

Dance from page E1

"Big Spender" as a student in the Creative and Performing Arts program at Livonia's Churchill High School in the late 1980s.

"Growing up I was really influenced by Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire," said Reuter. "Fosse was a contemporary, a song and dance man and one of my biggest influences."

Reuter and the cast went through six weeks of intensive rehearsals with Ann Reinking and Gwen Verdon.

Verdon, for whom Fosse created "Whatever Lola Wants" in "Damn Yankees," serves as artistic adviser to the production. Reinking was a principal dancer in many of Fosse's shows.

In fact, Reuter originally worked with Reinking in the revival of "Chicago" on Broadway.

"They're the keepers of the torch," said the 28-year-old Reuter, who started out in the chorus at Walt Disney World and eventually worked his way to New York where he sang at Radio City Musical Hall with The Rockettes and as a backup singer for Liza Minnelli. "They have all the original information and don't let you get away with much."

Reuter will give a vocal workshop for the students at Waterford Mott High School.

Steve Kosinski, Reuter's instructor in the CAPA program, now teaches at Waterford Mott.

Joining Reuter for the vocal workshop will be Marsh Hansen, a member of his vocal jazz group New York Bopp and a cast member of the "Irish and How They Got That Way" opening at Music Hall in March.

While studying for a degree in music theater performance at Western Michigan University, Reuter developed a love for vocal jazz music.

Today Reuter is founder and artistic director of the vocal jazz group New York Bopp.

Eccentric staff writers contributed to this article.

Crud debut draws neat reviews

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
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"You guys must be crazy," shouted one fan standing in a long line leading down the corridor outside Lili's 21 in Hamtramck. But the crowd of people rushing out of the club weren't leaving — they were heading for the stage door, ready to make their entrance.

In a moment made for local music history, Vinnie Dombroski, Joey Mazzola, Robby Graham and Jimmy Paluzzi debuted on Lili's stage as the newly formed Crud. These former members of Detroit-based bands Sponge and Hoarse have been rehearsing for just more than a month, but the buzz surrounding them is growing louder by the minute.

The crowd pushed and prodded its way as close to the stage as possible Friday, Feb. 11, anxious to catch a glimpse of Crud's first public performance. Four white-hot spotlights shined down — one on each band member.

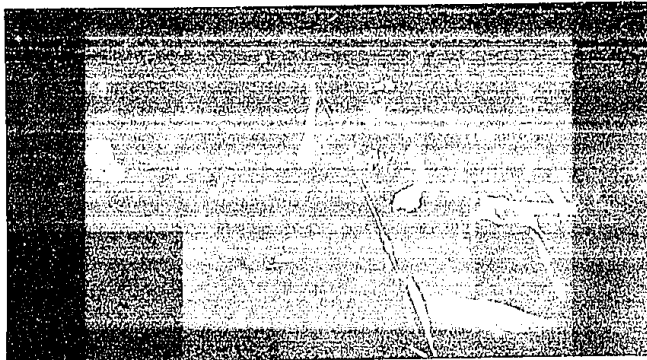
Vinnie — dressed in black with his head tilted toward the light — sang with such force and conviction, it was hard to look away. But each spotlight burned as brightly above this group of musicians who've proved themselves worthy of national attention. Paluzzi, Sponge's original drummer, and Graham had long solidified their places behind the drums and bass guitars as half of Hoarse. Vinnie and Mazzola made headlines as the voice and guitar behind Sponge. There was hardly a stranger in the club.

"It fell together really naturally," said Vinnie in a phone interview.

Welcome home

Debuting at Lili's seemed a natural choice. Sponge had chosen the venue for several record release parties, and even recorded "Live at Lili's" there four years ago. "It made sense to play there again," said Vinnie. "I feel welcome there."

Now it's time to put the past aside. Crud has a decidedly different sound, a far cry from the pop-driven melodies of Sponge hits like "Molly" and "Plowed." These songs possess more of an edge, a deeper, darker side of rock. "Dig My Own Grave"



STAFF PHOTOS BY GARY MARSH

New reality: Introducing Crud (left to right), otherwise known as Joey Mazzola, Jimmy Paluzzi, Vinnie Dombroski and Robby Graham — the latest, greatest musical incarnation of these longtime Detroit musicians.

and "Meat Dotation" are real, raw, rock and roll. Vinnie calls it "Zombie meets the Pilots doing a soundtrack to 'Easy Rider.'"

And it shows on-stage. It shows in the way Vinnie forcefully clutches the microphone, the way Jimmy Paluzzi grinds his teeth behind the drums. You can see it when Joey Mazzola hops up and down with fervor and Robby Graham intensely rocks back and forth cradling his bass.

"There's a certain aspect, that heart aspect, I think can really work for you," said Vinnie of his band mates. "When you work with people you've had some kind of history with, you know their gonna give 120 percent."

With that kind of energy, the name Crud doesn't seem to do the music justice, but Vinnie admits it's "sneer and sneer" to him. "The name was a focal point for me," he said. "When these songs started to emerge, I wanted to call them something. These songs fit so perfectly into that idea of this thing called Crud, it just seemed to work."

One to watch

Crud has already been touted as the one new band to watch in metro Detroit. Greg Pawlowski came out to Lili's not knowing what to expect. He'd never heard Sponge or Hoarse before, but now he's hooked on Crud.

"It was awesome," declared the Farmington Hills resident. "I'm actually really surprised. I've never heard any of these songs. I'd come see them anytime."

Pawlowski was one of a lucky few who managed to catch the show front and center. Chris Hutt, a Bloomfield Hills native, struggled to see the show from farther back. He wouldn't have missed it. "It was rockin'," said Hutt. "I believe it was their first show. Nobody knew the songs, but the place was packed ... everyone was standing on the chairs."

That curiosity hung heavily in the air. Theresa Gallagher and Jenny Zaccaro read about the show on a message board on the Internet and trekked all the way from Chicago to catch the band. "Vinnie is the greatest," gushed Zaccaro. "Whatever band he's in, we're fans." All this attention comes long before Crud has even begun work on an album.

Vinnie said he's constantly writing new material.

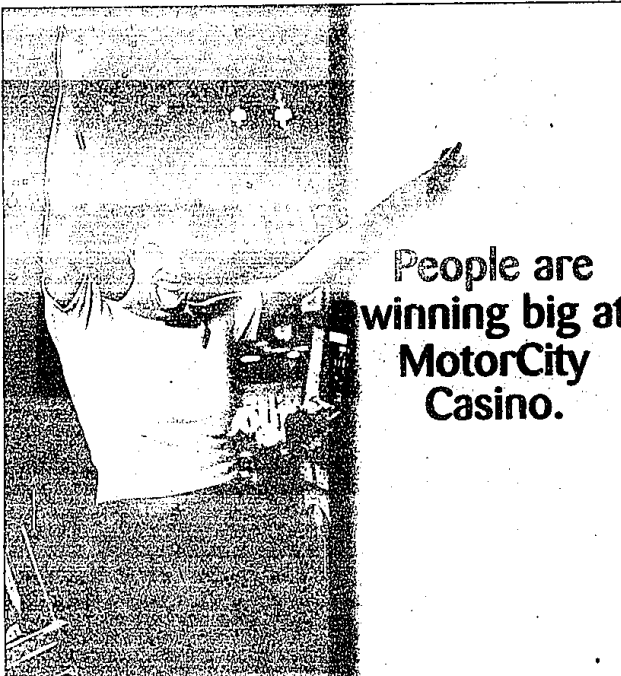


Loud at Lili's: Guitarist Joey Mazzola strings a tune for Crud, a local band to watch.

"The stuff never shuts off. It just happens."

"I've always used the live shows to gauge the success of the music. All the songs we played worked out well."

If Crud gets its way, there will be another show soon. For now, Vinnie's concentrating on getting the music out. "I'd love to have everything I've done recorded and mixed ... Give it a little time."



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