

STREET SCENE

The Observer & Eccentric® Newspapers

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Monday, November 4, 1991 O&E

IN CONCERT

● CATS IN THE BASEMENT

Monday, Nov. 4 — Cats In the Basement will perform at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● TEQUILA MOCKING BIRDS

Monday, Nov. 4 — Tequila Mocking Birds will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● LARRY SMITH & THE PARADISE VALLEY JAZZ JAM SESSION

Monday, Nov. 4 — Larry Smith & the Paradise Valley Jazz Jam Session will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

● CRACKERBOX

Tuesday, Nov. 5 — Crackerbox will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● MAGAZINE BENEFIT

Tuesday, Nov. 5 — His Name is Alive, Majesty Crush, Brothers from Another Planet, Gangster Fun and Duck will perform at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. The music is part of "Mural of Reality," a benefit for the new arts magazine 78 RPM. Visual art by Pam Aldred, Steven Boch, Dan Santoni, James Moore, Monica Wyatt, Alicia Gbur and Simonette will also be on display. Doors open at 8 p.m. For information, call 334-1893.

● THE URGE

Tuesday, Nov. 5 — The Urge will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● DAVE ALVIN AND THE SKELETONS

Tuesday, Nov. 5 — Dave Alvin and the Skeletons will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

● JOHNNY WITH AN EYE

Wednesday, Nov. 6 — Johnny With an Eye will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● TOAD THE WET SPROCKET

Wednesday, Nov. 6 — Toad the Wet Sprocket will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● REGGAE AMBASSADORS

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Reggae Ambassadors will perform at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● RAINBIRDS

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Rainbirds will perform with guests Sometimes Why and Time Trista at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

● BORN NAKED

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Born Naked will perform at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● TRACY SCIENCE

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Tracy Science will perform at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● BUZZCOCKS

Thursday, Nov. 7 — The Buzzcocks will perform with guests Poster Children and Carnival Art at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

● GRANFALLOON

Thursday, Nov. 7 — Granfalloon will perform with guests Happy as Clams at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, near 12 Mile Road, Royal Oak.

● PEDESTRIANS

Friday, Nov. 8 — Pedestrians will perform at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti. For information, call 485-5050.

● HOWLING DIABLOS

Friday, Nov. 8 — Howling Diablos will perform at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit. For information, call 832-2355.

● CIVILIANS

Friday, Nov. 8 — Civilians will perform with guests 17 Reasons Why at Lil's 21, 2930 Jacob, off Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.

● SUZANNE LANE & FRIENDS

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 8-9 — Suzanne Lane & Friends will perform at the Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. For information, call 962-8310.

● HAPPY AS CLAMS

Friday, Nov. 8 — Happy as Clams will perform at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward, Detroit. For information, call 831-8070.

● PAULA ABDUL

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 8-9 — Paula Abdul will perform with guest Afterchock at the Palace of Auburn Hills, 2 Championship Drive, off I-75, Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$22.50. For information, call 377-0100.

● GARFIELD BLUES BAND

Friday, Nov. 8 — Garfield Blues Band will perform at Moby Dicks, 5152 Schaefer, between Ford and Michigan, Dearborn. For information, call 581-3650.



They go by just one name. There's Bill on guitar, Krome on bass, Rick on guitar and Bob on drums. Their music is metal, alternative metal, and they're Blasphemous.

Alternative metal? Call it Blasphemous

By Larry O'Connor
Staff writer

Women in tight jeans who look like they could crush a cucumber in their hands are playing pool. The dank smell of leather and beer permeate the air and to top it off, some guy is on stage sticking needles through his mouth and arm.

A visit to heavy metal hell?

Well, no kids on the block are on the bill.

It may only seem that way with a band named Blasphemous scheduled to perform. A rather intriguing outfit, born out of hardcore inspiration and who have turned their sound into an indelible brand of metal/thrash that begs description.

"It's kind of alternative metal," said Rick Beard, singer and lead guitarist. "I think it's kind of Jane's Addiction meet Metallica. We're very influenced by rock and blues. Everything we do is derived from a blues riff."

Beard said this, hardly lifting his head while tuning his guitar. End of story? Ah, but it were that simple.

Something sets Blasphemous apart from other crashing metal bands, who invite all the Spinal Tap clichés or who resemble Woodstock revisited.

The band's debut release, "Grooving With the Mutants," is a 12-song effort, featuring a breadth of musical styles and themes.

THROUGH the metal dirge, Blasphemous lures a listener in with a tentacle of grooves, with undertones of jazz, blues and funk. Then they assault the senses with an

'We're very influenced by rock and blues. Everything we do is derived from a blues riff.'

— Rick

unrelenting metal guitar and Rick's screeching vocals.

Their songs offer no utopias or alternatives, just a state of mind at the time they were written. Current event themes are tackled with vengeance such as the crack epidemic, money grabbing churches and passing drug tests.

Songs of love gone awry are at a minimum, quaintly summed up in one number "Love F—d Me Up."

The spewing anger from the disillusionment of suburban life or simply bored? In Blasphemous' case it's probably a little of both.

"You've got your Rembrandts and you have your Picasso's," said Kurt "Krome" Sagan, the band's bass player after explaining how his jaw got broke in fight at a shopping mall. "Everybody paints it in their own way."

Blasphemous formed in 1987 as a three-piece with Beard, Krome and drummer Bob Champe, Bill Sanko,

the other guitarist, joined the band two years ago. They honed their craft at hardcore haunts such as

Blondies and the Falcon before moving to other palatable venues such as The Token, Harpo's and The Ritz. Initially, they were inspired by bands such as the Dead Kennedys and G.B.H.

"WE WERE into the thrash type bands," Krome said. "That's who we used to go see all the time. We got put in with all kinds of bands. We got put in with heavy metal acts and we did all right. We got put in with thrash acts and we did all right."

The band deviated from the hardcore scene later, according to Krome, because "We got our high school diplomas."

Those hardcore days served Blasphemous well, especially when it comes to performing live. There's an element of anything-goes, let's-have-fun that sustains this outfit. Krome, aptly named for the chrome helmet on his head, performed a Devil's Night show wrapped in toilet paper.

In a short, 30-minute set the band burned through several songs from the debut release. A technical glitz left the outfit with guitars for one number, but a self-inflicted dire saw them through.

"Our attitude three years ago was pretty immature," Champe said. "In the last few years, the ideas have skyrocketed."

Blasphemous will perform Friday, Nov. 8, at Harpo's, Chalmers Avenue, off of I-94, Detroit. For information, call 524-1700.

Die Warzau: Doing it all live — maybe

By Larry O'Connor
Staff writer

Is it live or Die Warzau? Band member Van Christie says it's both.

The Chicago-based techno band will seek a rather dubious achievement in sampling circles. The band's going to actually attempt to play all its music live on stage. Die Warzau performs with Foetus Saturday, Nov. 9, at St. Andrew's Hall.

CEOs at Memorex may cry by the window at night with Van Christie and Jim Marcus are carting along percussionists Chris Vrenas and Chris Bolt. But enough is enough, according to Christie.

"All I did when I was a kid was go to concerts," said Christie, 26, in a telephone interview from his home in Chicago. "Even if the bands absolutely (stunk), they gave it their all and walked out of there exhausted."

Keeping machinery to a minimum is only one deviation for Die Warzau. The duo of Christie and Marcus have always sought to meld an enlightened world view on a discordant platform of aural disintegration.

Peace seeking, Bible-belt bashing and deploring material goods are common themes in Die Warzau's technified stew, no doubt making them prime candidates for a subscription to *Mother Jones*.

Those topics are dealt in techno surgery on the band's second release "Big Metal Bass Face" on Fiction/Atlantic. Should they be frisked for ACLU cards or have P.C. tattooed on their foreheads?

"Politically correct is what you believe in . . . we're just politically aware," Christie said.

FOR CHRISTIE, his political hipness stems to childhood. Both parents were "heavy liberals," leading their kid to such covert un-Republican activities as plastering "George McGovern for President" stickers along corridors.

Christie promptly grumbles about all U.S. presidents of his generation, except for Jimmy Carter, and becomes the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. He contends Die Warzau doesn't have an agenda, though.

"You can't translate it to music, at least not directly," he said. "I don't think people listen to music for education. They listen to it for a variety of other reasons, escapism is one of them."

"We just want people to be more aware of what's going on around them. We're, definitely not a preachy band or anything."



Chicago-based techno band Die Warzau — Van Christie, Jim Marcus, Chris Vrenas and

Chris Bolt — is savoring its second release out, "Big Metal Bass Face" on Fiction/Atlantic.

"Big Metal Bass Face" is a little less darker and nastier than its predecessor "Disco Rigido," which was released in 1989 on Fiction/Polygram. After all, these are kinder, gentler times.

THE LATEST 14-song effort was self-produced by the pair, who met at Smart Bar in Chicago and went back to Christie's place to write three songs at 3 a.m. and thus formed Die Warzau Syndrome in 1988. They sought cohesion on "Big Metal Bass Face," mixing punk, funk and metal into a copious flow.

"We listened to a lot of records from the '70s," Christie said. "They weren't just a collection of singles. They always had a beginning and an end."

Initially, their recordings didn't nearly attract the attention their stage antics did. Die Warzau would per-

form, using welding torches and dynamite to provide a visual punch to their virulent music.

Performance art took an extreme one night when a band member stepped on a shard of metal and badly cut his foot in a show at the Limelight in Chicago. Things have been toned down since, including the band's more than rose-colored view of things.

"You don't have to have a dark vision with all the nastiness around you," Christie said.

Die Warzau will perform with Foetus Saturday, Nov. 9, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$9.50 in advance. For information, call 961-MELT.



The lineup at St. Andrew's Hall Thursday, Nov. 7, will include recording artists Carnival Art, along with The Buzzcocks and Poster Children.