Sister Hazel tires of the 'nice guy' label

They're nice guys who write nice, happy songs and put on happy shows. But Ryan Newell, rhythm/ slide guitariat for the roots rock band Siater Hazel, said the "nice" label is getting old.

"When we write songs, a lot of times they come from the same places the angst-ridden songs come from. Usually the songs start with some kind of frustration and either you claberate on the frustration or write a song to try to make you feel better. We're the ones playing the songs every night so there's no use in making ourselves more depressed," Newell said with a laugh, via telephone from Hawaii.

"We like to put peoplie in a nicer place. But people write us up as the 'happy shand.' That's ridiculous to us because we feel like we're writing about the same things."

No matter where the songs

When Universal Records showed interest (and a budget) the band "touched up" a few of

You."

The first record, it's self-titled, and is actually a demo for us to get gigs when we were first starting out. People liked the cassette so we decided to get CDs made," explained Newell, who appeared an the album.

After the success of "Sistor Hazel," the band returned to the studie to start work on. "Somewhere More Familiar." Recorded in six days and mixed in four, the band released it on its own label, Croakin Peot Records.

"We rode around in a van and trailer and sold the CD on our own. We started to have label interest but we decided to put it out as is. I think a lot of the magic from that record was the raw energy on it. We recorded a lot of those tracks live and went back and touched it up."

When Universal Records Sister Hazel and Seven Mary Three perform Wednesday, Aug. 19, at Clutch Cargo's, 65 E. Huron, Ponitac. Tickets are \$11 in advance, \$13 at the door for the all-ages show. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (248) 333-2362 or visit http://www.961melt.com. Sister Hazel's Web site is http:// www. sisterhazel.com



Dave Wagner returns to Backstage Pass

BACKSTAGE

In the salad passes that is Backstage Pass, with its many contributors adding flavor to the overall dish, Dave Wagner was the arrugula. So Dave's departure last season was roughfage?

ANN was roughfage?

DELISI on all of us. Sure, you can have a great season was roughfage?

On all of us. Sure, you can have a great season without arrugula, but the entire time you're partaking of it you're thinking, 'Great salad! If only it had some arrugula.

Well, our salad days are back. Like Michael Myers and Freddic Kruger before him, Dave Wagner won's stay gone. Of course, we couldn't be happier. But when you're talking about the guy who for so many years at WQRS was noted for bringing a sense of humor to the sometimes staid world of classical music, you have to figure we're going to teaso him mercilessly.

I called Dave and asked him, just where the heck was he, nayway? I was for lind a great time doing the world of classical music, you have to figure we're going to teaso him mercilessly.

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teach full time at Madonna, so I took the plunge doing the gif got as associate professor, teaching music history, music theory, and are welding for plumbers. Oops! I'm low on acetylene. OK, how about directing the University Chorale, then? I'll be busy doing some gigs on pipe organ, too. And, of course, I get to work with you again, Ann, which is extremely cool. I'm glad to be back for the third scason of Backstage Pass." While he liked Cinci, Dave missed Detroit. "Sure, they have Skyline Chili, but they don't have our Coneys or Greektown. You have to go away to realize the great things we have here."

Speaking of what we have

away to realize the great things we have here."

Speaking of what we have here, how about a preview of the upcoming classical season around Detroit? "The upcoming Michigan Opera Theatre season opens with Puccinis" Turandot, which actually hasn't been done here in a while. It has a really good cast, including Alessandra Mare, who got her first big break with the MOT and has gone on to an international career. Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, is coming at the end of September to do the ballet "Romeo & Juliet," Also, the Carlo is coming to perform at the Detroit Opera House as part of

the MOT season in May.

"The Detroit Symphony Orchestra season opens with Joahun Boll, the violinist, who's on the cutting edge now of the upcoming names. In October there's Nigel Kennedy, who goes by just the one name 'Kennedy,' kind of like Prince. He's one of the new wave of performers he doesn't dress in the traditional tuxedo, he may come out wearing all black. Then you have Awadagin Pratt, an African American planist from Philly, who's won all these competitions. Also coming in October is guitarist Chistopher Parkening. He was one of the favorite students of Andres Segovia, the great guru who brought the guitarist forth as a sole instrument on the concert stage. And I can't forget about the Preservation Hall Jazz Band coming in from New Orleans.

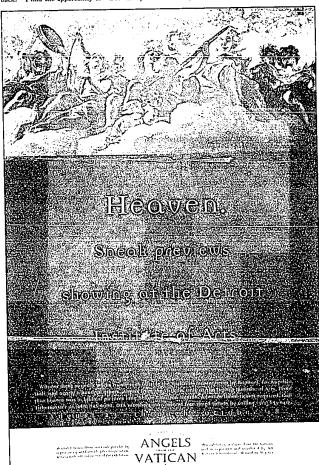
Anything outside the big venues? "Detroit's particularly rich in community music-making, both university and community groups. You've get the Lyric Chamber Ensemble, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, plus other community symphonies and ensembles, we're a very rich area for that. I hope we offer some surprises too, off-the-beaten-path groups you

Speaking of surprises, Dave got one earlier this year. "I won the 1998 Motor City Music Award for Best Classical Disc for my CD Bright and Clear. I was going to call the disc 'Dull and Opaque,' but I thought this was more uplifting. Maybe it was a sympathy vote after what happened at WQRS. I was so caught up in my romance with 1-76 that I didn't even know I was nominated. One day a friend told me, "Congratulations, you won the award." So now I have this statuette."

award.' So now I have this statute."

Thing sure turned around after the demise of WQRS and the abandonment of classical radio in Detroit got 1998 off to an unceremonious start. "Yeah, what a great year! Oddly enough, I'm looking forward to 1999; I've got a bunch of concerts lined up in Cincinnati. I guess you just look for opportunities as they come up."

Backstage Pass is pro-empted this week due to the August Pledge Drive at Detroit Public Television. Fear not; we'll be back on the air next week with more great coverage of Southeast Michigan's vibrant visual and performing arts.



DESTINATION: CRANBROOK

Take a day to visit Cranbrook with family and friends!
There's more to explore than ever before at Cranbrook - more exhibits,
more tours, more fun, Jump-start your imagination at our newly expone
science museum. Take a three-hour tour of our National Historic Landmacampus. Stop for a picnic near the science museum or hike lush nature
trails. At Cranbook, you'll find something for everyone to
pain this tumber - min or thin. enjoy this summer - rain or shine.

Institute of Science

Institute of Science
Chack out our newly expanded museum and summer blockbuster exhibit, The Rabat Zoal larger-than-life robotic beasts, including a giant sayuld with 18-foot tentacks, demonstrate how animals function in the natural world.

The Robat Zaa is sponsored locally at Cranbrook by FANUC Robatics North America. Inc.

Art Museum
Explore an array of contemporary art exhibitions
featuring photography, sculpture, ceramics and
more. The museum also offers fascinating tours
of historic Scarinen House as well as one of the
country's finest outdoor sculpture collections.

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gardens surrounding the home of Crambrook
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For information, call toll free: 1-877-GO-CRANBrook

1221 N. Woodward Avenue in Bloomfield Hills, just a few miles north of downtown Birmingham.

