

## Music from the '70s stars in new show

BY KEELY MALESKI  
STAFF WRITER

If your "Mama told you not to come," don't listen - 8-Track: The Sounds of the 70s, in an open run at the Century Theatre in Detroit, pulls people from all ages.

"My dad's 84 and he loved it," said Rick Seebor who created and directs the show. "Our core audience are boomers 35-55. It's nothing but entertainment, escapism of sorts. It attaches to people's hearts. You come into the show after a long day and it gives you energy. It does not take it away."

The 1970s? Wasn't that all about disco and "young and free... the dancing queen?" and "party with the lights down low?"

Yes and no.

"I am woman hear me roar." Women began breaking through the corporate glass ceiling. Marvin Gaye asked - *What's Going On*, and while some were content to "Keep on Truckin'" and survive "the morning after," others were busy *Taking It to the Streets* demanding an end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Platform shoes, elephant pants, and lava lamps - that was part of this decade too - and the funny thing is it's all coming back. Look at fall fashions, or listen to TV commercials, the '70s are hot.

"The show is designed so that you can take an emotional journey," said Seebor. Michael Gribbin did the musical arrangements of the songs organized like an 8-track tape. Remember those?

"There are some great tunes that aren't disco," said Seebor. "I was interested in doing a show about the '70s - feminism, hedonism, equal rights, you name it."

Four characters - a seeker, lover, blossoming feminist and man who isn't quite sure where he fits in, lead the audience through a series of "tracks" that include - Not sold in stores, a celebration of cheesy commercials, *Beginnings*, *The Party*, *War and Peace*, and the *Road Trip*.

In each scene the cast connects songs to tell a tale through music. *Afternoon Delight*, *I Want to Make It With You*, *Brickhouse*, sounds like a party to me. *Breaker Breaker One-Nine* - where's the Car Wash?

The cast might sing four or eight bars of a song, they've got a lot to cover - 58



Live the disco era all over again at 8-Track: Sounds of the 70s with cast members Liana Young, (left) Teddey Brown, Nik Rocklin, and Tonya Phillips, at the Century Theatre.

songs in 90 minutes. "We connect songs in interesting ways," said Seebor. "The cast is terrific, they have top level voices."

Nik Rocklin, baritone, is the lover, a man who thinks he's God's gift to women. Tonya Phillips, soprano, the Seeker, Liana Young, alto is a blossoming feminist, and Teddey Brown, tenor, is trying to find out where he fits in. He's the guy in the Nehru jacket.

Of course, there's a disco scene, wouldn't be the '70s without it. "Disco peaked in 1976," said Seebor. "But it's sort of what people glob into when they think of the '70s."

Listen closely, and you'll hear the Carpenters, Elton John, Aretha Franklin, Barry Manilow, K.C. and the Sunshine Band, and others you forgot about. The show premiered at the Milwaukee Rep in September 2001, and is scheduled to open in Minneapolis after its Detroit run.

### 8-TRACK

#### THE SOUNDS OF THE '70s

What: A journey through the decade in song  
When: Performances 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday, 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Sunday, limited 1:30 p.m. Thursday performances. Open-ended run.  
Where: Century Theatre, 333 Madison, Detroit  
Tickets: \$24.50-\$34.50, call the box office (313) 963-9800 or Ticketmaster (248) 645-6666. Half-price preview tickets available for the first two performance weeks. Opening night is Friday, Sept. 20. Theater and restaurant packages available, visit [www.gemtheatre.com](http://www.gemtheatre.com)

## Author shares fears and joys of becoming a writer

### MY SKY BLUE TRADES

by Sven Birkerts (Yiking, 249p)

This memoir by Michigan native Sven Birkerts (*The Gutenberg Elegies*) is subtitled *Growing Up Counter in a Contrary Time*.

Born in Pontiac to Latvian refugee parents (his father, a successful architect, worked with Eero Saarinen), Birkerts grew up in Birmingham and



Book Beat

Victoria Diaz

Thomas' *Fern Hill*) follows the sometimes-melancholic, rather circuitous route the aspiring writer took to reach his first publishing milestone in the *New Boston Review* at the age of 27.

Now nearing 50, Birkerts provides us a look back not only at his own beginnings, but also (more briefly) at the beginnings of his parents and grandparents, whose foreign culture would influence his own life in many important ways.

PLEASE SEE BOOKS, B5

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