugh.

McCarthy's trademark forceful vocals have been massaged into singing and even spoken word in the song "Border Talk." Fans of earlier Nitzer Ebb will be happy to hear that the old-time electro-rage prevails on the final track "Kick." Lyrically, Harris and McCarthy brought their personal emotions to the forefront, scraping off the candy



Hoping for that "Big Hit": Nitzer Ebb — from left, drummer Jason Payne, vocalist/guitarist and Grosse Pointe's newest celebrity resident Douglas McCarthy, and vocalist/bassist Bon Harris — play St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit on Friday, June 23, in support of their album "Big Hit."

coating that surrounded songs in the past.

"In the past, I did actually always put in personal things but it was more coated, and less apparent to the people who didn't know me. One of the plots we've always had was to talk about a third party, but in reality they're things that I've been doing."

For example, the duer song "Boy" is about the pain he felt at being separated from his son after ending a long-term relationship. "Oh my boy I love you so, so so. Oh my boy I had to go, go, go," McCarthy sings. "Hear Me Say" describes the fears of letting a loved one smoke

hanging onto my tears/clothing up my mind like all its fears/I'm leaving you/you want me to/ but how I got no shame/so call my name/call now/just hear me say/yeah, hear me say/don't turn away."

"In Decline" was triggered by a visit Nitzer Ebb made to Russia, two years ago.

"I remember seeing this old man, about 80 years old, sweeping the streets of St. Petersburg in full military uniform. It was so sad and pathetic, and yet it's no different from the West where we have to wear this uniform of pretending to be an adult,

just to keep people in their place," McCarthy said.

Despite the multitude of personal, musical and lyrical changes, Nitzer Ebb feels it's important to delve into their back catalogue for live shows. To deny their past, McCarthy said, would be ridiculous. Plus, they still like their old material.

"We enjoy that as much as anybody else."

Nitzer Ebb and Earth Eighteen perform Friday, June 23, St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the 18 and older show. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT or (810) 645-6666.

Aussie band Silverchair wins quick success

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

The past year has been a Cinderella story for Aussie teen grunge rockers Silverchair. Last June, the trio entered this "really boring" song called "Tomorrow" in a national demo competition for a chance to win a day in a recording studio.

Silverchair won the contest beating out 800 other entrants, much to the surprise of lead singer/guitarist Daniel Johns.

"It was the worst tape," he said barely awake via telephone from his Australia home. "It was so bad. (It was) just all out of tune. It's a six-minute version of the song and it gets really boring."

Silverchair — which rounds out its line-up with bassist Chris Joannou and drummer Ben Gillies — used its studio time at Australia's national alternative radio station 2JJJ-FM to record "Tomorrow." The song was added to 2JJJ's playlist and by December the song was No. 1 in the country.

Along with studio time, Silverchair's prize included months of hype, a record deal and a double-platinum album "Frogstomp." (In Australia a band reaches platinum status after selling 70,000 copies, according to Billboard magazine, as opposed to 1 million in the United States.)

"It's been pretty good for us here. We only expected to sell 1,000 copies," Johns said.

The kudos don't stop there. Silverchair swept Australia's Rolling Stone's annual readers poll winning the "Artist of the Year" besting long-established acts like Nick Cave and Crowded House, "Best Single" for "Tomorrow," "Best Hard Rock Band," "Hype of the Year," and "Brightest Hope for 1995" prizes. In addition, Johns won "Best Male Singer," and was nominated for "Best Songwriter," and "Best Guitarist." Joannou was up for "Best Bass Player," and Gillies for "Best Drummer" topping Rob Hirst of Midnight Oil, and Jon Farriss of INXS.

Members of the highly acclaimed band — which averages 16 years of age — don't seem themselves as rock stars, however.

"We're not rock stars. We've got an album out and it's goin' all right. Everything's just normal but we travel more," he said.

"Frogstomp" took off in Australia, now Silverchair prepares to battle the U.S. charts. "Frogstomp" hit the stores on Tuesday and the band made its North American live debut the following day at the Roxy Theater in At-

lanta. Silverchair comes to the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre in Pontiac on Saturday to perform as part of the "89X Birthday Bash."

"Frogstomp" takes a few lessons from the Seattle grunge scene, much like English rockers Bush. Johns doesn't mind most of the comparisons to the American Northwest, but the Nirvana comparisons he said are unfounded.

"None of us really liked Nirvana. We get compared to them a lot. None of us have any of their albums or anything. The main influence was probably Helmet and Soundgarden," he said.

One thing he can't deny is his striking physical resemblance to Nirvana's deceased lead singer Kurt Cobain. During a tour stop in Sydney, Australia, Courtney Love even acknowledged that Johns looks eerily like her ex-husband but later lamented, "he sounds like Eddie (Vedder). And that's not so great."

Lyrically, Johns and Gillies co-write songs like teams twice their age. In "Suicidal Dream" Johns sings, "I dream about how it's gonna end/approaching me quickly/Leaving a life of fear/I only want my mind to be clear/The people making fun of me/for no reason but jealousy/I fantasize about my death/I kill myself from holding my breath."

"Pure Massacre" touches on social ills. "Families been torn apart/ don't have to be this way/some people just have no heart/it's happenin' every day."

Musically, they have crafted a collection of songs that runs the gamut from full-on thrash ("Madman") to brooding, introspective ballads ("Shade," "Suicidal Dream") to metallic grunge grooves ("Undecided" and "Leave Me Out").

Silverchair began as a band that wrote songs as a way to kill time. Their hobby seems to have paid off and, Johns said, his family is thrilled.

"They're pretty happy about it. They know that we've started a career or something. We're not too smart at school so they're pretty happy that we've done something."

Silverchair performs along with Catherine Wheel, Carolyn Striho and Patti Smith, Hum, Hardship Post, and Rusty on the main stage; Love Battery, Big Black, Paul K. and the Weathermen, and Suicide Machines on the second stage, as part of the "89X Birthday Bash" at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 24, at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre, 10 Water St., Pontiac. The show is free and open to all ages. For more information, call (810) 335-4650.



Aussie wonderboys: Silverchair — from left, drummer Ben Gillies, guitarist/vocalist Daniel Johns, and bassist Chris Joannou — hits the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheatre stage in Pontiac on Saturday, June 24, as part of the CIMX-FM (89.7) Birthday Bash. It is only Silverchair's third U.S. show.