

STREET BEATS



Artie Wolff and The Pack have established themselves in the area as one of the finer roots rock and roll bands as part of the re-emergence of '50s-'60s rock music sounds.

Wolff, Pack do 'choice' roots rock

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Stamp Artie Wolff and The Pack's music as Grade A USDA choice roots rock and roll.

Artie Wolff, the lead singer of the group, will not stand for anything less than the lean, prime cut roots stuff. There's no fat, or worse yet, synthesizers or drum machines in these tunes.

Committed to the genre of music, Wolff left the relatively successful Kidbox partly because he felt they were straying away from the purity of straight roots rock and roll. To him, there's nothing else close.

"It's so basic," said Wolff, who lives in Redford Township. "It has the essential rock and roll feel. I listen to Eddie Cochran and Chuck Berry records all the time. I still love that stuff."

"I don't think people are going to be taking INXS records and holding them up 20 years from now, saying 'Wow, this stuff is great,'" — Artie Wolff

Roots rock is hardly new. In fact, it's somewhat on the rebound, with the emergence of the BoDeans, Blasters and The Thunderbirds.

Yet, as Wolff is quick to point out, the Blasters and The Thunderbirds haven't exactly been the pot rocks and Hula Hoops of rock and roll, having been around for a number of years. Joe Ely and Robert Gordon have been mainstays on the roots rock scene as well.

Roots rock and roll has stood the test of time. Except people listening to it now are just as likely to be drinking wine coolers as they are Pabst Blue Ribbon.

ARTIE WOLFF and The Pack would pass the test as a traditional roots rock group, except they use their diverse influences to keep it unique.

The music features a low-thumping stand-up bass, raw dancing guitar lines and Buddy Holly-esque vocals. The music, though, has a bluesy feel. The ditty "She

Knows It" on the group's cassette sounds like uptown blues. John Cohasse, the group's guitarist, has played with a number of blues and rockabilly bands in the area.

Like Wolff and Cohasse, drummer Mike Kissick is from a traditional roots rock background ("I grew up on a stack of Elvis records," Kissick said.) He played a number of years with the Rockabilly Cats before joining Artie Wolff and The Pack.

"We grabbed Mike when the grabbing was good," Wolff said with a laugh.

Actually, Kissick was the final piece of the puzzle. In little over a year, the band has established itself around this area as one of the finer roots rock acts around.

Immediate plans include shopping the six-song cassette in New York and Los Angeles. And, as always, the major goal is to land the ever-elusive record deal.

With the recent explosion of roots rock, there's a ray of hope. The audience is there for their type of music.

"Fans of this type of music tend to be loyal," Wolff said. "They tend not to worry about trends."

A RECENT trend with the re-emergence of roots rock has been cow punk. Artie Wolff and The Pack find it to be a poor facsimile of the real McCoy.

"I want to know where the cow is," said Cohasse, who lives in Rochester.

Wolff and his mates have seen trends come and go. Wolff, 35, has played in an array of bands since he was 15, including hard rock and pop. He's at home with roots rock.

But he's aware completely copying stuff from the 1950s isn't going to work.

"Instead of totally re-creating a sound, we're trying to feed off the spirit of the rebel rock and roll of the '50s," Wolff said. "We're trying to make it palatable for the people in the '80s."

IN CONCERT

Todd's welcomes Club

more information, call 365-9760.

● CARUSO Will perform Wednesday, March 30, through Saturday, April 2, at Jagger's, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford Township. For more information, call 681-1700.

THE GUN CLUB

The Gun Club will perform with Viv Akademik at 10 p.m. Friday, April 1, at Todd's in Detroit. For more information, call 99-9510.

FOLKMINERS

The Folkminers will perform Friday, April 1, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-8555.

ROBB ROY

Rob Roy will perform Saturday, April 2, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

ARTIE WOLFF AND THE PACK

Artie Wolff and The Pack will perform Friday and Saturday, April 8-9, at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. For more information, call 334-9292.

SEE DICK RUN

See Dick Run will perform Saturday, April 9, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 996-8555.

LOVE AND ROCKETS

Love and Rockets will perform at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 24, at Royal Oak Music Theatre. Tickets are \$17.50. For more information, call 546-7610.

● ROBIN TROWER

Robin Trower and Doggs will perform Monday, April 25, at Harpo's, 14238 Harper, Detroit. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance and \$14.50 at the door. For more information, call 823-6400.



Caruso will bring its brand of music to Jagger's in Waterford Township Friday, Wednesday, March 30, through Saturday, April 2.

COLLEGE

COUNTRY

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WOUX-AM, the campus radio station at Cornell University in Rochester.

1. "Lucretia," Sisters of Mercy.
2. "A Rush and a Push," ...Smiths.
3. "Eleanor Rigby," The Beatles.
4. "Gimme, Gimme," Leather Nun.
5. "Full of Love," Dr. Calculus.
6. "Beds Are Burning," Midnight Oil.
7. "Beat the Brat," Soulé Youth.
8. "Postcards from Paradise," Flesh for Lulu.
9. "Just Too Bloody Stupid," Close Lobsters.
10. "Wendy," The Descendants.

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

1. "I Wouldn't Be a Man," Don Williams.
2. "Turn It Loose," The Judds.
3. "Shouldn't Be Easier Than This," Charley Pride.
4. "Gimme, Gimme," Leather Nun.
5. "Full of Love," Dr. Calculus.
6. "Beds Are Burning," Midnight Oil.
7. "Beat the Brat," Soulé Youth.
8. "Postcards from Paradise," Flesh for Lulu.
9. "Just Too Bloody Stupid," Close Lobsters.
10. "One Step Forward," The Desert Rose Band.
11. "This Missin' You Heart of Mine," Sawyer Brown.
12. "I Wanna Dance With You," Eddie Rabbitt.
13. "Americana," Moe Bandy.

REVIEWS

NOW AND ZEN

— Robert Plant

Hey, Led Zeppelinites, this LP's for you.

With "Now and Zen," ex-Zep lead vocalist Plant has finally delivered a solo album that bites with the musical force of his former band, yet maintains his solo stamp.

This ain't no "Sea of Love." It's "Houses of the Holy" revisited. Even Jimmy Page shows up to crank his tax on the well-produced single, "Heaven Knows" and on one of the LP's highlight cuts, "Tall Cool One."

At the close of the ragin' latter

track, Page delivers perfectly-exe-
cuted bits and pieces of some classic

Zeppelin tunes: "Whole Lotta Love," "The Ocean," "Moby Dog," and "When the Levee Breaks."

But Plant doesn't

brace his Zep past should be dislodged with that cut alone.

Plant slows down a bit and tosses

in a couple songs more in line with

the style of such solo albums as "The Principal of Moments." Subtle craft-

ing is evident in "The Way I Feel,"

"(With exquisitely fine guitar work by

Doog Boyle) and "Ship of Fools."

There's an ode to '60s idol wor-

shipping, "White, Clean and Neat,"

and stab at today's technopop,

"Why."

— Tim Smith

Such variety on "Now and Zen,"

mostly co-written with keyboardist

Phil Johnston, keeps the listener

from overdoing on any one style.

But Plant makes sure he stays

close to his roots with lots through-

out, plenty of trademark "oooh

yeahs" to spice things up.

At the top of the power rockpile is

"Helen of Troy," which proves that

although Plant is 39, he still knows

how to get the blood pumping.

"Helen of Troy" combines the

guitarist for the since-departed

Smiths, seems insurmountable. But

Morrissey triumphs.

The loss of Johnny Marr, who was

the guitarist for the since-departed

Smiths, seems insurmountable. But

Morrissey triumphs.

Side two is filled with gems like

"Suedehead," "Hairsresser on Fire,"

and "Margaret on the Guillotine."

"Suedehead" bursts open with

lively sonic guitar work and has

Morrissey singing, "Why do you

hang around? I'm so sorry."

The upbeat melodic numbers here

are far better than the slow stuff.

An energetic guitar riff adds irony to

Morrissey's self-pitying lyrics. It's

kind of like playing "The Mexican

Hat Dance" at a funeral.

This is where Marr is really

missed. While Morrissey was moan-

ing and groaning, it was Marr's

booming guitar work that provided a

background for many of the Smiths

bits. Guitarists Stephen Street and

Vinny Reilly do an admirable job here

themselves.

Those who like Morrissey's lyrics

won't be disappointed. On "Bad in

Platforms," Morrissey sings, "No,

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