

STREET SCENE

The Observer & Eccentric® Newspapers

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Monday, December 23, 1991 O&E



Members of Loudhouse include Tim Cross (from left), Vin E. Sadrack, Ken E. Mugwump and Mike Cross.

Loudhouse stays close to home

By Joseph S. Hoffmann
special writer

A year ago, Loudhouse was just beginning its trek into the music business when they landed a contract with Virgin Records in Los Angeles.

Since that time their debut disc, "For Crying Out Loud," has attacked music stores everywhere.

They also have a song in the soundtrack of the popular film "Point Break." That song is a very unusual remake of the early '70s Deep Purple hit "Smoke on the Water."

They took the root of the original song, but drummer Vin E. Sadrack intensified its driving drum beat. Guitarist Mike Cross left the historic guitar solo somewhat intact, but bassist Tim Cross enhanced the original bass part.

Last but definitely not least the band's stalwart vocalist Ken E. Mugwump of Livonia fires off his

own unique tribal rendition of the song's archetypal lyrics.

They recently filmed the video for "Smoke on the Water" in an old abandoned Jaycees haunted house in Farmington Hills. That will appear along with the band's two other videos on MTV Headbanger's Ball.

Another significant facet of the band is their multiple talents outside of music. Mugwump and the group also wrote and directed the video. Many friends and relatives from around the area joined in.

"A LOT of people don't even know what we're doing yet," they're saying. "I've heard of those guys, but what are they doing?" Mugwump said. "They're doing it. It's not like 'are they doing it?' We're doing it and that's the bottom line. . . jump on the train. See what we've got to offer."

This band keeps its activities local. They recorded their CD in Ferndale. They shot all three of their videos in and around Detroit, and they

all live in the area.

"We're a product of this area and we don't ever plan on deserting our hometown like so many other bands do," said Mugwump, whose bright red dreadlocks, pall blue sunglasses and black plastic full-length trench coat make him look like some sort of mad witch doctor.

Their disc consists of 12 power-driven anthems of the musical periphery. Their sound is truly a product of the '90s, evidence of the musical era to come.

In the song called "Faith Farm," Mugwump takes you through a visual mind trip into LoudhouseLand, "Zebra's from Zimbabwe/Freedom in their tracks/Suicidal Radar men he's got a monkey on his back/Mister Elephant man never forgets who shot his wife."

Each band member controls his instrument to exceptional perfection. That's what breathes life into their strange new sound that Mugwump calls "a combination of life, death,

old shoes, new shoes and a great sense of humor."

"PUNCHING CLOWN" is one of the songs that captures the band in its purest form, unrefined, dominating and contemporary in the present-day alternative music subculture.

Their euphoric song called "King Among the Ruins" proves that guitarist Mike Cross can manipulate the acoustical guitar with the same intensity as he does with the electric one.

"I saw something very different in them. In a time where there is not much new happening in even the alternative arena," said Joel Martin, the band's promoter.

There is a resolute versatility in Loudhouse that defies a comparison of style.

From the primitive masks to the tribal tattoos this band's strange and dynamic stage performance tests the boundaries of reality.

Hubert Sumlin sings the blues without Howlin'

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Hubert Sumlin's billing as the former sideman to blues great Howlin' Wolf rings rather hollow.

For the Mississippi native was more than just a guitarist's silhouette in the background in his 23-year apprenticeship with one of the masters of the blues. Sumlin fought with him, he learned from him and he served him.

In return, Wolf reared him, fired him, punched him and protected him in the gritty-gritty blues world.

"When he died, it just felt like the world ended," said Sumlin, 60, in a telephone interview from his home in Milwaukee, Wis. "I sat over that man's casket for three days."

There was something of a father-son relationship. Wolf taking Sumlin in after the teenager ran away from home and started playing with James Cotton. He met up with Wolf at a West Memphis, Ark., radio station in 1953.

The association between Wolf and Sumlin could make for an interesting discussion in psychological circles. Wolf seemed to have a hold over Sumlin.

In Wolf, Sumlin found an authority figure, a task master on stage who would seldom tolerate an utter of dissent. He was always firing Sumlin if he felt he was stealing the stage. One disagreement concluded with Sumlin receiving a one-punch knockout delivered by Wolf who stood a sturdy 6-feet, 4-inches.

MUSIC ENTHUSIASTS would rather take note of the influence Sumlin had injected the growl into Wolf's edgy, urban blues music that produced such classics as "Red Rooster" and "Tell Me." Was he merely a foil? Hardly.

Lay such a compliment in Sumlin's lap that he had more than a perfunctory role in defining Wolf's sound, he'll quickly defer any credit back to Wolf himself and to God.

With Wolf's death, Sumlin's finger-picking, often-melodic guitar style is a disaster — for himself as well as blues audiences.

He can easily navigate from plaintive Delta blues inspiration to the jump-start boogie-woogie with an urban sway. One of the most lauded aspects of Sumlin's approach to blues guitar is his uncanny ability to improvise.

"I'm my own," he said. "Nobody tells me what to do. I think nobody knows what I'm doing."

"The way I play, you won't learn it in a book."

Sumlin lost his way after Wolf died in 1976. Desolate in mourning, he didn't pick up a guitar for three months and then seemed to languish on the circuit while releasing a nondescript LP on a French label.



Hubert Sumlin has proven there's a life for him after his 23-year association with Howlin' Wolf, apparent in his latest LP, "Healing Feeling."

"I couldn't quit," Sumlin said. "The music is in you. I realized life goes on. You got to do what you got to do."

What Sumlin had to do was release an album domestically. He did in 1987 with "Hubert Sumlin's Blues Party" on Black Top Records. Supported by New Orleans crooner Sam McClain and members from Roomful of Blues, Sumlin's emergence as a blues frontman was properly documented and largely heralded.

"HEALING FEELING," Sumlin's recent release on Black Top, has been lauded by critics for its subtlety as much as for its grit. Noted guitarist Ronnie Earl lends some stinging guitar tracks backing up Sumlin. Likewise, Texas Heat frontman Darrell Nulich provides a soulful vocal tone on cuts such as "Play It Cool."

If anything, the album is a testament to Sumlin's brimming vitality as a musician and a human being. Things are good now, said the guitarist who inspired Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Bitterness the blues has generated in some of its most grizzled veterans is refreshingly amiss. Despite a recent bout with the flu, Sumlin readily fills the conversation with anecdotes of his days with Wolf, punctuated with a distinctive howl of laughter and a "That's right, you got it."

Hubert Sumlin will perform Friday and Saturday, Dec. 27-28, at Sully's, 4754 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn. Cover is \$8 at the door. For information, call 846-1920.

REVIEWS

ACHTUNG BABY — U2

Bono — he of the bombastic, melodramatic walls and thought — wants to tell us about love. No trips to the desert plain where the streets have no name or excursions through the highway where a man turns the key and a man plays the saxophone.

For once, U2's home is in the heart.

The Irish band's latest "Achtung Baby" doesn't bludgeon you with metaphorically twined balls of ripe imagery or seeks to educate us on the social injustice of the month. This is a wondrous musical expedition, somewhat mesmerizing with its technological forays and yet stark with its plaintive lyrics.

Bono has also learned subtlety, replacing a line like "our love runs cold in the caverns of the night" ("Red Hill Mining Town") with "Joshua, my heart empty as a vacant lot" ("Who's Gonna Hide Your Wild Horses") — "Achtung Baby".

The first example was contrived, a pseudo attempt to describe someone else's pain. The second is less dressed up, but personal and honest.

At times his vocals are muted, barely distinguishable from past oracles. He can sound resigned,

downright weary in "Tryin' to Throw Your Arms Around the World."

Edge's piercing guitar stabs from all angles, sounding like he's jumping up and down on your chest in "The Fly" and so distant in "Acrobat" you want to send him a postcard.

More so, the industrial tone of "Achtung Baby" harks back to the experimental trek U2 pursued before with unrequited zeal on the moody, ambient Brian Eno-influenced "Rattle and Hum." Then, the excesses of Eno's production bore the fruit of only a few memorable numbers, "Pride (in the Name of Love)" being one.

"Achtung Baby," by contrast, produces 12 indelible, simply majestic songs. Part of this is Eno's experimental ranting is somewhat tempered by the pragmatism of Steve Lillywhite and the insular exploration encouraged by Daniel Lanois.

However, U2's highly touted daring venture into the ominous, technocratic world must be pulled into perspective. U2 sounds about as industrial and alternative as a band can sound — one selling albums in multi-platinum lots and selling out football stadiums that is.

Nonetheless, "Achtung Baby" is brilliant.

— Larry O'Connor

Monday Dec. 23

- **Delerante**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti.
485-5050
- **Full Moon Rising**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor.
996-274
- **Paradise Valley Jazz Jam**
Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit.
832-2355

Thursday Dec. 26

- **Maltres**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355
- **The Skyline Band**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor.
996-2747

Friday Dec. 27

- **Sun Messengers**
With Red C at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit.
832-2355
- **Almighty Lumberjacks of Death**
With The Brotherhood Recipies and Mother Mercy at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Cover is \$5.
961-5127
- **Frank Allison**
Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.
875-6555
- **Holy Cows**
With Dad Blasted and the Jamersons at Finney's Pub, 3955 Woodward, Detroit.
831-4070
- **Johnny "Yard Dog" Jones**
Attie Bar, 11667 Jos Campau, Hamtramck.
363-4194

- **Crossed Wire**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355
- **Vision**
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti.
485-5050
- **Hubert Sumlin**
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn.
846-1920
- **Chisel Brothers**
Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn.
581-3550
- **Sun Messengers**
Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit.
832-2355
- **Trash Brats**
The Ritz, 17580 Fraxho, near 104 Mile Road, Roseville.
776-6210

Saturday Dec. 28

- **Uncle Jessie & the 29th Street Blues Band**
The Attie, 11667 Jos Campau, Hamtramck.
363-4194
- **Park the Karma**
Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.
875-6555
- **Pinelap Perkins**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355
- **Hubert Sumlin**
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn.
846-1920
- **Alternative music night**
With Amy Denio, Nick Didkovsky, Only a Mother and Major Dents at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit.
832-2355
- **Heavens Wish**
The Ritz, 17580 Fraxho Road, at 104 Mile Road, Roseville.
776-6404
- **Chisel Brothers**
Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn.
581-3550

- **George Bedard and the Kingspins**
New Detroit Bar & Grill, 655 Dearborn, at East Fort.
963-3355
- **WAYN-AM Benelli**
With Blue Nimbus, Shools and Ladders, Soul Station and Neophyte Nation at Finney's Pub, 3955 Woodward, near Alexander, Detroit.
821-6020
- **Bootsy X and the Lovemasters**
Hamtramck Pub, 2438 Caniff, off I-75.
363-3529

Sunday Dec. 29

- **Panic in Detroit Rave**
With Majesty Crush and Charm Farm at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. Admission is \$5.
334-1999
- **Gary Dattler's Bad Attitude Arts Ensemble**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355

Monday Dec. 30

- **Cracker Box**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355
- **Prodigals**
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor.
996-2747

Tuesday Dec. 31

- **Flyin' Saucers**
Lili's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.
875-6555
- **Frank Allison and the Odd Sox**
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor.
996-4355
- **Regular Boys**
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn.
846-1920
- **Jimmy Tittle**
Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 N. Woodward. Admission is \$15.
646-4950



Goobar and the Peas pairs up with Loudhouse and Majesty Crush for New Year's Eve at St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit.