STREET SCENE

England's Jimmy Ray obsessed with American culture

Tusay that English pop singer Jinkiy Ray is obsessed with American culture is an under-statement. Looking around his

And is ousessed with American culture is an understatement. Looking around his London apartment. Ray lets loose a long list of his pop culture collectibles.

"Ive got thousands of books on all things American. A lot of stuff about (John F.) Kennedy – good and bad. A lot of Elvis stuff. A lot of stuff about American music, Muhammad Ali, all the 'Star Wars' scripts. My whole bathroom is black and white photos of my pop idols and a lot of Jimi Hendrix, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck stuff," Ray said pausing to eath his breath.

"Ive got the 'Boulevard of Broken Dreams' photo. I've got a Batman jug with kitchen utensis in it. I've got Elvis magnets on the fridge and atop the fridge is Staraky and Hutch's Grand Torino with a New York police car and a taxic abs following it."

"My life is pretty much the American dream gone wrong."
When he pulls into town to open for the Backstreet Boys on Friday, July 24, at The Palace of Auljurn Hills, Ray will probably see the store Decades in Royal



British rocker: Jimmy Ray, who loves American culture, is making his American debut and playing the Palace.

Oak as his Mecca.

It's not as if all of that was unexpected. On the back of his padour, is wearing cowboy boots,

On "Jimmy Ray," the singer

tips his hat to Presiev and even Motown.
"One track, Trippin' on Baby Blue, has a bit of a Smokey kind of thing, I certainly don't think it comes anywhere near the stars of the Motown days. I've always been a fan of pop music. Motown made some of the greatest poprecords of all time, he explained. New wave acts of the 1980s also played a part of the creation of "Jimmy Ray."

"The first record I ever bought was by the Human League, 'Dare.' That kind of spells out a little bit about where I came from. I quickly moved onto 'Osto' or 'o'll - Little Richard, Elvis and stuff like that. That really meant a lot to me," Ray said.

"I also listened to the Pet Shop
Boys and Madonna. I've always
been a fan of pop music. I'm too
lazy to hunt out underground
obscure music."
His debut has spawned the
shimmying introduction 'Are You
Jimmy Ray?' featuring a modified Bo Diddley beat and addietive chorus ('Are you Johnnie
Ray/l'Are you Stingray?'Are you
Fay Wray'l'Are you Jimmy
Ray?'')
"Daddy's Got a Gun" shares
his love of westerns and pon
music by coupling a tired harmonica with a hip-hop beat.

Ray said he is pleased to be lumped in with acts like the Backstreet Boys, the Spice Girls,

Hanson and 'N Sync who are-steering away from the doldrums of alternative rock and aiming for "the more colorful side of

steering away from the doint with a state of alternative rock and aiming for 'the more calorful side of alternative rock and aiming for 'the more calorful side of Minist.'

"You do have a lot of that,' Ray said about alternative rock and grunge. Even when I was in the states recently, I was promoting my song and hearing a lot of records like the Backstreet Boys and 'N Syne. But there would be a very heavy amount of Matchbox 20, and a lot of people who dress in black. I think that there should always be some kind of balance.'

The tour with the Backstreet Boys is Ray's first of the United States, aside from promotion appearances at radio stations.

"I couldn't ask for anything more, in terms of opportunities to play for people. I love the States. I only had one bad experience in Oklahoma and I won't states. I only had one had experience in Oklahoma and I won't spent in the states. I move that the states of sort of states and I never know what's going to happen. I'm looking forward to an exciting opportunity to fod around.

"Any is also excited about exploring the United States where a like the United States where a like the United States where the like the United States where the spent in the sort of plamour and piltz going on. In America everything seems to be more over the top. Even the buildings. And the curry take an old caddy und company it to a Ford Capri which you see driving a round London. America's got a little bit more get up and go."

Hilberry mixes classic and modern plays



First you get together your ingredients, like flour, oil, and yeast or whatever. Then you get together your tools, like measuring cups, bowls, and spatulas. Then you put it all together, creating a blob that's approximately

as appetizing as a lump of concrete. Then you kneed it, which
is such hard work that you'll
actually ache the next day. The
mass fights back as you attempt
to kneed it, sticking to everything and forcing you to fling
flow, on all proximal aurfaces.
Once kneeded, you let the blob
riser only to mercilessly beat it the
down with your bare fists.
Undeterred by your show of hostility, the blob rises again. Next,
you-force the goo into formed
pans:

pans:
Then, and only then, do you finally put the stuff into a preheated oven to bake. That's when you finally get a breather. The oven does all the work. Baking shouldn't be called 'baking,' It should be called 'Is This Really Worth It When Koepplinger's Is Willing To Do It For Me?"

They only named it after the easy part, "baking," to fool you into thinking it's something you can actually do at home.

Usually, when we enjoy a finished product, a lot of hard work and preparation is invested, work that we rarely have a channe to see. That's why in Backstage Pass on Detroit Public Television we often show the behind-the-scenes work that goes into the arts that we enjoy. And while Fall is the season full of art openings and premieres, Summer is the time when a whole lot of the hard work and preparation is being done.

So I thought I'd call Blair Anderson, who's working hard on the upcoming season at the Wayne State's Hilberry Theatre, to get a preview. "Well, besides offering a diverse selection of classical plays — Shakespeure's "Hamlet' and Moliero's "Scapin" — we have varied modern masterpieces, "The Playbuy of the Western World" and "The Mousetrap," an American gem in Moss Hart's "Light Up the Sky," a staging of Charles Dickens's classic novel "A Tale of Two Cities," and a contemporary play on George Pullman and his utopian vision gone awr."

Wow. That's a load. "Yes it is. But we have some new faculty members working with us. Their

arrival is exciting because they bring interesting points of view to the Hilberry. OK, Blair, rui it down tour first show, "The Mousetrap," comes via the State University of New York at Buffalo, The Alabama Shakespeare Festival where he was associate artistic director, and most recently at Florida State University. Ed has directed across the country at regional theaters and has a deep and active interest in traditional jazz. He's served as a radio-jazz host and interviewer both in Buffalo and Tallahassee, Florida.

"Jerry Cleveland comes most recently from Hampton University outside Washington, D.C. As far as I know, Jerry directs The Playboy of the Western World" in the spring. A Coss Tech graduate in 1970, Jerry worked as a professional stage manager on Broadway, on national and international tours, from Radio City Music Hall to Australia and Nigeria. Most recently at Hampton he directed "Midsummer Night's Dream" and 'The Piano Lesson. 'His experience and energetic spirit will be exciting as he joins our program.

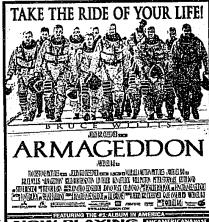
"Finally, Chris Jones takes on the duties of promotion and publicity director for our Hilberry

and Bonstelle Thentres. Chris was, I believe, a directing major here at Wayne 16 or so years ago and here most recent experiences have been with various opera companies across the country.

"On top of all that change, we will also have about fourteen now actors joining the company because we just graduated our largest group ever. I hope everyone—the curious who might like to check us out, or maybe folks who haven't been down in years—will join those who have actively supported us and keep coming back."

Finally, Blair, what are you

ly supported us and keep coming back."
Finally, Blair, what are you directing? "Moliered' Scapin."
It's less a comedy of manners, like 'Tartufle' or 'The Imaginary Invalid,' but rather it shares his comedie slap-stick techniques he used as an actor when he toured with his troupe in France. It's in the 'commedia dell'arte' tradition and a great theatrical romp."
This week, Kim Hunter joins the Salsa dance craze, Marshu Miro's look at Monet at U-M, plus music from "Sweeny Toddand Dog's Eye View. That's on Backstage Pass tonight at midnight, repeated Friday at 7:30 p.m. on Detroit Public Television.





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