

STREET SCENE



Celebrating release: The Vudu Hippies — clockwise from left, drummer Brad Schrage, guitarist Chris, guitarist Reed Schwaalee, bassist Steve Taylor, and singer Renee Paquette — celebrate the release of their EP "Who?" with a performance at 3-D in Royal Oak on Thanksgiving.

Vudu Hippies release new EP with 'substance'

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

The recording process over the past few years hasn't been an easy one for the Oakland County-based alternative rock band the Vudu Hippies.

Guitar players came and went. Then when the band found its lineup to include bassist Steve Taylor and guitarist Reed Schwaalee and booked time into Pearl Sound studios in Canton, they kept losing their spot to some other local artist.

"We kept getting bumped and pushed around by someone named Madonna," said guitarist/vocalist Chris. "I guess you could say we're in a blood feud with Madonna."

The Vudu Hippies — which also includes singer Renee Paquette and drummer Brad Schrage — eventually got into the studio and as a result are releasing the four-song EP "Who?" this week. Chris calls the release, which also features songs recorded at the Tempermill studio in Ferndale, the Vudu Hippies' strongest and most confident so far.

"These songs have more texture and substance and just all around more feeling than anything on (1991's) 'Happy Medium,'" he said.

"We're older, wiser Vudus." The songs — "Trains," "Cars," "Simpatico," and "Irene Said" — were chosen for the EP from a batch of 20 new songs the group recorded during the past year. On "Who?" the Vudu Hippies took a chance with crowd favorite "Simpatico" by taking the once upbeat

song and turning it into a ballad.

"It was Bill's (Blackwell, manager) idea. He's such a large fan of the song tender side of Renee," Chris explained about the change. At first the band, who had opened for John Mellencamp and Cracker, were a little more than apprehensive.

"We're like, 'Shut up Bill. No way. Get out of here.'"

But they found it worked. The tape is the Vudu Hippies' first release since 1992 when the band put out a Christmas single that sold 1,000 copies within a month.

Because it's been so long since they've released anything, the Vudu Hippies, who have a strong local following, decided to release a tape to test the waters of their popularity before putting out a full-length CD. The test was for practical reasons, not because of a lack of confidence.

"It's just gotten to the point where there are so many fantastic bands out there. I don't know how many awesome bands I've seen and there's been no one there (at shows)," he said.

"Time passed by and it had gotten to a point where we hadn't released anything in so long. We didn't know if people would be saying, 'Vudu Who?' ... So we just decided to collect some songs and sprinkle a little love on the children," Chris added. "Who?" will be initially available at shows but will be moved to independent record stores by the end of the year.

The Vudu Hippies perform Thursday, Nov. 23, with Star 80 at 3-D, 1816 N. Main St., Royal

Crossed Wire keeps fans happy

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Crossed Wire singer Chris Moore is the gentleman of the Detroit music scene. Despite being an annual Detroit Music Award winner and the leader of one of Detroit's most acclaimed bands, he always thinks of his fans first. Releasing after a short solo acoustic set at 3-D in Royal Oak, Moore is approached by a member of the sparse crowd who tells him how much he loves Crossed Wire's latest CD "Arrival Time." The modest Moore graciously accepts the compliment. As the fan turns to leave, Moore asks him to come back for a minute.

"Hey, I'm sorry I didn't play longer," Moore tells him sincerely in an almost "had I known you were coming I would have played longer" tone.

The man is obviously flattered by Moore's attention and promises to go to Moore's show with the rest of his band Crossed Wire Saturday, Nov. 25, at the Magic Bag in Ferndale.

It's been three years since Crossed Wire released its last full-length album "Caught in the Current" but the incident last week at 3-D is proof that fans have stuck with the band.

So have music industry folks. Between releases, Crossed Wire has toured incessantly to build up a regional following that lead to a record deal with the New Jersey-based Real Deluxe/W.A.R.? Records. Crossed Wire also contributed two songs to the soundtrack to "Sleep With Me," a film starring Meg Tilly and Eric Stoltz.

The expanded exposure of Crossed Wire uncovers Moore's talent which has been lauded by the likes of CMJ, Alternative Press and Billboard magazines. On "Arrival Time" Moore continues his award-winning storytelling talents backed by his band guitarist Gary Watts, bassist Cary Marsh and drummer Vic Burcar.

Moore said that while recording this album, the band concentrated on capturing the spirit of the songs.

"We just wanted it to have a lot of color," he said.

Crossed Wire accomplishes what it set out to do on "Arrival Time," recorded during January-April 1995 at White Room Studios in Detroit. The desperate delivery on songs like "What's it where he sings "nervous bumpy ride, barely made it in alive and I'm soakin', alidin' in a ditch underneath the wet wind-kissed skin, baby I ain't jokin'" creates a perfect picture in the listener's mind.



Long-awaited CD: Crossed Wire — drummer Bud Burcar, bassist Cary Marsh, guitarist Gary Watts, and singer/guitarist Chris Moore — recently released "Arrival Time," one of the most anticipated follow-up albums of the year.

Moore explained that the musically dark album is leading some to mistake it for a lyrically heavy record. He urges those who feel that to take a harder look.

"Everybody thinks it's so serious and heavy. There's a lot of comical things that people overlook. It is personal but it's not too dark. It's just rock."

Crossed Wire is the current incarnation of numerous bands formed by Moore and Burcar, who met at the Endless Summer skateboard park in Eastpointe in the late-1970s. Unlike the rock/acoustic sound of Crossed Wire, Moore's roots are set in punk rock

having been a member of the stellar punk rock group Negative Approach.

Since the formation of Crossed Wire, Moore, with his naturally bright orange hair, has become one of Detroit's most recognizable music figures. The fame is something that Moore isn't very comfortable with but he does like the interaction with fans.

"I just feel really awkward. It's cool that people know who you are but I don't like the pressure. I feel like I have to live up to something," he said.

Although as a solo performer he has opened for the likes of Sarah

McLachlan and Tori Amos, Moore stresses that Crossed Wire is his priority.

"I don't do that many solo shows," the shy Detroiters said. "I just do them when I need to practice or I use it to try out new songs," Moore added with a laugh.

Crossed Wire with special guests Whirling Road and Scott Fab performs Saturday, Nov. 25, at Magic Bag Theatre Cafe, 22915 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Doors open at 8 p.m. for the 18 and older crowd. Cover charge is \$5. For more information, call (810) 544-3030.

Hard work ethic pays off for band

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Life has been anything but cumbersome for the rock quartet Seven Mary Three.

Only six months ago, Seven Mary Three was a hard-working college band who released their own CD "Churn." On a whim, the band's manager gave a copy of the CD to a DJ at WJRR, a commercial radio station in Orlando, Fla., the same station that first played "Shine" from Collective Soul's demo tape.

The station began airing the hard-rocking, melodic song "Cumbersome" and it became such a hit that it was added to the station's regular rotation within a couple of weeks. The unsigned band found themselves near-overseers in the Orlando area.

Mammoth/Atlantic records signed the band who then re-recorded the album and named it "American Standard." Now "Cumbersome" is an MTV and radio hit which is played on five stations along in Detroit.

Lead guitarist Jason Pollock said he thinks the song and their live shows have become such a hit because "there's an honesty about it."

"I think our honesty and our hard-work ethic comes through. When we play live, we really connect with the audience and take the time to talk to them after the show, to sign autographs and shake hands," Pollock said.

"That's what playing live is all about — to put on a show for people. People want to see who you are. They want to hear your voice when you're just talking. That's also part of what we do. I think we really got out of our way a lot of times."

The band, who met while at



Do you copy?: Seven Mary Three — from left, bassist Casey Daniel, singer/guitarist Jason Ross, drummer Giti Khalsa, and lead guitarist Jason Pollock — plays The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 28.

tending the College of William and Mary in Virginia, isn't all serious straight-ahead rockers. Take their name, for example. It's CB lingo from the TV show "CHIPS." Pollock admits that he, like most people in their 20s, watched the adventures of Jon and Ponch as a youngster — and even in college.

"Casey (Daniel, bassist) and Jason (Ross, vocalist/guitarist) would wake up and turn it on. It always seemed to be on. But then again, there's nothing else on," Pollock said with a laugh.

With chunky guitars and vocal styles similar to Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Seven Mary Three will

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most likely fill the airwaves during the course of "American Standard." That's just fine with Pollock. He's enjoying having a hit song in the radio.

"It's everything I dream about. It's a great time. It's like living life, really. There are hard times and a lot of those we're really tired. A lot of obstacles come up

but they're interspersed with good shows. It's all about being in a rock 'n' roll band."

Seven Mary Three and Starbilly perform Tuesday, Nov. 28, at The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets available at Ticketmaster. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT or (810) 645-0668.

Chili Peppers postpone concert

The Red Hot Chili Peppers' show scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 25, at The Palace of Auburn Hills has been postponed until early January.

The band's drummer, Chad Smith, formerly of Birmingham, broke his wrist while playing baseball during a break between the Red Hot Chili Peppers' European and U.S. tours.

Hiring a substitute drummer was out of the question.

"The band just wouldn't be the same without him," a band spokesperson said.

The bands who were supposed to open for the top-selling act, however, have scheduled their own Detroit shows. The Flaming Lips will play Tuesday, Nov. 28, at St. Andrew's Hall.