

STREET BEATS



Performing with Doughboys are John Kastner (from left), Jon Cummins, Paul Newman and John Bondhead.

'Back Home'

Power pop punk Doughboys on the rise

By Larry O'Connor
Staff writer

John Kastner of the Doughboys doesn't pause. He doesn't apologize. He doesn't cover into the corner.

When asked who was his major musical influence, Kastner replies without hesitation: KISS.

Egad. But before one passes any hasty judgments on this four-man Canadian guitar-driven outfit, please take note: The Doughboys are not KISS.

Much like the '70s monsters of rock, though, the Doughboys are young (ages 22-25), hungry and bubbling over with energy. They don't, however, have a hankering to start wearing makeup.

"We actually met Ace Frehley three weeks ago in New York at a CMJ show," said Kastner, in a telephone interview from San Francisco, Calif. "He was such a . . . jerk. He's going on about 'My solo album sold the best.'"

So much for hero worship. Besides the Doughboys have better things to do.

The band is in the midst of what seemingly has been a non-stop touring. The Doughboys performed a grueling 260-date tour of North America, recorded their second LP "Back Home" (Restless Records) and then headed off to Europe.

RECHARGED, THE Doughboys

'I don't know what we are anymore. Especially in Europe, where they try to categorize everything. I don't know what to call it: Hippie Gymnastics?'

— John Kastner
The Doughboys

are on the continent again in support of "Back Home," an LP recorded in a mere 10 days in Los Angeles. The music is guitar-in-your-face rock'n'roll with no frills. A hint of a pop sound keeps this LP from being written off as strictly hardcore punk.

The Doughboys have always been something of a raw, raucous group since forming in 1986. Kastner performed in a hardcore outfit Aseculis and then met up with John Bondhead and John Cummins who were in a Toronto-based group Circus Lupus. Paul Newman (not the actor) joined this summer as the band's drummer.

In the beginning, the Doughboys didn't bother with the minor detail of playing any live shows. Instead, the group spent 10 months in the studio to record its first album, "Whatever."

Surprisingly, the indie LP sold well in Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

The latter helped bring about a recent tour overseas, which included the band playing several festivals, fanned over by the fickle British music press and in the middle of a riot in France.

"They were gate crashers who didn't have money to get in," Kastner said. "It got progressively worse and all of a sudden there was police in riot gear, windows were smashed and tear gas came into the club."

"It was weird."

OTHER THAN that, the trip was a success. The Doughboys had the critics on their side, playing energized shows night after night.

As a result, the Doughboys have been bumped into power pop punk status that has been known to include the likes of the Clash, the Re-

placements and Stiff Little Fingers along with several newcomers to the arena. Kastner steers clear of such comparisons.

"I don't know what we are anymore," he said. "Especially in Europe where they try to categorize everything. I don't know what to call it: Hippie Gymnastics?"

Perhaps. The group's latest album does seem to be something of a musical floor exercise on the power-pop mat. Scores from the judges appear to be mixed.

The LP was recorded on tour. A sense of urgency and rawness is prevalent. Most bands spend six months in the studio. The Doughboys had only 10 days, having the bomb dropped on them in Lawrence, Kan. (appropriately enough at the fictitious site of TV's "The Day After" seven days before they were to enter the studio).

"THERE WAS NO time to lay back and listen to what you've just done and to try and better it," Kastner said. "It was just rush, rush and get out of the studio."

Talk is already centering on the Doughboys' third album, an album which Kastner said they will have more time to write and record.

By then, perhaps the Doughboys can kiss "Back Home" good-bye.

The Doughboys will perform on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor.

IN CONCERT

● TYPHOID MARY

Typhoid Mary will perform on Monday, Dec. 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● EVAN JOHN

Evan John and the H-Bombs will perform on Monday, Dec. 11, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● DOUGHBOYS

Doughboys will perform on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● BARRY MANILOW

Barry Manilow will make an in-store appearance at Harmony House in Oakland Mall, 14 Mile and I-75, Troy, at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12, in advance of performances at the Fox Theatre Tuesday-Wednesday, Dec. 12-13.

● TED WHITE

Ted White will perform on Tuesday, Dec. 12, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● IODINE RAINCOATS

Iodine Raincoats will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● MOYA

Moya will perform along with Chill on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 663-7758.

● J.D. LAMB

J.D. Lamb will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● R.H. FACTOR

R.H. Factor will perform along with Dave Edwards Wednesday through Saturday, Dec. 13-16, at Jagers Nightclub, 3461 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford. For more information, call 681-1700.

● JUICE

Juice will perform on Thursday, Dec. 14, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● TOM CHAPIN

Tom Chapin will perform along with Matt Watroba on Thursday, Dec. 14, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For more information, call 846-5377.

● TRINIDAD TRIPOLI

Trinidad Tripoli Steel Drum Band will perform on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 14-15, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● BIG CHIEF

Big Chief will perform along with Anti-Pop on Friday, Dec. 15, at Rock 'N' Bowl, 1120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. For more information, call 833-9850.

● RED C

Red C will perform Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 14-16, at the Midtown Cafe, 139 S. Woodward Ave., Birmingham. For information, call 642-1132.

● CIVILIANS

Civilians will perform on Friday, Dec. 15, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

● MAP OF THE WORLD

Map of the World will perform on Friday, Dec. 15, at Griffs Grill, 49 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac. For more information, call 334-9292.

● SILENT PARTNERS

Silent Partners will perform on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 15-16, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, Dearborn. For more information, call 846-5377.

● IDENTITY

Identity will perform on Friday, Dec. 15, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● DIFFERENCE

The Difference will perform on Saturday, Dec. 16, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● HIPPODROME

Hippodrome will perform along with Static Alphabet on Saturday, Dec. 16, at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For more information, call 365-9760.

● BLUE FRONT PURSUADERS

Blue Front Pursuaders will perform on Saturday, Dec. 16, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● SEDUCE

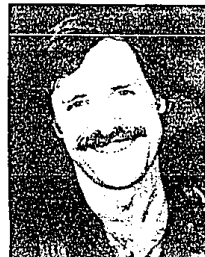
Seduce will perform on Saturday, Dec. 16, at Blondies, 21133 W. Seven Mile, east of Telegraph. For more information, call 535-8168.

● JUST SAY NO

Just Say No will perform with Grievance Committee Saturday, Dec. 16, at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, at Alder Drive, Detroit. For more information, call 831-8370.

● PAN THE BRENS

Pan the Brens will perform on Saturday, Dec. 16, at Griffs Grill, 49 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac. For more information, call 334-9292.



Tom Chapin will perform Thursday, Dec. 14, at Sully's in Dearborn.

COUNTRY

Here are the top 10 singles on WWW-FM:

1. "The Jukebox Played Along," Gene Watson.
2. "It's Just a Matter of Time," Randy Travis.
3. "I've Been Loved by the Best," Don Williams.
4. "An American Family," Oak Ridge Boys.
5. "Two Dozen Roses," Shenandoah.
6. "A Woman in Love," Bonnie Maitland.
7. "The Vows Go Unbroken," Kenny Rogers.
8. "Til Love Comes Again," Reba McEntire.
9. "Yellow Roses," Dolly Parton.
10. "The Place Is On," Sawyer Brown.

TOP HITS

The best-selling records of the week are:

1. "Blame It on the Rain," Milli Vanilli.
2. "Angelia," Richard Marx.
3. "The Way That You Love Me," Paula Abdul.
4. "Love Shack," B-52's.
5. "When I See You Smile," Bad English.
6. "We Didn't Start the Fire," Billy Joel.
7. "Listen to Your Heart," Roxette.
8. "Get on Your Feet," Gloria Estefan.
9. "Back to Life," Soul II Soul.
10. "Back to Life," Soul II Soul. (Source: Cashbox magazine)

REVIEWS

LAUGHTER
— The Mighty
Lemon Drops

The Mighty Lemon Drops have always suffered from comparisons to the Echo and the Bunnymen and, in all honesty, they've been well-deserved criticisms.

They come along here with their new release "Laughter" (Sire), and have placed the Echo ghost well behind them. They have an extremely solid "Mighty Lemon Drops" record.

Their guitar-based sound has been augmented by backing vocals which are so strong, it sounds almost like a second lead vocal.

The LP starts off with "At Midnight," a jaunty number which rides on the rumbling drums and has a guitar riff suspiciously reminiscent of Blondie's "Heart of Glass."

There follows "My Decision," the single, a foot-tapper sing-along that rocks along on a righteous guitar riff.

The pace is changed with the acoustic guitar-based "Where Do We Go from Heaven." This melody-laden gem has touches of the Church's classic "Under the Milky Way."

Later, they introduce a brass section to color the sound in an attempt to avoid a certain sameness, which can befall the sound of a band with



one central songwriter.

This attempt is not entirely successful as by the end of the album, the excitement level has diminished somewhat, despite their presentation of some marvelously catchy choruses.

The album is certainly not a classic pop album but it is indeed good enough to re-establish the Mighty Lemon Drops with their own identity.

— Cormac Wright

OUTER DRIVE
— Outer Drive

Outer Drive is one of those local groups who you don't hear much about. The four-member band doesn't overdo it on the club circuit, appearing instead to concentrate its efforts on writing some solid songs.

Perhaps more groups should follow suit. What we have here is a rather well-done, if not something of a sleeper, of a cassette tape. All eight songs are radio friendly, chock full of simple and enjoyable progressive-pop melodies that never tire (We listened to this tape six consecutive times during one sitting).

The refreshing aspect of this project is that most of these numbers are keyboard dominated yet devoid of the cheesy sound one often associates with Top-40 lounge liars or the Goth dirge of so many of today's "new" music buffs.

First, and foremost in the Outer Drive sound is the vocal work of Jeff Sudakin. Undoubtedly, there is more than a hint of Peter Gabriel and/or Phil Collins in his voice. But as long as Sudakin doesn't try "Red Rain," hey, we're satisfied.

Especially when Outer Drive lets loose like it does on "And He Did," which infuses jazz and a buzzing rock guitar and explodes for more than eight minutes of pure musical



enjoyment.

The progressive nature isn't limited to the sound of music. Lyrically, Outer Drive shows some bite. Without harping on traditional themes, numbers are geared more to personal politics where dreams and love are the House and Senate.

The only criticism here might be that Outer Drive's music doesn't really break any new ground. But, judging by this cassette, the band more than stands firm where it's already at.

— Larry O'Connor

THE FORCE
OF NATURE
— The Jungle
Brothers

In the voluminous thank-you's on this record's inner sleeve, the Jungle Brothers refer to De La Soul as "our parallel and somehow related." The comparison is apt.

Like De La Soul, the Jungle Brothers are a tight, but playful rap trio capable of producing dense and dizzy mixes. But in place of De La Soul's neo-bizy (flower power politics), the Jungle Brothers lace their latest record with a more tough minded approach.

"Acknowledge Your History" is a critique of black acceptance of white-written history in the tradition of Boogie Down Productions' "You Must Learn." The song opens with a Brother singing, "My forefather was a king/He wore fat gold chains and fat ruby rings/Nobody believes this to be true/Maybe it's because my eyes ain't blue." It goes on to deride history as "his story."

But while much of "The Force of Nature" contains messages of similar weight, The Jungle Brothers manage to keep the record from becoming didactic. Their sound is too



playful and giddy for that.

At their darkest, the Jungle Brothers can recall the spare, bass-driven rapping of Eric B. and Rakim. But at their lightest, the Jungle Brothers actually get away with lyrics like "So if you wanna be a little Disko-Ducker/I came here tonight to tear the roof off the Muthafuckers."

The quoted lyric is one of several nods to George Clinton's Parliament-fadecadillac Thang, who are well represented in the album's rich library of sampled materials. Other samples range from early doo-wop to South African township jive to hoary rock guitar riffs.

Comparisons to De La Soul are inevitable, but "Doin' Our Own Dang," a duet between the Jungle Brothers and De La Soul, shows that the two groups are each singular enough to co-exist in the same song without smothering the other. The same also is true of their LP's.

— John Logie