

STREET SCENE

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Building on past success

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

The Difference should not be releasing "Groundswell" with its \$30,000-plus price tag. At least not with their own money.

Past accolades would have people predicting a better fate for the five-man band of funksters. After all, wasn't this the band that MTV called "Best College Band in the Nation" in 1988 and that *Musicians* magazine picked as one of the 10 best unsigned bands in the country the same year?

Drummer Tom Campbell wearily nods his head yes.

"We sort of sat back and thought record companies would approach us," said Campbell in the living room of his Whitmore Lake home. "They didn't."

"We were a little naive about it. What we should have done was walk into their offices and crammed it down their throat."

Major labels better invest in some throat lozenges, as "Groundswell" is headed for the industry's collective tonsils.

The self-produced compact disc was 2½ years in the making, recorded and mixed at three different studios, such as Producer's Color in Southfield and the Schoolhouse and Solid Sound in Ann Arbor. The band, instead of a record label, is paying the bill for its release.

YES, THIS is crunch time. Yes, this is the release to either put the band over the top or leave them languishing as one of those who could've, should've but never did.

Any repeat of past history is unlikely, especially judging by the infectious energy emanating throughout "Groundswell."

The Difference has always been able to tap the source in live shows, which have always been sultry groove-infested affairs burning the wax off of dance floors. Bassist Randy Martin double-jointed gyrations alone are a sight to behold.

But try getting that on record or as Campbell put it, "Energy is tough to capture in binary code."

The Difference's previous two projects have been wayward at best, including a five-song EP "Culture Shock" that was recorded in New York with studio time won in the MTV contest. The project was never released.

"Our first couple of projects we didn't feel represented our music the way we liked," Campbell said. "People also commented that they thought the live show was better."

"Groundswell" reveals a group as something more than a funk-inspired aerobics session. Stirring rhythm blues, mystical Celtic soul and flat-out rock'n'roll are detected on the 13-song effort on the band's own label, Bad Dog.

VOCALIST/GUITARIST Ramsey Gouda has been in New York



Difference has spent 2½ years and more than \$30,000 to produce "Groundswell," meant for record companies to sit up and take notice of the group.

shopping the compact disc. Already the CD is getting air play on college radio.

If anything, "Groundswell" is an injection of morale for a band whose members were glum. The studio offered rejuvenation.

"This time it was a lot more creative," Gouda said. "We had a better engineer (Geoff Michael). He was working real hard to get our ideas across."

"It was nerve-wracking," Campbell added. "Being in the studio

was a joy. We opened our minds this time. We let everybody do what they wanted. We had fun."

The nerve-wracking part was the differences in opinion over the remixing. . . It's like writing a book but writing it with four other authors. All of you have to agree."

Through the bleak times, live shows helped sustain the Difference. The group continued to forge ahead, performing up to 10 shows a month across the Midwest and the East Coast.

"There are some hard times

when you start wondering what's wrong with the music industry or what's with your music," Gouda said. "If you're sincere about your music and it's a part of you, it won't burn out."

With the CD, the band wants to make up the difference between live shows and a recorded product.

"I think it's a contrast; we've attempted to merge them instead of separate them," Campbell said. "I think we go with what we go with on stage. That's one of the ways we've grown up."

STREET SENSE

Doubts aside, stick to your convictions

Dear Barbara,

I recently broke up with the man I dated for the last year. Now I am having second thoughts and feel confused as to whether I did the right thing. This is the story:

I am 30 and my ex-boyfriend is 33. Neither of us has ever been married. We both have our own apartments and about two weeks ago — this is the occasion of our break-up — he asked me to move in with him. I don't want to move in with him. I don't want to live with anyone unless I am married to him and I told my boyfriend so.

I also told him that I was ready to get married. He asked how long he had to think about whether he was ready to get married. I told him two weeks, and he replied that that wasn't long enough; he needed longer to think about such an important topic. That's when I broke up with him.

My reasoning is that we are both adults, we should know what we want after a year. I do. Why doesn't he? I have spent a lot of energy and time thinking about whether this guy is right for me. Why hasn't he been doing the same?

I know I sound sure of myself, but then there is also a little voice deep down inside that feels unsure. There were a lot of great things about this guy and I will miss him.

Do you think I was wrong to break up with him? Many of my friends say I was crazy to give him such a strict ultimatum.



Barbara Schiff

so disturbed by this occurrence that I broke the engagement.

Many of my friends have told me that I should be more understanding. I was brought up to believe that pornography was wrong and I believe it. I am sickened and disgusted by what he is doing. I have a gut feeling I cannot get rid of.

You have written a lot recently about different things being normal that I would have thought were not. Possibly I am wrong about my fiancé, too. I feel confused about this issue.

Broken-Up

Dear Broken-Up,

On a recent TV program about couples and marriage, the emphasis was made that it is compatibility in a marriage that makes it work. If a husband and wife have similar attitudes and feelings in common, then they can be happily married. Even though other people would point out deficiencies in their marriage.

Yours is a different picture. You have a strong feeling against pornography. Respect yourself. I don't know if your boyfriend is right or wrong, but in order to love a man, a woman has to respect him. Without respect as a foundation, the love tends to fly away. Stick to your guns.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,

I was engaged to a man. One day I went to his apartment unexpectedly and found him masturbating while watching a pornographic film. I was

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

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IN CONCERT

• **SOUTHOING ZAK**
Monday, Aug. 19 — Southgoing Zak will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2742.

• **PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ JAM**
Monday, Aug. 19 — Paradise Valley Jazz Jam will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2335.

• **HELMET**
Tuesday, Aug. 20 — Helmet and Jambox will perform at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$5.50. For information, call 961-MELT.

• **WISHING FIELD**
Tuesday, Aug. 20 — Wishing Field will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• **CHISEL BROTHERS**
Tuesday, Aug. 20 — Chisel Brothers will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2335.

• **KYMOX**
Tuesday, Aug. 20 — KYMOX will perform with Charm Farm at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. For information, call 334-1999.

• **YELLOWMAN & THE SAGITTARIUS BAND**
Wednesday, Aug. 21 — Yellowman & the Sagittarius Band will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-6555.

• **WATER FOR THE POOL**
Wednesday, Aug. 21 — Water for the Pool will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• **CATFISH HODGE**
Thursday, Aug. 22 — Catfish Hodge will perform at Sully's, 4754 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1920.

• **STEVE WOOD QUARTET**
Thursday, Aug. 22 — Steve Wood Quartet will perform with guest Edlen Orr at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2335.

• **AL GREEN**
Thursday, Aug. 22 — Al Green will perform with guests, Mighty Clouds of Joy, at Pine Knob Music Theatre, Saginaw Road and I-75, Clarkston. Tickets are \$17 for pavilion and \$12 for lawn.

• **FUNHOUSE**
Thursday, Aug. 22 — Funhouse will perform with guests, Jimmy Bones, at 3-

Chute, 1815 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 589-3344.

• **THE DEAD BAND**
Thursday, Aug. 22 — The Dead Band will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

• **INCURABLES**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Incurables will perform at the Hamtramck Pub, 2048 Canfield, off I-75, Hamtramck. For information, call 355-3829.

• **HOPE ORCHESTRA**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Hope Orchestra will perform along with Strange Bagfellow and the Chapter at Grosse Ile Racquet Club, Groh and Meridian. For information, call 675-4272.

• **ORIENTAL SPAS**
Friday through Sunday, Aug. 23-25 — Oriental Spas will perform at The Studio Lounge, Wayne Road, south of Warren Road, Westland. For information, call 729-2540.

• **RON BROOKS TRIO**
Friday and Saturday, Aug. 22-23 — Ron Brooks Trio will perform at Third Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 662-8310.

• **RED C**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Red C will perform with guests, Spiral Dance, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. For information, call 832-2335.

• **ANNE DE DAVIS**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Anne De Davis will perform with guests, Weather Vane, at Club Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor. For information, call 994-3562.

• **BEFORE OR AFTER**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Before or After will perform at Paycheck's, 2932 Canfield, at Jos Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8934.

• **MARC FALCONBERRY**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Marc Falconberry will perform at the Station Lounge, 32413 Michigan, west of Merriman Road, Wayne. For information, call 721-3860.

• **JEANIE AND THE DREAMS**
Friday, Aug. 23 — Jeanie and the Dreams will perform on the Bobo Moonlight Cruise. The boat departs 11 p.m. and returns 1 a.m. For information, call 843-0700 or 843-8800.

• **GEORGE BEDARD**
Friday, Aug. 23 — George Bedard will perform at Sully's, 4754 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-1820.