



Anton James is upfront about his music. He's image conscious and tries to look good for his audience.

Anton James' music: Reality 'with a beat?'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Yes, Anton James has landed. Amid the smoke machines and the incessant drumming, Anton James makes his appearance at St. Andrew's Hall. Like a UFO, though, there's only a flash.

For there are some things even Anton James cannot control, like his drummer showing up late. As a result, his recent show appearance at the "Detroit Music Scene" show was limited to one number.

Was Anton disappointed? Perhaps. Defeated? Never.

The press release that precedes Anton James perhaps offers insight into the resiliency of a man who is somewhere "between outer space and the inner man."

States the piece of propaganda: "He has tasted triumph and defeat. He has stumbled and fallen. In his darkest hours, like all men, he has prayed. Every emotion visited upon him has been a part of Anton. But unlike that man on the street, he is one of the chosen ones, one of those minstrels who move among us singing the most favored and beloved songs of the past."

With that, Frank Zappa might ask who does he think he's jiving with that cosmic debris? If anything, Anton James looks fairly down to earth sitting in a cafeteria discussing his music.

ANTON JAMES is his real name reversed. He's direct about his music. "We're image conscious," said James, 22, a graduate of Redford St. Mary High School. "We try to come off looking good and try to be entertaining as well. We would never dress down. People want to know that someone is going out of their way to present themselves... we don't try to overdo it."

Anton James music is self-described as "reality with a beat." The sound is a hedgepodge of blaring saxophone solos and keyboard wizardry.

The band features Dave Rollins on guitar, Marc Speck on keyboards, Chris Branch on alto and tenor saxophone.

'We try to come off looking good and try to be entertaining as well.'

— Anton James

phone, Steve Wieser of Livonia on drums (replacing the drummer who was late at St. Andrew's) and Dwight Bierman on bass.

On stage, James takes a Bowiesque presence. Lyrical content ranges from the upbeat to the bleak. "Here It Comes" is a number about suicide. A video has been made about "Here It Comes," which will be aired as a public service announcement for suicide prevention.

The video already has been shown on cable programs in Redford, Livonia and Bloomfield Hills. James also has submitted it to MTV's "Basecamp Tapes."

"Here It Comes" is the third video effort from James, who is extensively involved in that particular area of music. He works full time as a video editor, which might explain his interest in that field.

THE DIFFICULT thing about videos is finding an outlet to broadcast them. And, as always, there are the artistic questions as well.

"That's the hardest part," he said. "You have to find something that's representative of the song. But you have to have something that's attainable, such as the budget and the location."

He's been able to attain his own sound on his debut EP, "Off The Cuff," and "Anton James," a nine-song cassette tape. While his stage presence is extravagant, James has a keen business sense as well.

On the "Here It Comes" video, James found a group to split the production costs with. He also shopped for the least expensive tape duplicator for his latest cassette tape.

Anton James believes the real strength lies in the music. "We're not just selling the size," he said. "We have the bacon."

IN CONCERT

● ROBERT NOLL AND THE BLUES MISSION

Robert Noll and the Blues Mission will perform tonight and Tuesday at the Plymouth Rock, 8825 General Drive, Plymouth. For more information, call 455-9800.

● JUNK MONKEYS

The Junk Monkeys will perform along with Electric Soul at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-8555.

● ADRIAN BELEW AND THE BEARS

Adrian Belew and The Bears will perform at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 13, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance.

● THE NEVILLE BROTHERS

The Neville Brothers will perform at 9 p.m. and midnight Thursday, April 14, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. Tickets are \$14.50 in advance.

● JONATHAN RICHMAN

Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers will perform two shows at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Thursday, April 14, at The Ark in Ann Arbor. For more information, call 99-MUSIC.

● FIGURE 4

Figure 4 will perform Friday, April 15, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2045 Canfield, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

● RADIATORS

The Radiators will perform Saturday, April 16, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400.

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● EMERSON, BERRY AND PALMER

Keith Emerson, Carl Palmer and Robert Berry will perform Saturday, April 23, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. For more information, call 823-6400. Tickets are \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door.

● 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 Droogs will perform Monday, April 25, at Harpos, 14238 Harper, Detroit. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance and \$14.50 at the door. For more information, call 823-6400.

JAZZ

Here are the top 10 albums receiving airplay on WJZZ-FM, a jazz radio station in Detroit.

1. "Acoustic Alchemy," Natural Elements.
2. "Passion," Norman Connors.
3. "Special Part of Me," Osajie Allen Gumbs.
4. "Centuries End," Donald Fagen.
5. "Harlem Blues," David Byrd.
6. "Beyond the Sun," Clyde Criner.
7. "Short Stories," Bob Berg.
8. "Yutaka," Yutaka.
9. "Get Here," Brenda Russell.
10. "Night Charades," Tom Grant.

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WAYN-AM, the campus radio station at Wayne State University.

1. "Wishing Well," Terence Trent D'Arby.
2. "She's Surreal," Pop Will Eat Itself.
3. "Pure and Simple," Orange Roughies.
4. "Haunted as the Minutes Drag," Love and Rockets.
5. "Fever Rite," Junk Monkeys.
6. "High Expectations," Inside Out.
7. "Only a Memory," The Smithereens.
8. "Heroine," Sinead O'Connor.
9. "Finest Worksong," R.E.M.
10. "Never Do Know," Hysteria Narcotics.

COUNTRY

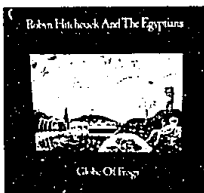
Here are the top 10 songs being played on WWW-FM, a country and western radio station in Detroit.

1. "Lying in His Arms Again," Forster Sisters.
2. "Shouldn't Be Easier Than This," Charley Pride.
3. "Life Turned Her That Way," Ricky Van Shelton.
4. "Turn It Loose," The Judds.
5. "One Step Forward," Desert Rose Band.
6. "This Missin' You Heart of Mine," Sawyer Brown.
7. "I Wanna Dance With You," Eddie Rabbitt.
8. "Americana," Moe Bandy.
9. "I Didn't (Every) Chance I Had," Johnny Rodriguez.
10. "Famous Last Words of a Fool," George Strait.

REVIEWS

GLOBE OF FROGS

— Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians



Robyn Hitchcock states up front in his manifesto that his songs are not about so-called real life situations. No kidding.

Hitchcock goes for the obscure, the quirky and the completely bizarre on "Globe of Frogs." Hitchcock experiments like a chemist gone mad here.

And, because of it, "Globe of Frogs" both shines and suffers at times. There are numbers that are wonderfully aloof and feature the hooks needed in well-tuned pop songs.

Then there are those tunes that seem almost too disjointed and too jagged to be enjoyed by the human ear. To be unique is one thing. To try to be unique is quite another.

Sometimes one senses Hitchcock tries too hard. "Tropical Flesh Mandala" and "Vibrating," for example,

are songs that seem to miss the mark as the result of an overextension of Hitchcock's creativity.

But when Hitchcock is on the mark, he's brilliant. Listen to the melodic acoustic number "Balloon Man," and one would think Hitchcock has all the magic to be the best songwriter hands down.

"Balloon Man" will lure you in and pique your interest enough to listen further. "Sleeping With Your Devil Mask" and "Flesh Number One (Beatle Dennis)" serve the same purpose. All three are excellent pop offerings.

"Luminous Rose" strays from track as a dark, more surreal number. It remains as one of the highlights of this album.

In short, "Globe of Frogs" has enough highlights to make it worth listening to.

— Larry O'Connor

EASTERN BLOC — Eastern Bloc



Sometimes one doesn't even have to shred the heat-shrink rapping to know if a record is going to be worth a listen.

All it takes is a glance at the song list. When you see such hackneyed titles as "So Long," "Wait Too Long," "Heartbreak," "Time Will Tell," and "You Got Love," it ought to give you a fair idea of what might lie inside.

Such song titles on "Eastern Bloc" are only surpassed by the cliché-ridden lyrics inside. Simple melodies and trite lyrics seem to be the norm here.

On top of that, the sound is almost too slick. There's nary a flaw in the technical department, which doesn't make for a very vibrant album.

The brightest spots here are in the songs with the most promising song titles. One rather enjoyable melodic number is "Dancing Barefoot." The rhythm guitar combined with pun-

chy lyrics adds life to this song. Another tasty morsel of Eastern Bloc's music is in "Miracle Mile." Here, as in "Dancing Barefoot," there's something at least original being put forth. Too bad the same cannot be said for the rest of the album.

Musicianship is not a problem here. But, usually, it never is with a formula-following band.

To truly appreciate the lifeless lyrics, one just needs to listen to "Time Will Tell." "One, Two, Three/It's a mystery for what will be for you and me." What poets.

Another limerick can be found in the equally mindless number "Call Me." "You're so mean and vicious/you act so precious/I know you've got it in for me/don't call me because I'm not alone."

They would be lucky if anyone would call for this album.

— Larry O'Connor

BETWEEN THE BUTTONS

— Rolling Stones

We've heard the Beatles on CD, but what about the Rolling Stones? If you haven't heard, the Stones' CDs were released last year.

Unlike Beatles CDs, led to the clamoring public a few at a time, the Stones' '60s CDs were released all at once. Maybe that's why the event drew little fanfare.

But wasn't it always that way? The Stones, big as they were, were always deemed second best.

The Beatles, it was said, had better vocals and songwriting, and were more innovative. But there's something about the Stones that moves some of us to — dare we say it — like them even more than the Beatles.

That aside, the release of the Stones' early albums on CD could be viewed as the most significant event. That's because several of their records were poorly recorded compared to the Beatles.

Now digitally remastered, those old albums show a big improvement in sound quality on CD.

On "Beggars Banquet," the acous-



tic guitars sparkle. The orchestration on "As Tears Go By" (from the "December's Children" album, once a muddy mess, now sounds clean. CD versions of "Aftermath" and "Between the Buttons" spark a renewed appreciation for the mid-period Stones. They weren't always a guitar-slashing rock band.

Brian Jones' contributions shine on "Between the Buttons." His recorder on "Ruby Tuesday," dulcimer on "Cool Calm Collected," and marimba on "Yesterday's Papers" helped vary the band's sound.

"Miss Amanda Jones" — used for a recent movie soundtrack — and "Let's Spend the Night Together" rock as well as any '70s Stones number. "All Sold Out," "Who's Been Sleeping Here" and "Something Happened to Me Yesterday" show the band's playful side.

— Kevin Brown