Ray Echlin is credited for keeping the band going, encour-aging and setting up shows. "He's really challenging," said Lew of his brother.

Harry Chronic Jr.'s sound holds tight to its influences -which, if you ask Lew Echlin,

## STREET SCENE

# Harry Chronic Jr. has some surprises in store



Lew Echlin knew at age 7 he was going to be a rock star. It's as simple as that.

According to the Royal Oak resident, three seident, three defining childhood moments led to this conclusion. First, there was the regular after-dinner trip he and his brother Ray took to the park, where they would listen to music. One tast of David Bowies Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars and the boys were hooked.

Then of course. Lew recalls the

the boys were hooked.

Then of course, Lew recalls the little league parade that marked his first encounter with The Beatles. Revolver brought him to tears, but he blamed his emissional outpouring on the fact that the little blue hat blew right out of the window of the van they were traveling in. "I couldn't tell them it was because of The Beatles," he said.

During a trip Up North, Lew later discovered the magic of The Who's Baba O'Riley. "These three things together convinced me that I loved rock and roll."

### Chronic pop habit

These days Lew Echlin is living out those childhood fantasies — along with his brother Ray Echlin on keys, John "Elvis" Emmert on bass and Pete Ulbrich on lend guitar — by fronting Harry Chronic Jr. The tongue-in-check name was inspired by a former roommate who once left his Harry Connick Jr. Christmas CD out on a table next to Lew's copy of The Chronic by Dr. Dre.

Nearly seven years since

te by Dr. Dre.

Nearly seven years since
Harry Chronic Jr. played its first
show, an opening gig at Detroit's
Majestic Theatre, the band
known for its infrequent-butaffermerable appearances, constant rotation of drummers and
unpredictable antice is about to
hit the stage again. The "Dirty
30" show will feature performances by Crome Mali and Centrifuge at Ferndale's Magic Bag.
Though the band is the headlining act, expect Harry Chronic Jr.
to go onstage around 11 p.m.,
before Centrifuge.

The formation of Harry Chron-

## IN THE CD PLAYER...

Horry Chronic Jr's singer/guitarist Lew Echlin isn't shy abou is music collection. Here's what he's been listening to lately:

- Twilight as Played By The Twilight Singers
  "It's a seasonal record. It got me through the v winter."
- "It's a sensonal record. It got me through the winter.

  B J P
  "He mixes Time After Time (Cyndi Lauper) with Round and
  Round (Ratt)."

  Complete John Waite: Falling Backwards
  "I'vo been listening to the Missing You single in my car."

ic Jr. was inspired by a third Echlin brother, Hobey — who originally played drums. He helped arrange the band's first show, at the largest venue to have the Chronic to date. Low still remembers the feeling of being backstage at The Majestic, more nervous than excited – he and Elvis were doing push ups.

Starr and Judi Barrett. "They exceeded our tions," said Elvis, hap the addition. Being brothers

Ray Echlin is cred expired the and going and setting up the still provide really challenging and setting up the setting the setting the second to the setting the second to t

#### Meet them at the bar

Meet them at the bar

These days, the band has traded in preparatory push ups for wacky costumes (the rule is, it has to be as silly and stupid as possible) and memorable cover songs snuck in amid a fury of boy-verses-girl pop tunes, penned and arranged by Lew Echlin. The songs deal with some combination of the following ingredients: The apprehensive or shy behavior of a 20-something guy frequenting bars to meet girls, what to do when he finds one, and "all the rotten things" that can happen once he's got one. Lew of his brother.

Ray joined the band on bass four years ago, filling in when Elvis had been transferred out of town. He skayed on and switched to keys shortly after Elvisteturned to the metre area. He said working with Lew gives them "a rare opportunity to be more than brothers." he's got one.

It's all easily explained in the lyrics of Chronic songs like Smart Boy and I'm With Stupid, which appear on the band's E.P., When You See Me At The Bar.

"I think the songs reflect more of Lew's personal life," joked Elvis during an interview Mon-day morning at Royal Oak's Caribou Coffee shop.

Caribou Coffee shop.

Each bandmate adds a personal touch to the music. Not having one regular drummer, Harry Chronic Jr. brings in some of the Detroit area's finest for live performance, each adding their own style to the sound. For the Magie Bag show, the band will be joined by Jerome Day of Howling Diablos fame. It will also mark the first appearance of The Chronettes – backup singers Dawn New, Amy Wefel, Jessica

A WARM, HEARTFELT, UPLIFTING GEM this of those rate, thoughtful, beautiful movies with a feeling of 2 Min and 10 Min and

blends the musical style of Afghan Whigs, with Radiohead-whiny harmonies and the atti-tude of The Allman Brothers all into one shiny, happy package They stray from usual formats, leaving out guitar soles and sometimes bridges, stripping songs down in their own way. "There's an appropriate complex-ity to it," said Lew Echlin.

From the first note, it's evident these musicians are in it for fun. The focus, said Elvis, has always been to 'keep it upbeat." Though he admits he wouldn't turn away a chance at fame if it stopped by and tapped on his door. "They exceeded our expecta-tions," said Elvis, happy about

## Happy Birthday to Lew

Happy Birmany to Lew
Harry Chronic Jr. will record
Friday's show for live tracks
which are likely to appear on an
upcoming CD. Ray Eshin can't
wait to capture that sound. 'Lew
loves being an entertainer,
bringing joy to people, fostering
an air of 'let's smile and have a
great time,' he said. 'If we can
touch just one person with our
show—our job is done.

"Well and then our other inh

"Well, and then our other job is to dodge objects being hucked at the stage."

The band also plans on reveal-ing a surprise guest and inviting the audience to hop enstage for a grand finale. more than brothers."

"We put on our "unusician' hats over the Echlin Standard Issue and do what bandmates do argue and agree. When our older brother Hobey played drums, and it was just the three of us crazies, more than just musical notes floated through the air. But seriously, it is a labor of love. Low writes some poignant songs that I think deserve an air of professional presentation. So I feel I bring that element to the fold."

grand mane.

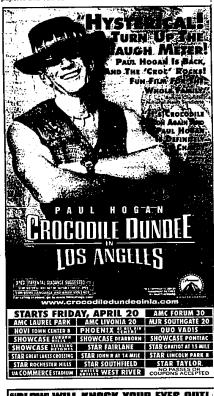
If that isn't reason enough to get over to the Magic Bag for the Chronic, come down to celebrate Lew Echlin's 30th birthday, Harry Chronic-style.

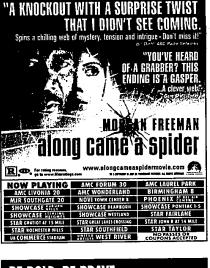
Spend the night with Harry Chronic 4r.,, Centrifuge and Crome Mali, 8 pm. Friday, April 20, Magic Bag, Ferndale. Tickets are \$7. Call (248) 544-3030. Check them out on the Web at www.harrychronicjr.com.



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