

STREET BEATS

Robb Roy eyes rock stardom

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Lenore and Fenton streets are already on the Redford Township map. Robb Roy wants to put those streets on the music map as well.

The four members of the folk-influenced rock'n'roll band had their beginnings. Robb Roy's founding fathers, lead singer Graham Strachan and guitarist Michael Martin, have been pals since they were 5 and even went to grade school together.

"What really got us going is we did a pantomime to the Partridge Family," said Strachan, who later moved to Livonia and is a 1980 graduate of Livonia Stevenson High School. "Me and Mike and some other guys lip-synched a few of their songs."

Now the only people moving their lips are those saying, "wow," watching the band perform. Robb Roy is one of the most highly touted bands in the area.

Already the group is being scouted by a couple of record companies. RCA is said to one of the companies interested.

ALSO, ROBB ROY is one of the few bands that has transcended both spheres of the area music scene. The band goes over well at hard-rock venues like the Token Lounge and Westland and yet Robb Roy can feel right at home in the Hamtramck hub like Hamtramck Pub and Paycheck's, noted new music establishments.



Several record companies reportedly are interested in signing local rockers Robb Roy: Michael Martin (left), Jason Kuehn,

Graham Strachan, Kevin Pruitt and Perez Morris.

Why that is so stems from no real conscious effort on their part. They just play, and play well.

"We just wanted to have the melody stuff and add a hard bottom to it," said Strachan, describing the group's music. "It was hard at first."

"We're kind of testing on both sounds," Strachan added. "We have a hard enough edge on our stuff to appeal to both clubs (hard rock and new music)."

Mainly, that's because members of Robb Roy have been on both sides of the fence. Strachan and Martin were also the nucleus of a hard-rocking group, the Lords. The two left the group two years ago, citing creative differences with other band members.

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While this was transpiring, now Robb Roy drummer Perez Morris of Redford was playing for such bands as the Enforcers and the 3-D Invisibles. Strachan performed with Perez in the past in informal jam sessions. When The Lords broke up, he didn't waste a second asking the talented drummer to join the fold.

Then they had to find a bass player.

Kevin Pruitt of Detroit auditioned for the job. Before that, he performed in everything from heavy metal bands to Top-40 groups.

"I remember the night I came over to audition," Pruitt said. "Mike headed upstairs and got Graham.

They both came down and said, "There's not a lot of money in this."

Jason Kuehn of Livonia played in a rock band with Strachan's brother.

Strachan said Kuehn brings the new music influence to the band's sound.

The end result is a band that is confident, though not cocky.

"WE'RE PROS," said Martin, who is a 1980 graduate of Redford Union.

"We're secure in what we're doing," Gary Spaniola would agree. Spaniola is a well-known producer in the area (he produced Ready for the World's "16 Lovers" on the "Beverly Hills Cop II" soundtrack) and worked with Robb Roy on their single, "Like a Doll."

Robb Roy is one of Spaniola's projects. He works with "two or three groups a year" trying to secure

record deals.

Spaniola has had considerable success as area bands such as Press (Atlantic), Cinema (A&M), Ready for the World (MCA), and Toby Redd (RCA) have inked record deals.

"The one thing I liked most about (Robb Roy) is they have a back-to-basics songwriting approach," Spaniola said. "They write and go for the feeling . . .

"I think they have great potential. They have some good songs, and they have a real strong lead singer."

Strachan's singing came about by accident. In his youth, he was a drummer. One day, though, Martin took him aside.

"Mike said, 'I think you should try singing,'" Strachan recalled. "I asked why. He said, 'Because you can't play drums.'"

CONCERTS



Mojo Nixon will be performing Tuesday at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor.

● MOJO NIXON

Mojo Nixon will be performing Tuesday, Dec. 1, at the Blind Pig, 208 First St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-6555.

● THE FRONT

The Front, featuring Greg Stryker, will perform Tuesday, Dec. 1, at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For more information, call 681-1700.

● UNDERWATER RAIN

Underwater Rain will perform with the Raging Hormones Friday, Dec. 4, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

● THE POGUES

The Pogues, with former Clash member Joe Strummer, will perform Friday, Dec. 4, at Todd's, 8139 E. Seven Mile, Detroit. Doors open at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$13.50 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

● MAN O WAR

Man O War will perform Friday, Dec. 4, at Harps, 1428 Harper, off I-94, Detroit. Tickets are \$4. For more information, call 623-6400.

● AEROSMITH

Aerosmith will perform with Dokken Saturday, Dec. 5, at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and can be purchased at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 823-6400.

● ROBB ROY

Robb Roy will perform with A Million Reasons Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

● ANTHRAX, CELTIC FROST & EXODUS

Anthrax, Celtic Frost & Exodus will all perform Sunday, Dec. 6, at Harps, 1428 Harper, Detroit. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15.50. For more information, call 823-6400.

● THE CARS

The Cars will perform with the Brandos Saturday, Dec. 12, at the Cobain in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and can be purchased at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and can be purchased at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

● TED NUGENT

Ted Nugent will perform Thursday, Dec. 31, at the Cobain in Detroit.

● WHITESNAKE

Whitesnake will perform Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 and available at TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

COLLEGE

Here are the top-10 songs being played on WOUX-AM 640, the campus radio station of Oakland University in Rochester.

1. "I.O.U." The Replacements.
2. "Hard Times," Public Image Limited.
3. "Exhuming McCarthy," R.E.M.
4. "I Want to Be a Flintstone," Screaming Blue Measles.
5. "On Tuesday," Men Without Hats.
6. "Big Decision," That Petrol Emotion.
7. "Prisoner," Squeeze.
8. "Mandinka," Sinead O'Connor.
9. "Caravan of Love," The Housemartins.
10. "Love Removal Machine," The Cult.

CDs

Here are the top-10 songs being played at Harmony House in Westland.

1. "Live Bullet," Bob Seger.
2. "Cloud Nine," George Harrison.
3. "Momentary Lapse of Reason," Pink Floyd.
4. "Chronicles," Steve Winwood.
5. "Nothing Like the Sun," Styling.
6. "Live in Australia," Elton John.
7. "Lonesome Jubilee," John Cougar Mellencamp.
8. "Actually," Pet Shop Boys.
9. "Big Generator," Yes.
10. "Hysteria," Def Leppard.

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