

## STREET SCENE

## For a healthy dose of happy-go-lucky punk just 'blink'

Tom DeLonge wouldn't exactly be surprised if the Central Intelligence Agency stopped by his house, in an attempt to keep him quiet.

Singer, guitarist and one-third of the Bay

area's pop-punk outfit blink-182, DeLonge admits he's somewhat consumed by thoughts of government conspiracy and alien existence—and he's proud of it.

"All I ever do is read books about aliens and the end of the world," he said in a recent telephone interview with The Observer & Eccentric. "I'm trying to open up the eyes of the public. I know we have got technology and contact." Though he insists it's just the government and Tom DeLonge himself that know for sure, "I'm going to talk about aliens so much it will get the point where the CIA is coming to my house."

"If my band is suddenly really unpopular..." his voice trails with laughter as he expects to get into some trouble. Somehow it seems unlikely. But this virtual obsession with the unknown did lead to his favorite track on the band's latest album *Enema of the State*.

A possible new single and video might be made for *Allens Creek*, the mere thought of which gets DeLonge into an adorable, child-like tizzy squealing: "I might have my video."

This is a far cry from his earlier days of delivering concrete. DeLonge insists if he weren't busy being a full time rock star, he'd probably be "stuck at some god-awful 40-hour a week job."

lucked out," he said. "We worked hard to get it."

The work has paid off and to prove it DeLonge and his blink-182 cohorts, singer-bassist Mark Hoppus and new drummer Travis Barker will grace the stage June 9 at Pine Knob Music Theatre in Independence Township before a sold out crowd. The upcoming tour, he promised, will be chock full of funny video footage and some funny new jokes—along with some of the same old jokes the band can't seem to lose.

What does blink-182 do before heading out on such a big-time tour with all sorts of sold-out dates? "I light a fire, say a chant, I put water on my face," he said, laughing. "I don't really do anything. I try to relax as much as possible. Every time I come home, I'm more busy than anyone you've ever seen."

While sitting on his sofa strumming his guitar from a San Diego home, DeLonge spoke with an easy-going tone—a seeming almost stunned about the band's success. "We all met through mutual friends and put a band together. All of a sudden we're playing big shows."

Referred to as Hot Pants—for no particular reason—on the CD liner notes, he describes the average blink fan as a "happy-go-lucky skater kid who doesn't hate the world." Though he admits now rock, pop and metal fans of all ages entered the mix. "There's such a wide array of kids." But the punk-rock-skater boys and girls remain loyal.

"We sing about things these kids can relate to," he reasoned. "We're sincere about what we write about." That encompasses anything from the heartbreak of *Don't Leave Me This Time* to the lessons

about women taught ever-so-tongue-in-cheek in *The Party Song*, and it's all done in furious-paced blink-182 style.

The band is also featured on the latest compilation for *Benefit for The Bay*. "We live at the beach," said DeLonge. "We know the people putting it together. We've done one or two before."

His reasoning is simple, and it rhymes: "If it helps out the bay, then hay!"

But radio stations, MTV and music media everywhere can't get enough of *Enema of the State* over-playing undeniable hits like *All The Small Things* and *What's My Age Again?*. "I'm really proud of our record," he said. "I like what we've done."

Though the album took only two and a half months to record, it's proved to have a much longer shelf life. After 50 weeks on the Billboard 200 chart, it's steady at 48. Their recent single *Adam's Song* is currently at number two on the Modern Rock Charts. But that's not all DeLonge has been listening to these days. After a recent trip to the record store, he bought albums by Dr. Dre, The Descendents and The Ataris.

As for his own band, DeLonge noted that they've come a long way. "We've gotten to be a much better band, better songwriters. We learned from what we've done wrong—what jokes are bad, what music's bad. But we all know we look really good naked!"

Does anyone else predict an alien abduction here?

Lucky ticketholders will see all of blink-182, along with *Bad Religion*, *Fenix TX*, 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 9, Pine Knob Music Theatre, Independence Township. (248) 377-0100.

Stephanie Angelyn Casola



JUSTIN STEPIEN

On the way: blink-182's Mark Hoppus, Tom DeLonge and Travis Barker make their way to Pine Knob Music Theatre in Independence Township Friday.

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## Lou Reed tour brings 'Ecstasy' to State Theatre

By ALICE RHEIN  
STAFF WRITER

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For music enthusiasts, the one true test of a perennial artist's or band's musical relevance is whether or not their early vinyls were upgraded to CDs.

David Bowie. Yes. Ziggy Stardust is as fresh today as it was more than a quarter century ago.

The Who. No. Live at Leeds remains tucked away in the cardboard case, pressed together with every other Who album purchased in the prime of adolescence.

King Crimson. Some. Though played far less often than they ought to be.

Then there's Lou Reed—who performs at the State Theatre on Thursday, June 15.

From his very first album, *The Velvet Underground and Nico* to *Transformer*, his brilliant second solo album, to *Rock & Roll Animal*, often reputed to be one of rock's best live albums, to *New York*, the poignant poet's perspective on politics, drugs and sex in the city, just about every

What: Lou Reed with special guest Victoria Williams

When: Thursday, June 15, 7:30 p.m.

Where: State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit (313) 961-5450

Tickets: \$29.50-35 available at TicketMaster locations or charge by phone at (248) 645-6666.

Reed vinyl in my collection as its jewel-case sister.

And after a few less-than-memorable projects to date (specifically 1996's *Set the Twilight Reeling* and 1998's live *Perfect Night*), the master of avant-rock is back with *Ecstasy*, a textured torrent of biting lyrics and funky-up rhythms.

Girlfriend Laurie Anderson—the performance artist best known for *O Superman*—lends her electric violin to *Rock Minuet* and *Rouge*, the former a maudlin tale of perversion; the latter a plush minuet which is prelude to the heavy anthem *Big Sky*.

The 77-minute album opens with *Paranoia Key of E*, an acerbic wit set loose into a don of droning guitars courtesy of Reed and guitarist Mike Rathke.

There's also *Like a Possum*, a gritty urban tale which, at 18 minutes, is certainly not destined for radio play, but holds its weight against *Sister Ray*, the last lengthy saga Reed offered when he fronted the Velvet Underground.

At 69, the slinky Brooklyn native, once the darling of Andy Warhol's Factory, is less decadent

these days and more the quintessential New Yorker—a mindful cynic who can't help but find pleasure in pain.

But even with more than 35 years in the music biz, Reed hasn't lost a beat.

Perhaps he's not walking on the wild side quite so much—he was, after all, the subject of a profile on the PBS *American Masters* series. And he's played art festivals, the White House and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Still, while the musical roots for a generation of new artists can be traced back to Reed, his most recent works remain relevant.

*Songs for Drella*, his 1990 dedication to Warhol which reunited him with former Undergrounders John Cale, and 1992's *Magic & Loss*, a deathly serious work of art, are witness to why he is rock's poet laureate.

*Ecstasy* reaches its climax on its title track not with a wailing wall of sound, but with lush orchestration and a grave declaration of discontent.

Add in *Future Farmers of America*, with its upbeat rock tempo, and Reed, along with David Kahne and Hal Willner, have produced an impressive array of songs that explore the dark side but still know how to rock.



Lou Reed

## CD REVIEW

## The Eels' new release proves to be a slithering success

*Daisies of the Galaxy*

The Eels

DreamWorks Recordings

In the genre of "artists formally known as," *Daisies of the Galaxy*, the Eels third album is written and produced by a man called E. Just E.

And though E is often the subject of his music, he isn't the main attraction. Instead, he channels family tragedies (his beloved sister and father died within months of each other), confusion and clinical depression into deceptively simple but extraordinarily lush pop tunes.

It takes a very peculiar mind to attach a mamba beat to songs about death, cancer and hospital food (not necessarily in that order), as E did in his previous releases *Electro-Shock Blues* and *Beautiful Freak*. But it works.

With the tonal sensibility of melodic sage Brian Eno and the delightfully funky courage of Beck, the California artist formerly known as Mark Everett seems—if not happy—is at least a fit hanger in his third release.

*Daisies* opens with a wash of off-beat notes and shifts into *Grace Kelly Blues*, an ode to and flow of plucky guitars and drifting orchestration.

For one of the most intelligent lyrics of our time, his subjects are rather warm and fuzzy—furry field mice, birds, clouds and daisies, of course.

But he takes poetic twists and turns into the dark side with *Tiger in my Tank* ("I think I'm on the brink of disaster"), and ruminates in the bittersweet *Selective Memory* ("The days go on forever when you only know that much").

Rather than needing *Nouveau* for the *Soul*, as in his first release, E seems to be numbing his pain with the forces of nature. And when that doesn't work, he always has a perennially upbeat rhythm running through his veins.

—By Alice Rhein

Check out The Eels on Monday, June 19, 7th House, Pontiac. For tickets, call (248) 645-6666.

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