

STREET SCENE

Van Halen welcomes a down-to-earth new singer

"To Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony, new lead singer Gary Cherone is a God-send."

"He's very down to earth. He doesn't have 'LSD Syndrome.' That's what we call lead singer delirium where it's like all the planets rotate around the singer. He's just a very down-to-earth guy," Anthony said.

He added that he was the only member of Van Halen who was familiar with Cherone's former band, Extreme, before the trio hired Cherone.

"I had met Gary five years ago at a concert they played. We all knew that he was a talented singer, though. But it's probably more about how he is as a person. When you're in a band, it's like you're married to one another in this business," he said.

"It only took probably for him to get out of the car for us to say, 'Hey, this is it.' Forty-five minutes later we wrote 'Without You'."

That single, from the band's debut effort with Cherone, "Van Halen III" (Warner Bros.) proved to be successful.

For the recording of "Van

Halen III," not only did Anthony, drummer Alex Van Halen, and guitarist/vocalist Eddie Van Halen, bring along a new singer but a new producer as well — Mike Post. Post is best-known for composing the theme song to the TV show "Hill Street Blues."

Originally, Glen Ballard was chosen to produce the album, but he was committed to doing Alanis Morissette's second album.

"Ed knew Mike Post because they had golfed together a couple from times. They were casual acquaintances. ... Mike Post was actually Gary's idea. He did stuff years ago. He produced and won a Grammy for Mason Williams. He did all of Sonny and Cher's recordings. He got fed up with that end of the business because he never got his big break," Anthony said of Post.

"By going into that other aspect of the business he got quite famous."

The new blood in the band was inspirational to Van Halen in a few ways, Anthony explained.

"He writes great lyrics for one thing. This is the first album that Eddie will tell you lyrically

inspired a lot of his songwriting. Usually the music came first, we'd create a melody and put a lyric to that."

Cherone has also inspired the band to travel to countries like New Zealand and Australia, which the 10-year-old band had never visited.

"Right from the get-go, the shows were great. It's actually the first time we ever played over there. We had singers in the past who have never wanted to go there," Anthony said.

"Figures, now that Sammy's not in the band, he's down there right now. Maybe his wife wanted to go there."

Van Halen and Creed performed at 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 19, The Palace of Auburn Hills, 2 Championship Dr. (I-75 and Lapeer Road), Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$40 and \$27.50 reserved for the club. For more information, call (248) 377-0100 or visit <http://www.palacetent.com>.

The Verve Pipe is slated to receive an ASCAP award Monday, May 18, in Los Angeles for the song "The Freshman," which

was dubbed one of the top 50 singles of 1997.

The East Lansing-based band will return to the studio at the end of June with producer Michael Beinhorn to record its follow-up to the platinum-selling album "Villains." Beinhorn's credits include Social Distortion's "White Light, White Heat, White Trash," the Red Hot Chili Peppers' "Mother's Milk," Social Asylum's "Grave Dancers Union," Ozzy Osbourne's "Ozzmosis," and the Violent Femmes' "Why Do Birds Sing?" RCA Records hopes to release the album by this summer.

Verve Pipe fans who can't wait that long to hear new material can pick up the soundtrack to the film "The Avengers" (Atlantic Records) on July 7. It will feature "Blow You Away," a song that singer Brian Vander Ark wrote with XTC's Andy Partridge.

Steve Poltz's ballad "Leavin' Again," from his solo debut "One Left Shoe" (Mercury) was scheduled to be featured in the season finale of Fox's "Party of Five." He

was coy about the scene in which it will be used. However, the lyrics "You can say you're comin' back/You can say you're leavin'/I wish that you would let me know/So I can start my grieving" lead to the break-up of Julia and Griffin's marriage.

"Charlie's gonna die. Bailey's gonna start drinking again and little Claudia's violin is going to be stolen. No, I don't know what's going to happen," Poltz said with a laugh during his show Friday night at the Mill Street Entry in Pontiac.

"Maybe they'll play it when Neve Campbell (Julia) is making love to that husband of hers (Griffin), played by Jeremy Lon-

donk. What about that guy? He's always whining about money. What a loser. Get a job."

Poltz, the lead singer of the quirky pop band The Rugburns, also co-wrote "You Were Meant for Me" with Jewel. While performing the song Friday, he stopped after the line "Got my eggs, got my pancakes too/Got maple syrup/Everything but you" and said, "You know a guy didn't write the next line." Poltz went on to sing with an exaggerated smile "Break the yolk and make a smiley face."

He also did acoustic covers of "Waterfalls" by TLC and "Red Corvette" by Prince.

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Backstage Pass gets back to normal

BACKSTAGE PASS



ANN DELISI

Back to normal. Detroit Public Television's Spring fundraising events are over. Some of these big events are like the holidays: You have a little nag, visit with friends you only see at that time, and really enjoy them while they're happening. But when but when things go back to normal you breathe a huge sigh of relief.

We really are creatures of habit. Even the things that break up our routines are sometimes, well, routine. They happen every year like clockwork, and we mark our calendars and wait for them to come around to divert us.

The same is true in Detroit's arts and cultural events. Many take place each year, and while they grow and evolve and boast bigger and better acts each year, we look forward to them partly because of the continuity of the happening. With the city on the brink of the summer festival season, a whole slew of annual events are on the slate, and Backstage Pass is primed to bring them to you.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open, Friday, May 8

"DEEP IMPACT"

Sci-fi thriller tells how people on earth deal with an impending collision with an asteroid.

"HUGO"

Romantic comedy about a straight-laced law clerk's blind date with a beautiful young woman that results in an evening of nonstop adventure.

Scheduled to open Friday, May 15

"THE QUEST FOR CAMELOT"

Thrilling adventure set in a magical world. Timeless legends and contemporary humor are intertwined with images created by some of the world's most distinguished animation artists.

"BULLWORTH"

A depressed U.S. Senator finds himself saying publicly for the first time what he's always known to be true about race and wealth in America. Stars Warren Beatty.

"CHARACTER"

Exclusively at the Landmark Main Theatre: A story of passion and ambition about a father and son locked in a struggle to destroy each other. Stars Fede Warren Beatty.

"CHINESE BOX"

Exclusively at the Main Art. Romantic melodrama of impossible cross-cultural love between a British journalist and a former prostitute.

"THE HORSE WHISPERER"

Based on Nicholas Evans' best-selling novel of a mother's quest to save her maimed daughter, and a horse driven mad by pain. Stars Robert Redford.

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