

STREET SCENE

Local musician provides 'refreshing' change

By CHRISTINA FUOCO
Staff Writer

Tempe, Ariz., has made a name for itself spanning the rock bands Meat Puppets and Gin Blossoms. The Refreshments are the latest to jump out of Arizona and onto a major label — thanks in part to Ticketmaster and the Gin Blossoms.

The Refreshments won the 1994 National Ticketmaster Music Showcase and received a weeklong recording studio package. (Dishwalla who plays St. Andrew's Hall on Saturday, April 13, with The Refreshments, participated in the 1993 contest.) The contest, guitarist Brian Blush said, helped get the band's name in the media.

"We met a few people and probably most importantly it got our name into a few trade mags," said Blush, a graduate of Rochester Adams High School

who moved to Arizona in 1986 to attend Arizona State University. "It was really cool, though. We learned how to play showcases and do those kind of things. As a result of winning it, we got to recording in a really nice studio. All of those things were certainly helpful."

The Refreshments' debut disc "Whistle," released on an independent label based in Tempe, piqued the attention of ASCAP and Mercury in winter 1995. By the summer, The Refreshment secured a deal with the label. Throughout the process, Blush said, the Gin Blossoms gave The Refreshments advice.

"They're old dear friends of ours. We just spent about a month on the road with those guys. I can't really explain how much they helped us — everything from advice when we were going through the motions of the

record deal to just being good friends."

The Refreshments' debut for Mercury "Fizzy Fuzzy Big & Buzzy" is a fun, straight-ahead pop-rock album. "Mexico" pays homage to the band members' visits to the neighboring country; while "Down Together" pokes fun at the band Dend Hot Workshop, with whom they once shared a bill. The Refreshments recently wrapped up the video for its first single, "Bandito."

Blush, who writes most of the songs, also takes credit for the goofy album title.

"I keep a notepad next to my bed at night. I wake up a lot (in the middle of the night) and think 'that's the most brilliant thing I ever thought of.' Nine times out of 10, though, I'll wake up in the morning and it'll say 'Cows go moo' or the dumbest thing in the world," Blush said.

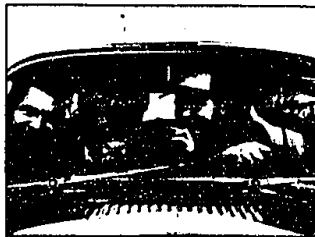
"One morning I woke up and that was laying next to my bed. I pretty much wrote it off. I thought it would make a good album name but I didn't think it would make the cut. They really seemed to like it. It's kind of a fun and lighthearted thing to say. It's not a very dark record. It's pretty upbeat and happy, like the album."

For more information about the show, call (313) 981-MELT.

• Jawbreaker's guitarist/vocalist Blake Schwarzenbach started April 1 out by doing the same thing he does the beginning of each month. He says "Rabbit, Rabbit."

"See, you're supposed to say, 'Rabbit, Rabbit' on the first of the month before you say anything else," he told BAM magazine. "So, I make a poster every month because I'll forget if I don't. Otherwise, I'll get up and say something else and blow it — I'll blow my luck for the month."

Rest assured, bassist Chris Bauernmeister said during an April 1 interview, that Schwarzenbach had done the deed that morning.



Light-hearted album: The title of The Refreshments' debut "Fizzy Fuzzy Big & Buzzy" reflects the mood of the album, said Rochester native Brian Blush (third from left).

"That's his personal thing. I think he cursed slightly before saying it, but he didn't finish, so it's OK," Bauernmeister said with a laugh.

Bauernmeister called while his band was on a break from making its way through the United States to Minneapolis where the band was scheduled to open its tour. The band comes to St. Andrew's Hall on Thursday, April 4.

The pop punk band Jawbreaker has been hearing a lot of peculiar comments of late. Sure, the band hears that it's a sell-out for releasing its album "Dear You" on a major label (Geffen). But

Bauernmeister has also been told about his new fan base.

"I've been hearing that a lot lately. 'My now-ex-boyfriend got me into you guys.' It's kind of funny. The good thing about that though is that the boyfriend is an ex and we're still liked," Bauernmeister said.

If you have any questions or comments for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her care of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 38261 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or via e-mail at cfuoco@aol.com, or you can leave her a message at (313) 953-2047 ext. 2130.

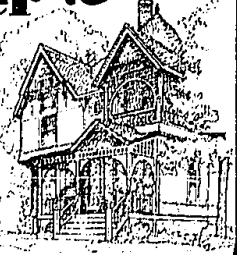
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