

Delta 88 takes driver's seat



STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

sometimes the best music can still be found in the shadows of a small club, amid the smoke of a historic theater. Based in Ann Arbor, this three-piece consists of singer-songwriter Danny Kline, guitarist Alex Anest and bassist John Sperendi.

On Friday afternoon, Jan. 19, I met the musicians for tea at Zola in Ann Arbor and learned how three diverse personalities come together to create this rooty sonic blend which somehow manages to capture a slice of Americana in the most mellow, unassuming way. Anest, 26, who also manages the band, speaks with the experience of someone determined to get where he's going, and yet seems content enough to share where he's been. Playing guitar since age 7, Anest now teaches the instrument. You might even stumble across the Chelsea resident at the Clarkston Conservatory of Music. With a penchant for artists like Willy Nelson, Anest is also the most likely to be donning a cowboy shirt upon arrival.

But don't classify Delta 88 as country — or you'll hear it from Danny Kline. The gentle-voiced singer-songwriter's career began on a dare. When childhood friends told him he couldn't sing, Kline proved them all wrong. He sings with an honest, all-knowing quality and uses words that convey an introspective curiosity of life. Also a photographer, the 27-year-old creates lyrical snapshots, infusing inspiration from his cross-country travels. He's miles from the days he once spent singing in a Jane's Addiction-like rock band. "I'm being a little more honest with myself," he admits. "It's easy to reach people through anger. It's harder to reach people through this kind of meekness."



Hard-driving American music: (Left to right) Delta 88's voice, Danny Kline, former drummer Jim Latini, guitarist Alex Anest and bassist John Sperendi may be new in the Detroit area, but they've been playing music together for years.

Oddly enough, Anest and Kline met by accident. Both already established musicians, Kline knocked on Anest's door when looking for a former girlfriend who lived upstairs. Anest never imagined how the meeting might impact his future. "I thought he was this crazy guy," recalled Anest. "He left. I was practicing guitar. I thought maybe he was going to clobber me."

Instead, the two began working on music together, naming their venture after the first car Anest's ever owned, an Oldsmobile Delta 88. From humble beginnings in Bowling Green around 1997, Anest moved to Michigan and met John Sperendi while teaching at Herb David Guitar Studio in Ann Arbor.

Sperendi, 24, emits wild energy — the same one you'll find when he's on stage pounding on his bass, tongue hanging out and all. His style and manner seemed a perfect fit.

"It was magic from day one," said Kline, with a laugh.

Delta 88 drove their sound as hard-driving American music. But the softer side seems to ring

true. There's something almost contemplative and familiar in songs like *Stone Quarry* and *Truth is a Whisper*. Combining sentiments with gliding guitar and a smooth upright bass, Delta 88's sound is as pervasive as a cool summer wind, and just as worthy of coveting.

"To be out on the road, I've found you look at things in a very different way," said Kline. "When you're around something, you stop seeing it."

The story there lies between the notes, the words and compositions.

One song that truly conveys the spirit of Delta 88 is *Truth is a Whisper* — a favorite for both Kline and Anest. "It expresses lyrically what we are like as people," said Kline. "That song not only tells a true story, you can feel it by the way it's played."

It also has a history. "That was the first song Danny ever played for me when we were putting the record together," said Anest.

Stone Quarry is another favorite. "I like how it doesn't jump at you," described Kline of the album's opener. "You have to

come down to hear it."

For Sperendi, *Feeling Low* is a highlight of their work that really came into its own in the studio, Ann Arbor's Perfect Balance. "It just kinda happened," he recalled.

Now focusing on new material, Delta 88 is shopping for a producer to work with on a new album. The band is also starting to perform more often in Detroit and beyond. After the recent, friendly departure of drummer Jim Latini, Delta 88 is re-focused on a more organic folk-oriented sound. Preferring theaters to bars, the band hopes audiences will lend an ear.

Delta 88 performs with opener Kevin Meisel, 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, Trinity House Theatre, 38840 W. Six Mile Road in Livonia. Tickets are \$10 or \$8 for theater members. Call (734) 464-6302. For more on the band, check out www.delta88.net.

Stephanie Angelyn Casola writes about popular music for the Observer & Eccentric! News. She can be reached at (734) 953-2130 or e-mail at scasola@oe.home.com.net. To send a fax, dial (734) 591-7279.



ON SALE NOW!



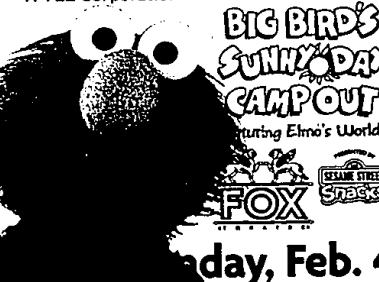
The
PHANTOM
of the
OPERA

CALL (248) 645-6666

Tickets are on sale at the theater for the first time. Tickets are on sale at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Masonic Temple Theatre.

"...exceptionally well performed..."
- Chicago Tribune

123
SESAME STREET LIVE!
A VEE Corporation Production



Big Bird's Sunny Day Campout

Featuring Elmo's World!

FOX

Friday, Feb. 4

Tickets \$10, \$14, & \$18. No double discounts. Minor charges may apply. Limited premium seats available — no discounts apply.

248-433-1515

You could be a Winner!

Check today's Classified Section to see if your name was chosen from Postcard entries.

Observer & Eccentric!
It's all about you!

Go RVing. Now thru Sunday! Life's A Trip!

Great Show!

- 21 RV Dealers showing 400 new RVs
- QUADRASTEER™ demonstrations by Delphi Saginaw Gear
- 30 Campgrounds and vacation destinations from 10 states and Canada
- Antique Camperite
- Pan-bounce, balloon rides

Great Prizes!

- Win a Viking Fold Down Camper from ROSEVILLE
- Win a 2 Week Motorhome Rental from LAKEVIEW RV
- Details and Registration at show. No Purchase Necessary

Great Location! Silverdome

- Easy Access from I-75 or M-59!
- Convenient, Safe, On-Site Parking!
- Now 2 Domes for More RVs!

Great Seminars!

- Bill Farlow — RV Writer for Highways Magazine
- Preparing for Full Time and Extended RVing
- Jim DuFresne — Travel Writer
- Great Michigan Camping Destinations
- Alaska & Canadian Maritime Provinces
- Larry Lonik — Mushroom Man
- Mushroom Hunting — How to find and cook 'em
- Great Mushroom Hunting Destinations
- Mad Dog & Merrill — Grilling Gurus
- Great RV Wiring Techniques

\$100 OFF

11th Annual PONTIAC SILVERDOME CAMPER, TRAVEL & RV SHOW

JAN 24 - 28

marketplaceofroll.com

Go RVing. Life's A Trip!

11th Annual PONTIAC SILVERDOME CAMPER, TRAVEL & RV SHOW

JAN 24 - 28

www.showspan.com

Bring your favorite camping recipe and we'll e-mail you a camping recipe book!

NOVI EXPO CENTER
Thursday, February 1, 2-10pm
Friday, February 2, 2-10pm
Saturday, February 3, 10am-10pm
Sunday, February 4, 10am-7pm

It's the ninth year for this exciting event, with thousands upon thousands of square feet of quality products and services for your home.

You'll enjoy hours of fascinating exhibits filled with new ideas, along with featured attractions and demonstrations!

ADMISSION:
Adults \$7, Seniors \$5, Children 6-12 \$4
Children under 6 - FREE

THE 2001 HOME IMPROVEMENT SHOW!

Over 300 Exciting Exhibitors...PLUS:

- Chief Raymond Wong brings his artistry and humor to Chinese cooking.
- WJR's "The Appliance Doctor" Joe Gagnon and "The Garden Show" Dean Krauskopf.
- WKYT's "Ask the Handyman" Glenn Hage.
- "Money Talk" Rick Bloom and "PC Mike's High Tech Weekend" Mike Wendland on Saturday and Sunday.
- Presentations on decorating, home repair and remodeling.
- Treasure Chest contest with daily prizes.

HOME IMPROVEMENT SHOW
NOVI EXPO CENTER
1-96 & NOVI RD.
FEBRUARY 1-4, 2001
www.builders.org