

Caruso rises on the market

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— Mike Caruso
bass player



Members of Caruso include brothers Mike Caruso(left), Dave Caruso, Joe Caruso and Rob Caruso. The group will play Monday, Oct. 19, at Rumor in Westland.

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

OK, shoppers. This "In the Face" T-shirt is currently for sale.

Yes, this 50 percent cotton blend, comfortable tee comes in cream and sells for a mere \$8.50. But wait, there's more.

This neat two-tone, one-square inch Caruso button goes for only \$1.50. Act now, and add \$1.50, and you can have an 8-inch-by-10-inch, black-and-white autographed photo of Caruso with the correct spelling no less.

No, this isn't the Home Shopping Network. This is a rock'n'roll band whose marketing skill is only surpassed by its music.

Merchandising the band is paying dividends. Caruso is a five-member group on the verge of making it big.

WHICH, OF course, is the claim of every band in the Western Hemisphere. Except, in Caruso's case, there are some definite signs that commercial success could be at the next light.

• "In the Face," a four-song extended play record, is the best-selling disc at Harmony House by an unsigned Detroit band, according to Sandy Bean, distribution director at the record outlet.

• "London," a track off the recently released EP, has received air play on WLLZ-FM, which in itself is a considerable feat for any area band.

• "Caruso," the band's first album, sold out the 6,000 copies that were made.

• Caruso has opened for the likes of Corey Hart, Joan Jett, Rick Springfield, UB40, Burton Cummings, and John Cafferty.

• For the fourth consecutive year, the pop group has been nominated by the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) for an award in the contemporary music category. Other recent nominees include the Del Fuegos and the Bangles. This year, Caruso's on the ballot with the Georgia Satellites.

SO TO GO along with the T-shirts, posters and buttons is some fine music. Which is all part of the master plan, according to Mike Caruso.

"We meet once a week in our organization," said Caruso, 29, the bass player and oldest member of the group. "We said, 'What are we going to do with this record?' We decided to treat it like a national release and not take 'no' for an answer."

"Fortunately, we haven't had to take 'no' too often." The band's main goal, obviously, is

to say yes to a major record deal. Mike Caruso said the group's being shopped around to major labels on the West Coast.

Now it's a waiting game. "The major labels wouldn't call you up and say, 'Hi, I'm CBS records,'" Mike Caruso said. "It's pretty much who you know in this business."

THE CORE of the band are the four Caruso brothers, who are from Trenton: Dave Caruso, keyboards; Rob Caruso, drums; Joe Caruso, guitar; and Mike Caruso, bass. Lee Thomas, the lone non-brother in the group, is on guitar.

Mike Caruso can't exactly pinpoint when they actually became a band in brotherhood.

He recalls playing for family by the fireplace during the holidays when they were younger.

"Then we got a P.A. system, lights and we made a rock show out of it," he said.

Currently, Caruso's rock show can be heard in a number of venues in the area, including Rumor in Westland and Jagger's in Waterford Township. The band has proved popular on the college circuit as well.

Ohio, Illinois, Florida and Texas have also been stops on Caruso's rock 'n' roll journey.

The band's music is hit-oriented and commercial, Mike Caruso said. Perhaps that can be traced back to the music they enjoyed on CKLW-AM during their youth.

Like the music which was played on the "Big Eight," Caruso believes "In the Face" has crossover potential. Dave Caruso penned the material for the EP, though Mike Caruso said all the band members contribute in the songwriting department.

THE EP, which is on NuBeat Records, was made possible by some outside financing. The promotional budget is handled by the band, which is bolstered by the sale of T-shirts, buttons and autographed pictures with the correct spelling ("If nobody gets it, I guess it's an inside joke," Mike Caruso said. "Rob's got real bad handwriting.")

But business doesn't shadow the business of making music, according to Mike Caruso.

"We're primarily musicians," he said.

Caruso will appear Monday evening, Oct. 19, at Rumor, 450 Merriman, south of Ford Road, Westland. Cover is \$3 (those who have a Caruso VIP card receive \$1 off). For more information on playing dates or obtaining a VIP card, call 671-7625.

WORLD SERIES CONTEST

West Bloomfield entry is winner

By Richard Loch
staff writer

Steve Grigorian of West Bloomfield is the winner in the Street Scene World Series Contest.

Grigorian will receive the first prize, a Louisville Slugger baseball bat with his name inscribed on it.

He was one of four entrants to get 19 of 20 questions right in the trivia quiz, which appeared in the Sept. 24 issue of Street Scene. The four names were placed in a hat and Grigorian's name was picked first.

Grigorian missed only the first question, which asked what contribution Pat Sheridan made to the Kansas City Royals in the 1985 American League Championship Series. Grigorian guessed "two home runs in one game" but Sheridan hit two for the series, in different games.

Grigorian, a Tiger season-ticket holder, said he guessed at a few of the questions, but he also did some extensive research to nail down the right answers. He even called his brother-in-law in Cleveland, a big Boston Red Sox fan, to get the correct answer to Question 20 (see below).

HARVEY CHAPMAN of Farmington Hills finished second in the drawing and will receive an official Detroit Tigers cap. He missed Question 12, guessing Jack Morris as the former Garden City resident instead of the correct answer, Walt Terrell.

Jerry Chwalek of Livonia finished third and will receive a Detroit Tigers coffee mug. He also guessed Morris instead of Terrell.

Gerald Stulberg of Birmingham also got 19 correct. Stulberg missed the first question, guessing that Sheridan hit two home runs in the first game. He will receive a Detroit Tiger yearbook.

We'd like to thank all of you who sent in entries. For your enjoyment, here is the Street Scene World Series Contest one more time — this time with the answers.

Steve Grigorian will receive the first prize, a Louisville Slugger baseball bat with his name inscribed on it.

1. Wayne Memorial High School graduate Pat Sheridan played a key role in the 1985 American League Championship Series, helping the Kansas City Royals make it to the World Series. Yet the following spring he was cut by the Royals and signed by the Detroit Tigers. What was Sheridan's major contribution to the Royals in the championship series?

We were looking for "hit two home runs in the series." But we accepted any answer that was technically correct, that said something



Steve McCarty, former pitcher with the Oakland Athletics, was the answer to Question No. 13 in the Street Scene World Series Contest

Sheridan actually did during the series. For the record, he hit a pinch-hit home run in Game Two to tie the score and send it into extra innings and hit a homer in the seventh and deciding game.

Some of our contestants suggested he got a game-winning RBI, but that was not the case, according to an account of the series published in Street and Smith's Official Baseball Yearbook for 1986.

2. This one-time Detroit Tiger World Series star later opened a business in downtown Rochester. Name the player and the type of business he started.

Mickey Lolich once operated a doughnut shop in downtown Rochester. He later moved the business to Oxford.

3. Two Tiger batting champions were residents of Garden City at one time or another. One played in the 1968 World Series, the other managed in the 1982 series. Name them.

Norm Cash played in the 1968 World Series and won the 1961 American League batting title. Harvey Kuenn managed the Milwaukee Brewers in the 1982 World Series and won the batting title in 1959. Both lived in Garden City at one point or another.

4. What Southfield High School graduate boomed home runs in the first two games of the 1982 World Series?

Ted Simmons for the Milwaukee Brewers.

5. Although he was a 10-game winner for the Tigers in 1984, this Lathrup Village resident did not pitch in either the Championship Series or World Series.

Juan Berenguer.

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