

STREET BEATS

The Scott Campbell Group includes Kenneth Bignotti (from left), Tim Beneteau, Scott Campbell and John Finan.



SCG: The stage is its 'laboratory'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

The stage is their laboratory and their instruments are their beakers.

The Scott Campbell Group seem more like chemists than the average rock 'n' roll musicians. And they certainly like to experiment.

Dress these mild-mannered lads in lab coats and put them to work, and the end result is some rather quirky, yet clever numbers.

"I'm Saving Myself For Angela Cartwright," an ode to the "Lost In Space" cuto, and "The Waitresses' Legs" are probably two of the band's more well-known comedies.

In a recent 3 a.m. clinical discussion on music at the Clock Restaurant, John Finan of Redford Township explained the process involved.

"Usually, I take minor things, put a little imagination to them, take a lot of liberties to make them flip and come up with the lyrics," said Finan, guitar player and co-songwriter of the group.

Don't misunderstand.

On stage, the Scott Campbell Group doesn't get bogged down in scientific mumbo jumbo. Let it be said this group can rock.

Let it also be said that Scott Campbell is a group, not just an individual.

Scott Campbell, the individual, is an accomplished songwriter and one of the deans of the Detroit new music scene. Campbell, who used to

manage Bookies in Detroit, has won five songwriting awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

SCOTT CAMPBELL, the group, formed roughly two years ago, includes Ken Bignotti on bass, Tim Beneteau on drums, Finan and Campbell.

"We're trying to convince people that Scott Campbell is a group, a group," Finan said. "It's an individual and a group," Bignotti added. "They don't work for me," Campbell said. "We work for each other."

The group also works at being versatile musicians. Campbell, for example, plays both six- and 12-string guitars, saxophone, oboe, keyboards and drums.

Finan, no instrumental slouch himself, can handle a guitar, saxophone, keyboard and drums.

Campbell and Finan also write the songwriting chores. Together, they have written 30 songs for the group.

"I'm Saving Myself For Angela Cartwright" is one of the many Campbell-penned numbers. He was inspired after watching the teenage actress in "The Poseidon Adventure II."

It only took Campbell 15 minutes to knock off the tune to the daughter on the 1960s' TV series, "Lost In Space."

"Angela Cartwright still looked terrific," Campbell said. "I remember when I was young, she was the only person who was near my age on television. I thought she was cute and she ap-

pealed to me.

"Hell, I thought I'd write the song."

Past relationships are the main source (70 percent, he said) of many Campbell's numbers. The rest are usually on the funny side, like "Sex For the Handicapped."

CAMPBELL SAID most of his lyrics are written between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. Then he goes back, perhaps "years later" and does the music for them.

The process obviously gets results. Still, Campbell feels somewhat limited. Most of the time, they have to go with a straight-forward rock 'n' roll show. The group would certainly like to experiment more, but most clubs are too small for all their equipment.

They still bring it with some rather unique covers. In a recent show at the Hamtramck Pub, the Scott Campbell Group performed the Rolling Stones' "10,000 Light Years From Home" along with malnests like "Journey to the Center of the Mind" and "Little Girls."

But originally is the band's trademark. Scott Campbell, the individual, will be performing for record companies in New York at the end of the month.

"Three separate times, the band I was with was supposed to go to New York," Campbell said. "Each time, one of the members failed to go for whatever reasons — ratted out, chickened out, what have you."

WRIF earns kudos for no heavy metal

Kudos, kudos, kudos to you, WRIF. Of course, there are already some people who feel the station should be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for recently dumping heavy metal from its format.

The station's latest venture also is worthy of praise. The rock 'n' roll radio station now has a show at 11 p.m. weekdays, showcasing some Detroit musical talent.

Finally, somebody in the Detroit radio market is taking some initiative. "Local Riffs" features three area bands Monday through Thursday evenings. Then, judging by listener response, four bands are picked to be broadcast again on Friday night.

Greg St. James, who hosts the show and was one of the driving forces behind the concept, likes what he has heard thus far.

"I'm very impressed," St. James said. "It's very difficult to decide what to play. The stuff I've heard so far is very professional. There's a lot of talent out there."

Local talent shows such as this are nothing new to St. James. The veteran DJ was involved with WABX's "Dangerous Exposure" program as well as WWWW's "Homegrown" concept.

When St. James huddled with Pat Still, program director at WRIF, both agreed there was a need for a program like "Local Riffs."

"I'm not going to say it's going to get anyone a record contract," St. James said. "But who knows? Maybe it will inspire somebody."

One of the major problems with the Detroit music scene has been a lack of radio support. As a result, a lot of local bands chuck it in out of frustration.

Places like Boston and Athens, Ga., have radio stations that give air time to local bands. And thanks to

that, bands like 'til Tuesday, The Cars and Del Fuegos (all from Boston) and R.E.M. and the B-52s (from Athens) have been able to emerge to the forefront.

Hands can send their reel-to-reel tapes to: Local Riffs, P.O. Box 5097, Southfield 48066.

Blues time

Everyone was singing the blues at the Martin Luther King Commemorative Blues Jubilee, recently at Moby Dick's in Dearborn. Harmonica Shab, Robert Knoll and the Blues Mission, Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones, Willie D. Warren, The Living Room Blues Band and Billy Davis all performed at the gala event. The Famous Coachman from WDET-FM emceed the show.

Another show is planned for Saturday, Feb. 13, at Moby Dick's on Schiffer, between Ford Road and Michigan Avenue.

Some 250 people attended the MLK Jubilee that came on the heels of a record release party in December for "Detroit Blues Factory Vol. 1," which more than 400 people attended. The album features many of the artists who appeared at the jubilee and already is in its second printing.

The blues are back.

Guitar gem

Hippodrome has just released its first cassette, "Novelty." And in terms of first efforts, this is a dandy. Produced by Scott Campbell on Nebula Records, the Livonia-based group has mastered a breezy guitar sound that is just plain enjoyable.

For more information, write: Hippodrome, 28024 Whitcomb, Livonia 48154.



Kyle Richard (from left), Doyle Dean and Chris Richard are Hippodrome.

IN CONCERT

● **THE STRAND**
The Strand will perform Wednesday, Feb. 5, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff near I-75.

● **FRANKLIN SANE**
Franklin Sane will appear Friday, Feb. 5, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff near I-75.

● **PAUL DI ANNO BATTLEZONE AND OBSESSIONS**
Paul Di Anno Battlezone and Obsessions will appear Friday, Feb. 5, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400. Tickets are \$4 at the door.

● **FRANK DUMONT & HIS BAND**
Blues artists Frank Dumont & His Band, which opened up for Bo Diddley and Ron Wood recently at Har-

pos, will perform Fridays, through February, at Four Greenfields, Woodward and 13 Mile. Little Junior Kennedy will be the special guest.

● **FELA**
Fela and his 30-piece group from Nigeria will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6, at the Michigan Theater, 605 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$12.50 and \$14.50 and available at all TicketMaster Outlets. For more information, call 423-6666.

● **NEW ALPHABET**
New Alphabet will perform Saturday, Feb. 6, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff near I-75.

● **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.

● **THE DEAD MILKMEN**
The Dead Milkmen will perform at 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$8.50 and available at all TicketMaster Outlets.

● **GEORGE THOROGOOD**
George Thorogood and the Destroyers will perform at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19, at EHH Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$17.50.

● **STING**
Sting will perform Friday and Saturday, Feb. 19-20, at the Masonic Temple Theater in Detroit. Tickets are available at all TicketMaster Outlets. To charge tickets by phone, call 423-6666.

● **DIO**
Dio, with special guests Megadeth and Savatage, will perform at 7:30

p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, at Cobo Arena. Tickets are \$17.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

● **EARTH, WIND & FIRE**
"An Evening With Earth, Wind & Fire" will take place at 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, at Joe Louis Arena. Tickets are \$17.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

● **FRANK ZAPPA**
Frank Zappa will perform Friday through Sunday, Feb. 26-28, at the Royal Music Theater. Tickets are \$49-76.

● **RUSH**
Rush, with special guests Tommy Shaw, will perform Friday, March 4, at Joe Louis Arena. Tickets are \$17.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

COLLEGE

Here are the top-10 songs being played on WWAY-FM 1180, the campus station of Wayne State University.

1. "It's A Wonderful Life," Fishbone.
2. "End of the World . . ." R.E.M.
3. " Elvis Everywhere," Mojo Nixon and Skid Roper.
4. "Instant Club Hit," Dead Milkmen.
5. "Hard Times," P.L.L.
6. "Bedbugs and Ballyhoo," Echo & the Bunnymen.
7. "Never Let Me Down Again," Depeche Mode.
8. "Just Like Heaven," The Cure.
9. "Pure and Simple," Orange Roughies.
10. "Stop Me If You Heard This One Before," Smiths.

COUNTRY

Here are the top-10 songs being played on WWWW-FM 106.7, a country and western radio station in Detroit.

1. "Those Memories Of You," THE TRIO.
2. "Do You Believe Me Now," VERN GOSDIN.
3. "Goin' Gone," KATHY MATTEA.
4. "Lynda," STEVE WARINER.
5. "Somewhere Tonight," HIGHWAY 101.
6. "Tennessee Flat Top Box," RO-SANNE CASH.
7. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Lucky Star," MERLE HAGGARD.
8. "One Friend," DAN SEALS.
9. "I Can't Get Close Enough," EXILE.
10. "That's My Job," CONWAY TWITTY.

REVIEWS

DIRTY DANCING SOUNDTRACK — various artists



Once upon a time, movie soundtracks contained many long suites wherein aspiring Bachs and Beethovens tried to set the mood for a particular piece of film. That was a long time ago, before MTV.

Now, film soundtracks are a hodgepodge collection of potential hit singles — a few even having something to do with the movie in which they momentarily appeared.

It's not as if the public isn't responsive. Soundtracks to "Beverly Hills Cop," "Top Gun" and "Beverly Hills Cop II" were among the blockbuster albums of the past three years. This one appears to follow that trend.

Even though it has already been played to death on the radio, the hit song is pretty good. Jennifer Warnes has a supple, soothing voice and ex-Righteous Brother Bill Medley really lets it loose, especially on the "you're the one thing" part.

While it's good to hear Eric Carmen again, his "Hungry Eyes" is more typical of '80s soundtrack pop

— catchy in a bland kind of way. (Does anyone remember when this guy was considered the next McCartney?)

"She's Like the Wind," on the other hand, proves that, as a singer/dancer/actor, Patrick Swayze is a pretty fair dirty dancer. But the hit-to-girls understated.

The real highlights here are the oldies, especially the Ronettes' "Be My Baby," which makes its first digital appearance on the CD.

But all that does is make one hunker for the CD release of Phil Spector's greatest hits, containing not only the Ronettes best, but those of the Crystals, Darlene Love and, yes, the Righteous Brothers, too.

Now there's a soundtrack that could inspire some serious dirty dancing.

— Wayne Peal

THE NO COMPRENDO — Les Rita Mitsouko



So this is the state of pop music in France? If so, maybe another revolution is overdue.

Currently, Les Rita Mitsouko is the big pop novelty in France. Les Rita Mitsouko is not an individual, but rather a pair of Parisian beatniks.

Some have gone as far as to label the group the French Eurythmics. Yes, like Annie Lennox, Les Rita Mitsouko lead singer Catherine Ringer is a female. And much like Dave Stewart, Fred Chichin is male.

But all comparisons should cease right there.

The Eurythmics are not a dance group, Les Rita Mitsouko are. "The No Comprendo" is chock full of dance tracks. "C'est Comme Ca," a track off the album, already is a favorite on many a glittery floor.

Ringer screams, Ringer yells. Once in awhile, she actually gets around to singing. And she's really quite good when taking the opportunity.

But there is a warning: when listening to this album, bring a French-English dictionary. Ringer sings the majority of the songs in her native tongue. And a translator would certainly help on some of these numbers.

When she does take a sultry twirl in English, the results are rather favorable. "Tonight" is one such number, when one can comprehend Ringer. Musically, there are no holds barred. The sound is eclectic. There's violins and trumpets and an assortment of instrumental displays. It certainly gives Les Rita Mitsouko a sound of its own.

But on a whole, this effort can be described as quirky at best.

— Larry O'Connor

SAVAGE — The Eurythmics

The Eurythmics make a welcome return to the sparse, pounding, synthesized sound they started with on their new album, "Savage."

In 1983, the English duo introduced this sound on their "Sweet Dreams" album. It was marked by a No. 1 song, "Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)," and other standouts showing the group's fresh approach.

The Eurythmics tended to stay away from flashy solos or other pop-rock cliches. Songs were built on simple, repetitive drum and bass lines.

Singer Annie Lennox would come off as cool or distant, yet emotional in her restraint. Dave Stewart would add a range of well-placed sounds — from slide guitar to disco scratching to airy, synthesized keyboards.

This continued on the "Touch" album, which yielded more hits — "Here Comes the Rain Again" and "Who's That Girl?" But by the time they released their 1985 hit "Would I Lie To You?" the group was moving toward a mainstream rock sound.

The new sound served them well on "Lie" and "Missionary Man," their most recent hit. But for the



first time, some of their album cuts were only passable and lacked the stark emotions aided by the earlier sparse, synthesized beat.

But on "Savage," the group moves back to their original sound. The album opens with "Beethoven (I Love To Listen To)," marked by a pounding drum and bass beat, some catchy backwards noises and other psychodelia and a chorus that manages to be driving, yet lilting.

"Need A Man" is another potential hit single. It's a raunchy Stones-like rocker, in which Lennox sings "Don't powder puff, just leave it rough" to a sparse beat and a hot rhythm guitar.

"Need You" opts for a different sound. Here, Lennox is backed only by Stewart, strumming an acoustic guitar, with occasional slide guitar fills.

While "Savage" is marred by a couple of lackluster songs, it shows the Eurythmics getting back to where they once belonged.

— Kevin Brown