

Wrath charts a path to success

By Jill Hamilton special writer

Chris Mison of Redford, the voice and guitar behind the band Wrath of Christian, is determined that his band is not going to fall in the usual local band rut.

"We didn't set out to have a band just to have a good time playing around town — this band can get signed," Mison said.

So, the guys in Wrath of Christian — Mison, his brother Matt Mison of Southfield on keyboard and programming and Joe Progar of Southfield on drums — have decided that they are going to do things a little differently. This involves meticulously plotting each step of the band's career and breaking a few rules in the process.

CONSIDER THE band's just-released four-song demo cassette. Instead of spending a lot of money and giving up creative control by recording in a studio, the band decided to record the tape in the Mison basement.

This might mean disaster in the hands of another band, but, luckily, Mison happens to be an experienced sound technician. He occasionally moonlights at the sound board of the Majestic Theater in Detroit.

Anyway, what the band eventually came up with is an amazingly professional-sounding tape. The four songs — with names like "Pluckage" and "Precious Margold" — are a Euro-electronic variety and sound just as good as any you could hear on your local cutting edge radio station. But perhaps the most surprising thing about the tape was that



Chris Mison, his brother Matt Mison and Joe Progar, better known as Wrath of Christian, are meticulously plotting each step of the band's career.

It was recorded live.

THE FINE sound quality is due to the time and care they spent before recording the tape, Chris Mison said. "That's what always fascinated me — sound quality," he said. "I can't imagine ever letting somebody take my material and not being able to follow up on what I do."

Brother Matt explained the brothers' working process. "I'm like the producer and he's (Chris) the engineer. It's kind of like an assembly line. I write the music and he writes the vocals and the vocal melodies. Joe puts his 2 cents in, then we all

work on it together.

"This band has been a year in the basement before coming out. Before we left the basement, we said, 'We've got to have a final project.' Because the band recorded in the basement, it saved a lot of money on the tapes and is passing along the savings to its fans by selling the tapes at cost.

"Basically, even if you've head a band a few times, at \$4 a tape you start wondering," Mison said.

THE BAND has no plans to make an album.

If we wanted to make an album,

we could have, but, if no one knows who you are, why go out and record an album? You have no market," Chris Mison said. "The whole idea is to get people to hear you."

"My theory is the people who buy records and the people who see shows are not the same. You may have the best band in Detroit and play every weekend, but not everyone is going to know who you are."

INSTEAD OF hitting the club circuit after creating five or six original songs, like many other local

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IN CONCERT

INDEPENDENT LABEL

Independent Label will perform Monday, Jan. 7, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

DIFFERENCE

The Difference will perform Tuesday, Jan. 8, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

STATE EMERGENCY

Ska bands State Emergency and Etc-a-Sketch will perform Tuesday, Jan. 8, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

POETRY SLAM

Poetry Slam will perform Tuesday, Jan. 8, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

BOB (HARVEY)

Bob (harvey) will perform Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the Nectarine Ballroom, 510 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$5 in advance. For information, call 99-MUSIC.

ATTIC

Attic will perform Wednesday, Jan. 9, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

MOCKING BIRD

Mocking Bird will perform Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the Token Lounge, 28949 Joy Road, Westland. For information, call 522-0245.

GOON SKWAD

Goon Skwad will perform Wednesday, Jan. 9, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

PASSION NOUVEAU

Passion Nouveau will perform with guests, Park the Karma, Thursday, Jan. 10, at 3-D Club, 1815 N. Main, north of 12 Mile Road, Royal Oak. For information, call 588-3344.

ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Assembly Required will perform Thursday, Jan. 10, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

FRANK ALLISON/VOODOO CHILI

Frank Allison and the Odd Sox will perform 6-9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 10, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

PRIMAL SHELLS

Primal Shells will perform with guests, Washing Field, Thursday, Jan. 10, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

HEART BEATS

Heart Beats will perform Friday and Saturday, Jan. 11-12, at Jameson's, 1812 N. Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 547-6470.

BIG SHOULDERS

Big Shoulders will perform Friday, Jan. 11, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

JEANNE AND THE DREAMS

Jeanne and the Dreams will perform Friday, Jan. 11, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

GENERALS

Generals will perform Friday, Jan. 11, at Psyche's Lounge, 2932 Caniff, off Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 874-0254.

HOPE ORCHESTRA

Hope Orchestra will perform with guests, Happy As Clams, Friday, Jan. 11 at Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 958-3829.

GOOBER & THE PEAS

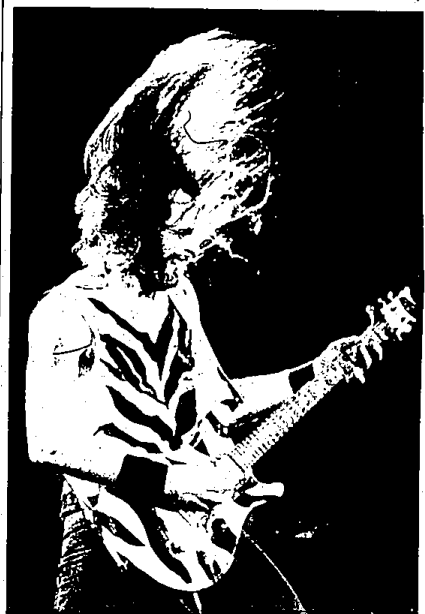
Goobar & the Peas will perform with guests, Dushanes, Friday, Jan. 11 at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

PARK THE KARMA

Park the Karma will perform with Big City Chicken Friday, Jan. 11, at Lili's 2129 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.

SHOUTING CLUB

Shouting Club and the Freemasons will perform Saturday, Jan. 12, Jan. 11, at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Caniff, off I-75. For information, call 365-3829.



What a bash!

The fans were into the beat and Cobo Arena was rockin' n' rollin' New Year's Eve, thanks to famed rocker Ted Nugent. The Motor City Madman was in his prime at his annual Whiplash Bash, with screaming guitar licks and heady lyrics. Nugent (center) shared the stage with Damned Yankee members Tommy Shaw (left) and Jack Blades and local group Heaven's Wish, which had made its way to being the opening act at the Bash.



PHOTO BY SHERMIE BUZZER



Shouting Club will join the Freemasons on stage Saturday, Jan. 12, at the Hamtramck Pub.

LOCAL

Here are the top 10 songs on Detroit Music Scene — which is heard 4.5 p.m. Sundays — created 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays on WDRB-FM.

- 1. New Day Now — The Gear
2. Harbor in the Shade — Hannibal
3. Local Girl — Knives
4. Ask Me Another Day — Inside Out
5. Pain of It All — Blue Simbus
6. Italian Girls — Ragnar Kvaran
7. Teacher Teacher — Dawn
8. In Your Skeetaper — Blue Angels
9. The Passion — Walkin' Stick
10. Railroad Bill — Andy Breckman

CUTTING EDGE

Here are the top 10 LPs receiving air play on "The Cutting Edge," which is heard 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. nights on CIMX-FM 88.7.

- 1. Ritual de la Habitacion — Jane's Addiction
2. Galls — Lush
3. Hiss by Brick — Iggy Pop
4. X — INXS
5. Mixed Up — The Cure
6. Heart-Shaped World — Chris Isaak
7. Right Here, Right Now — James Jones
8. Ghost of a Dog — Eddie Redkey & New Bohemians
9. Cake — Trash Can Sinistras
10. Bomba Drag — Murrissay

CHILDHOOD — Missionary Stew

A pop band doesn't have an easy go of it today. Thanks to many predecessors (Air Supply, for example), many are quick to write the lot of them off as facile, banal and total lacking in overall imagination.

Some choose the pop route, not out of affinity but necessity due to a lack of talent. Also, there are all those limitations — albeit many self-imposed — that state a pop song should be short, sweet and not disturb the thought process.

Then comes Missionary Stew. This five-man outfit works within the constraints of the pop genre, professing a vision and fulfilling it without compromising in the least bit that took some doing.

First off, Dion Bobdy's voice is an unflawed, unrelenting flow of ethereal expertise — the perfect vehicle for a pop band that could be light on substance. Then there are the air-driven keyboards that would seem at home in an Archies' song.

Gosh, how do they do it? Well, one thing the lyrics capture more than chronicling conquests in the backseat of a souped-up Chevy. Many of the numbers speak of love, childhood or day-



to-day living. The lyrics in the bar-bones guitar offering of "Waterworld" reflect this. "The waterworld is a no man's land where reason has no place to stand where love and hate go hand where I obey your every command." Of course, no set of songs is complete without a utopian vision. The dissonant acoustic number "Peace Like a Prayer" is rather straightforward in this regard. "I want the clouds to blow away. I want the sun to shine by my side. I want my peace like a river. I want to give this life of mine give it all to you." The Britton line in Missionary Stew's successful debut is mostly due to talent, something that even pop's limitations can't suppress.

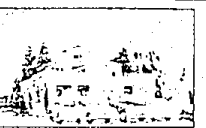
LIVE AT LEGS — John D. Lamb

With all its engaging narratives and sterling musicianship, John D. Lamb's Live at Legs has an under-tone of desperation. An urgency that more than pushes this music offering over the top.

Lamb sounds like someone who sat down, pondered his place in life, rather, as an entertainer and came out with all musical cylinders firing with a go-for-broke effort utilizing all his strengths as a live performer and a songwriter.

The setting is Legs Inn, a scenic, little lakefront enclave judging by the painting on the cover which depicts a place with a keep standing next to the pickup truck, motorcycle and automobiles in its parking lot. Lamb's perpetual tour of the small-town club circuit comes across with the introductory guitar lines of "Fire Me." He, in his name's John D. Lamb, I've been fired from more hats than anyone I know.

Lamb's songwriting is marked by introspection and self-realization, often preferring the directness of first-person references opposed to wrapping himself in vague imagery and metaphors. To his credit, Lamb pulls this off without sounding self-absorbed. His story-telling narrative especially washes well with the in-



pretentious chat-and-beer set who don't give a hoot about the surreal, visceral of the desire.

His numbers like "Tomato," "Suburban Boy" and "Lover Man," Lamb sings as much about them as he does about himself.

Sometimes in the quest for sincerity and passion, Lamb can steer close to New Jersey ala Springsteen. "I believe," a knock-out of a number, has that quality of a grease-stained motorcycle boot stamp and an arm with a pack of Marlboros rolled up in the sleeve thrust in the air.

When not inventing his apparent songwriting talents, Lamb or more precisely, his hand makes showcase some excellent musicianship on the instrumental "Atlantic Ocean." Salvatore D'Agli's lead guitar soars above the crashing waves and the blue horizon on this number. Andy Boller's keyboards ooze with tranquility, putting a shiny finish on Lamb's unprinted lyrics. Mike Hesse's bass and Mitch Pardy's drumming pounds it all home.

Larry O'Connor

SINGS THE BLUES — The Simpsons

Holy, Milt Vanilli! Stop the press!

For people who still care about this sort of thing, the Simpsons — those lovable (?) characters that are a marketing man's dream and a real juggernaut — DO NOT SING ON THEIR OWN A REPEAT.

The music industry is hush on the topic, but insiders say former "Tracey Ullman Show" alumni Dan Castellaneta (in place of Homer Simpson), Julie Kavner (Marge Simpson), Nancy Cartwright (Bart Simpson), Yeardley Smith (Lisa Simpson) and Matt Groening (Maggie Simpson) do the actual vocals for the tone- and tune-deaf cartoon characters.

When contacted via phone, Bart Simpson — who had to be pulled from a power brunch with his media guru, — would neither confirm nor deny the persistent rumors, but did say, "So what if we didn't sing, dude? Don't have a cow, it's only a novelty album."



Fresh Prince Fame), Joe Walsh and blues legend B.B. King. There's very little blues on "Sings the Blues," which relies mostly on a rap beat and rhythm to get its message across. There's some cute stuff here, most notably the hit single "Do the Bartman." Do the Bartman? Thank you, no. That marketing megalith known as the Simpsons marches on, but it marches to the beat of a different drum. — Gerald Frauley