

STREET BEATS

Before Or After puts heart in the beat

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Jim Stewart of Before Or After has fire in his eyes. Through those blue orbs, he's seen the road of life.

Or at least it seems that way after driving for 60 minutes in rush hour traffic to Livonia. Stewart has traveled from the Downriver community of Trenton to discuss Before Or After's music. Before Or After member K. Bryan Kane had already arrived 25 minutes ago.

"After this interview, I'm going to kill you," said Stewart, greeting his partner in music. "This guy gives the worst directions."

Musically, it's a different story. The four-man dance outfit shares a common direction.

Before Or After is trying to make a name for itself by presenting music with a beat devoid of mindless lyrics.

Their sound definitely has a Euro-pop flavor to it. Vocals drone over a fluid, rapid drum sound. Except there's more of a sting to Before Or After's music, mainly due to the excellent atmospheric guitar work of band member Mark Bower.

Before Or After is trying to fight the rap that dance music doesn't have heart. Just mention the possibility that his band might be guilty of that draws an arched eyebrow from Stewart, who appears to be still suffering from white-line fever.

"Not our music," Stewart said. "If someone accused us of that, boy... I don't know."

WHAT BEFORE Or After does know is that any failure along the way won't be from a lack of effort. The group is featured on College Music Journal's "Certain Damage —

Vol. 13" compilation CD, which features up-and-coming artists from around the country. The group was also featured on the "Detroit Music Scene" album.

Before Or After is busy at work on its own LP, which is slated for a possible late winter release.

Before Or After formed three years ago out of a friendship of students at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor ("Don't print that," Kane said. "I don't want us pegged as an Ann Arbor band. We don't play 'Louie Louie' for the frat boys.")

But things hadn't really kicked into gear until the band recently added two new members this past summer, former What If Thinking drummer Al Waltz and Bower.

Original band members, Kane and Stewart, parted ways with the previous members. Kane said they had different goals. With a complete lineup, he believes the group is more focused.

The chemistry of the band works, even though members come from completely different backgrounds. Stewart is from Grosse Ile and is a high school English teacher at Trenton High School. Kane is from St. Clair Shores and works in marketing for Chevrolet. Waltz is from Wayne and is a commercial driver. Then there is Bower, who certainly looks intriguing in the band's photograph.

"HE DOES his own makeup," said Kane, slightly bemused. "That black lipstick has got to go. I guess he wants to be different."

Different, perhaps, but he serves an integral part in the creative spark that makes Before Or After work. Stewart marvels at how well band members get along despite coming from different perspectives.



Before Or After includes K. Bryan Kane, bass/keyboards (from left), Al Waltz, drums, Mark Bower, guitar and Jim Stewart, lead singer.

"Bryan and Mark are unbridled energy," said Stewart, sounding like a person who teaches English. "They come up with ideas and they have the energy to pursue them. Al and I, while positive and forward moving, are still organizers and observers."

"I wouldn't say you were organiza-

ers. I'm pretty organized," Kane said.

"No, you're right. Analytical. Maybe we sit back."

"I don't know about that. I'm pretty good at critiquing the band."

"You are. I'm just making some generalized statements about the

band."

The statements Stewart makes on stage attempt to avoid the banal as the case with most dance music. He said he loves language. In addition to English, he speaks Russian and Spanish.

The band's four-song demo tape is

rich with imagery. One tune, "You Make It So Hard" has received airplay on several radio stations around the country. One reason, perhaps, is they don't opt for sampling where a line is repeated for 10 minutes.

"We're a dance band you can listen to," Kane said.

IN CONCERT

● **FUNHOUSE**
Funhouse will perform tonight at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Pontiac. For more information, call 681-1700.

● **NO RIGHT, NO WRONG**
No Right, No Wrong will perform tonight at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-2747.

● **FRANK ALLISON**
Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform Tuesday, Dec. 20, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-2747.

● **WALK THE DOGMA**
Walk the Dogma will perform on Tuesday, Dec. 20, at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Pontiac. For more information, call 681-1700.

● **ROUGH HOUSE**
Rough House will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-8555.

● **GANGSTER FUN**
Gangster Fun will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-2747.

● **THE DEL-RAYS**
The Del-Rays will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-2747.



Walk the Dogma will perform on Tuesday at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Pontiac.

● **GREG STRYKER BAND**
The Greg Stryker Band will perform Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 21-23, at Jagers, 3481 Elizabeth Lake Road, Pontiac. For more information, call 681-1700.

● **IODINE RAINCOATS**
The Iodine Raincoats will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at The Beat, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 683-7752.

● **INVAIN**
Invain will perform tonight at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-8555.

● **TROPICAL CONNECTION**
Tropical Connection will perform on Thursday, Dec. 22, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-8555.

● **ORANGE ROUGHIES**
The Orange Roughies will perform on Thursday, Dec. 22, at the Beat, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Proceeds will go to the Goodfellows. For more information, call 683-7752.

● **ELVIS HITLER**
Elvis Hitler will perform on Thursday, Dec. 22, at Psychicks Lounge, 5932 Cass. For more information, call 996-8555.

Uf, Hamtramck. For more information, call 872-4934.

● **THE DIFFERENCE**
The Difference will perform along with special guests, Walk the Dogma and Hippodrome, on Friday, Dec. 23, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 481 E. Congress, Detroit. For more information, call 961-MELT.

● **TRINIDAD STEEL**
The Trinidad Trippoli Steel Band will perform on Friday, Dec. 23, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 996-2747.

● **VIBRATORY SYNOD**
Vibratory Synod will perform on Friday, Dec. 23, at Psychicks Lounge, 5932 Cass, Hamtramck. For more information, call 872-4934.

● **BLUES BENEFIT**
The Detroit Blues Factory will present its annual Christmas Benefit for the Children's Home of Detroit on Friday, Dec. 23, at The Attic Bar, 11167 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. Robert Noll, the Butler Twins and Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones will be just some of the performers who will appear. For more information, call 965-4194.

● **ARTIE WOLFF & THE PACK**
Artie Wolff & The Pack will perform on Friday, Dec. 23, at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. For more information, call 334-8392.

● **ROBB ROY**
Robb Roy along with special guests, League of Nations, will perform on Friday, Dec. 23, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2041 Cass, off I-75. For more information, call 365-5760.

● **BOP HARVEY**
Bop Harvey will perform on Friday, Dec. 23, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For more information, call 832-2355.

● **TEMPTATIONS**
The Temptations and the Spinners will perform Wednesday, Dec. 28, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$22.50. For more information, call 567-6000.

● **O'JAYS**
The O'Jays and the Whispers will perform at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30, at Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$25. For more information, call 567-6000.

● **TED NUGENT**
Ted Nugent will perform at the Third Annual "Whiplash Bash" at 9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, at Cobo Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$22.75. For more information, call 567-6000.

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 songs receiving airplay on WORF-FM, campus station for Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

1. "Dancing Barefoot," Feist.
2. "Do You See," Hunters & Collectors.
3. "Wasteland Day," Billy Bragg.
4. "City of Love," Dreams So Real.
5. "Kissability," Sonix Youth.
6. "Chord of Souls," Fields of Nephilim.
7. "2541," Grant Hart.
8. "Ornaments of Gold," Sleazies & The Bananas.
9. "Charlie," James.
10. "Incubation," Joy Division.

CLASSICAL

Here are the Dick Wallace's 10 most-requested selections on WQRS-FM.

1. "Rodeo Excerpts," Copland.
2. "Symphony No. 2," Schubert.
3. "Piano Concerto No. 1," Beethoven.
4. "Symphony No. 32," Mozart.
5. "Overture to Beethoven's Cello," Beethoven.
6. "Flying Dutchman Overture," Wagner.
7. "Symphony No. 69," Haydn.
8. "Pictures at an Exhibition," Mussorgsky.
9. "Peer Gynt Suite No. 1," Grieg.
10. "Wasteland Suite Excerpt," Bernstein.

REVIEWS

BEEN THERE... — Something Happens!

The band Something Happens! did something rather peculiar for a relatively unknown entity outside of their native Ireland. They released a live album before their debut studio LP. That's the musical equivalent of putting on the show before the rock.

But it is all part of the grand plan, if you will. Something Happens! forie has always been the energy they exude by playing live. And "I Know Ray Harman" was quite a stunning introduction.

So now we have the studio version of Something Happens! as "Been There, Seen That, Done That" (Virgin import only) attempts to capture that spark.

For the most part, Something Happens! succeeds with plenty to spare. Many first-time listeners will undoubtedly be impressed with the charge these Dublin dudes put into their songs. The first two songs, "Beach" and "Incoming," are high-voltage rockers by anyone's standards. Ray Harman (the person) goes for the gusto with frenzied guitar numbers.

Like much of the stuff that



floats over from Europe, Something Happens! shows a remarkable ability to appeal to both those who cling to the alternative charts and people with mainstream tastes as well.

And while the band certainly aren't their rock'n'roll stripes with driving numbers like "Beach," "Incoming" and "Burn Clear," the flatter moments of this LP are captured in slow-moving, poignantly penned songs like "Both Men Crying" and "Be My Love." Tom Dunne's vocals are a steady stream of flawlessness without becoming monotonous. He has a knack of telling the story in an understated sort of way that gets your attention.

Surprisingly enough, Tom Erdelyi (better known to most of us schmucks as Tommy Ramone) is at the controls for most of the melodic numbers. Yet Erdelyi lets Something Happens! fire all the guns when it has to.

— Larry O'Connor

VICTORY DAY — Tom Cochrane

In rock'n'roll these days, mediocrity is not a sin.

The latest album from Tom Cochrane and Red Rider, "Victory Day," bears this out well.

In the early 1980s, Red Rider had an FM radio hit with "Lunatic Fringe." The song was tailor-made for the static rock that has dominated the airwaves this decade. Since then, the band has traveled the same musical path, but with less success.

Upon first listen, "Victory Day" sounds most like one of Cochrane's Canadian countrymen, Bryan Adams. After further inspection, one can hear influences of Tom Petty, Aerosmith and even Lou Reed. But it sounds like these artists on their worst days.

The album's biggest weakness is Cochrane's songwriting. Writing a song is like walking a tightrope, and Cochrane doesn't have very good balance. His lyrics range from decent to trite to just plain lame.

The opening cut, "Big League," tells the tale of a teenage hockey star who dies in an auto accident. Its message is that you "never can tell when you might check out/So right to others like you do to yourself."

The moronic lyrical vein continues



on "Calling America" and "Vacation (In My Mind)."

The record does have some highlights. "Saved by the Dawn," a quality instrumental, features a heavy steel guitar over cryptic percussion that sounds like it's right off a recent Peter Gabriel album.

Likewise, the last two songs at least leave fans a glimmer of hope for the next album. "Good Man (Feeling Bad)" and "Not So Far Away" both have good melodies and strong guitar work and are a cut above the rest of the record.

The music industry encourages this type of safe, dull music. Record companies and radio stations have progressed slightly in accepting and promoting a wider variety of rock since "Lunatic Fringe." But, unfortunately, on the fringe is where they remain.

— Jim Cortes

HEARTBREAK HOTEL

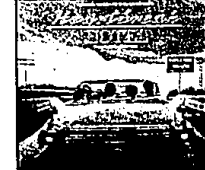
Elvis Presley is still dead, so far as we know, but that doesn't stop RCA from continuing to cash in on his name and legend.

That means a soundtrack to "Heartbreak Hotel" soundtrack contains a smattering of Presley hits, as well as Double Gray's "Drift Away" and Albie Cooper's "I'm Eighteen." It's only of passing interest, except for actor David Keith's remarkable readings of the title tune, "Can't Help Falling in Love" and "Love Me" — an essential Presley hit not found among the 50 hits package.

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Keith, who plays Elvis in the movie, possesses a powerful, resonant, country-tinged voice. And hideout. And if you half close your eyes while staring at the back cover pictures...

— Wayne Peck



Much more essential is the World-wide Hits package. It's the same set originally released on record in 1970, at the height of Presley's comeback. Gold CDs are supposed to be the latest word in sonic excellence and the set sounds fine, especially considering the age of the original recordings. But it doesn't sound noticeably better than other Elvis CD releases. Voluminous and moderately priced, however, this collection should be a welcome find under many a Christmas tree this holiday season.

And as for Keith — listen buddy, you have to do that Elvis suit. I'll rent out the Auburn Hills Palace and together we'll go make ourselves some serious money.

— Wayne Peck