

Musicians remember Rob Tyner

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

THEIR WAS MORE THAN just music. MC5 and its leader Rob Tyner sent out a rallying cry in the late 1960s. The echoes of which are still largely heard today in local music circles.

One need look no further as evidence than to a series of memorial concerts this week in tribute to Tyner, 46, who died Sept. 18 of a heart attack.

The Friends of Rob Tyner have put together four shows, including an eight-band concert "Kick Out The Jams: A Tribute to Rob Tyner," Saturday, Feb. 22, at the State Theatre in Detroit.

The Romantics, Goobers and the Peas, Dark Carnival, The Romantics, Loudhouse, The Notorious Johnnys are among those scheduled to perform. Also, rumors abound of possible appearances by members of other national acts in the area Saturday.

An all-star blues jam, Thursday, Feb. 20, at Moby Dicks in Dearborn sets off the series. Other shows will follow Friday, Feb. 21, at The Miami and Sunday, Feb. 22, at Alvin's.

A majority of the proceeds will benefit the Tyner Scholarship Fund for his children, son Robin, and daughters, Amy and Elizabeth; with a portion also going to the Center for Creative Studies.

"I think he's some sort of focal point for the Detroit music scene," said committee member Scott Morgan, whose Romantics were also a product of the thriving '60s in Detroit music. "Being the lead singer for the MC5, a lot of people came up in the late '60s and got started in the music business at that time. They know how influential the MC5 were."

"ALSO, THERE is some sort of desire to be part of a community. It never had the opportunity to happen before."

One of Tyner's visions was a unified music scene in Detroit. And he always did his part to foster it.

Aside from the MC5 — whose sound along with Iggy and the Stooges influenced a generation of punk and metal bands — Tyner could later be seen helping out local outfits, such as the Vertical Pillows and the Orange Roughies. He also released a solo effort in 1990 "Blood Brothers," on Troy-based R&A Records trying to rekindle an insurgent spirit that had been seemingly amiss in the scene.

The memorial concerts have evolved into something more than just a gathering to honor Tyner's musical contributions.

Sire recording artist Primal Scream will do a video performance on MC5 number to be played at Saturday's show. Artist Gary Grimshaw has designed a commemorative poster for the event, which will be presented to Tyner's wife, Rebecca.

The 50 or so people involved in The Friends of Rob Tyner perhaps best mirror the diversity of those affected by Tyner and the MC5s anarchistic sound and vision. Included are a plethora of musicians, radio disc jockeys, concert promoters, club owners and journalists who are normally in competitive situations.

"IN THE course of pulling them all together, a lot of people who had no prior relationship have suddenly found out they could get along with each other," said Ben Edmonds, who is co-chair of The Friends of Rob Tyner with music journalist Stewart Francke. "Which is something Rob always worked for — a unified music community."

Added Francke: "Everybody is making a statement about how they feel about Detroit rock'n'roll and what it can still do, and Rob's contribution to that."



Rob Tyner was MC5's chief lyricist, beyond music. He was a gifted graphic but his artistic vision expanded beyond music. He was a gifted graphic but his artistic vision expanded beyond music. He was a gifted graphic but his artistic vision expanded beyond music.

The idea of a tribute concert came about when a small group of people met after Tyner's death to decide what would be the best way to remember him. Initially, a bill featuring national acts was considered but proved unfeasible.

A strong schedule of local acts was deemed more appropriate, seeing that Tyner held a firm belief in the singular strength of the music already here, Edmonds said.

Edmonds worked closely with Tyner, finishing up a book on the band "No Greater Noise: The MC5 Story" due out in the spring of 1993. The author believes there was no better band live than the MC5 in its heyday of late '60s and early '70s.

A testament is the unbelievable number of bands influenced by the MC5 today, including many in the metal/thrash explosion in Seattle, Wash., and the UK.

"THE THING that really distinguished the MC5 apart from a lot of the stereotypical peace and love bands of the era they came out of was they reflected a completely different consciousness," Edmonds said. "They were not a hippie band in the classic '60s sense. That's why the darker side they looked at is more attractive to people today rather than the nostalgic flower power stuff."

"They were hated for it. Hate might be a too mild a term. They were actively despised in a lot of quarters because it was just too loud, too intense and too aggressive in a time when everybody was lovey dovey."

At the forefront of the MC5's uncompromising stance was Tyner, who was the group's chief lyricist.

Tyner's artistic vision expanded beyond music, Edmonds noted. He was a gifted graphic artist and involved in poetry. But the way he expressed himself made any conversation with him memorable.

"He communicated well with people," said Morgan, who kept in contact with Tyner after the MC5 broke up in 1971 and sang on his "Blood Brothers" release. "He interacted well with a wide variety of people."

Which is understandable since Tyner always had a message to get across.

When and Where

Thursday, Feb. 20 — "Kick Off the Jams" at Moby Dicks, 5452 Schaefer Road, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, 581-3650. Blues jam featuring Jeff Grand and others. Show time is 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Friday, Feb. 21 — "The Rob Tyner Rock and Roll Revival" at The Miami, 2930 Cass, one mile south of Wayne State University, Detroit, 831-3830. Featuring Blanks, The Marshall Gannia Band and Or featuring Rob Tyner Jr. Show time is 9 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 22 — "Kick Out the Jams: A Tribute to Rob Tyner" at State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit, 951-4150. Featuring The Romantics, Goobers and the Peas, Dark Carnival, The Romantics, Loudhouse, The Notorious Johnnys, When People Were Shorter, and Live Near the Water. Former MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer and former Ramones Dee Dee Ramones are scheduled to perform. Tickets are \$10 in advance (\$5 with ticket stub from these Saturday shows): The Cult at the Fox Theatre, Van Halen at The Palace and Teenage Fanclub at St. Andrew's Hall.

Sunday, Feb. 23 — "Remember Rob Tyner" at Alvin's, 5755 Cass, across from Wayne State University, Detroit, 832-2355. Poetry of Jim Gustafson and Mick Vranich and music featuring Vertical Pillows.

think. Is it too young for a child to attend a funeral?

Kathy

Dear Kathy,

To answer your question, I spoke with David Techner, funeral director at the Ira Kaufman Funeral Home. He is active locally and nationally in educating parents and children on death and funerals. He says the critical aspect of deciding whether a child should attend a funeral is relationship, not age. He has children as young as 3 attending funerals.

I told him that I have always advised parents to ask their child whether they want to attend. He agrees but adds that the child should be properly educated first. He does this by taking the child to the funeral home and walking him through the procedure. He explains where everyone will be sitting and what they will be doing.

He rehearses the child, all the while looking for signs of comprehension and interest. After the tour and explanation, then the child

IN CONCERT

Monday, Feb. 17

- Jazz Nerds
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti 481-3050
- Going Public
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor, 966-2747
- Paradise Valley Jazz Jam
Alvin's, 5755 Cass Ave., across from Wayne State University, Detroit, 832-2355
- Chain Reaction
Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, between Warren and Ford roads, Westland, 729-2540

Tuesday, Feb. 18

- Tequila Mocking Birds
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor, 966-2747
- Tiny Lights
With Weather Vans at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor, 966-4555
- Chisel Brothers with Thornetta Davis
Alvin's, 5755 Cass Ave., across from Wayne State University, Detroit, 832-2355
- The Story
The Ark, 637 1/2 Main, Ann Arbor. Part of the Schoolkids' Records free concert series. 761-1451

Wednesday, Feb. 19

- Dire Straits
The Palace, Two Championship Drive, off I-75, Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$22.50. 977-0100
- Johnny With An Eye
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor, 966-2747
- Nudie Tipples
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor, 966-4555
- Motor City Music Carlel
Motown Music Revue at Alvin's, 5755 Cass Ave., across from Wayne State University, Detroit, 832-2355
- Tuommi Diabale
The Ark, 637 1/2 Main, Ann Arbor, 761-1451

Thursday, Feb. 20

- Night Flight
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti, 481-3050
- Park the Karma
3-D, 1815 N. Main, at the corner of 12 Mile St., Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$7.50. 99-MUSIC
- Jerry Sprague
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor, 966-2747
- Benefit
Mr. Picasso Head will perform in a benefit for the Ann Arbor Committee for Deaf and Hearing Impaired at Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor, 966-4555
- Pete Morton
The Ark, 637 1/2 Main, Ann Arbor, 761-1451
- The Fleashtones
With Shadow Men from a Shadow Planet at The Majestic, 4140 Woodward, near the DIA, Detroit. Tickets are \$5.50 in advance, \$9 at the door. 832-9700
- No Mercy
The Ritz, 17580 Frazer, Gratiot and 10 Mile, Roseville, 778-6404
- Incubables
With Odd Ramsey and Molde Dirt Dogs at Paycheck Lounge, 2932 Canfield, off I-75, Dearborn, 481-4254



Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown will be at Sullivan's in Dearborn Sunday, Feb. 23.

Friday, Feb. 21

- WHFR Benefit
With Almighty Lumberjacks of Death. The Generals and Grady Hazy perform in a benefit for WHFR-FM in the Henry Ford Community College Pagoda Room, 5105 Evergreen, between Ford Road and Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. All ages admitted with show time at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5. 945-0676
- Big Dave and the Ultrasonics
Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti, 481-3050
- Van Halen
With Baby Animals at The Palace, Two Championship Drive, off I-75, Auburn Hills. Tickets are \$22.50. 977-0100
- Opaque
With Cylinder Head at Paycheck, 2932 Canfield, off I-75, Dearborn, 481-4254
- Regular Boys
Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, between Michigan Avenue and Ford Road, Dearborn, 484-1920
- The Attic
Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor, 966-2747
- Mellow Fellows
Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor, 966-4555
- Jane Oliver
Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Reserved seats are \$18.50. 99-MUSIC
- Primal Scream
The Ark, 637 1/2 Main, Ann Arbor, Detroit. Tickets are \$7.50. 99-MUSIC
- Howling Diablos
Alvin's, 5755 Cass Ave., across from Wayne State University, Detroit, 832-2355
- Blasphemous
Heidelberg, 215 N. Main, Ann Arbor, 663-7758
- LJ Booth
Birmingham Unitarian Church, 651 N. Woodward. Advance tickets are \$12 and \$10 at the door. Doors open at 8 p.m. 646-4950
- Happy Accidents
With the Weatherwans at Lili's 21, 2390 Jacob, Hamtramck, 873-6355
- Heaven's Wish
The Ritz, 17580 Frazer, Gratiot and 10 Mile, Roseville, 778-6404
- League of Nations
Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, 334-0292
- Blind Dog Blues Band
Moby Dicks, 5452 Schaefer Road, Dearborn, 581-3650

STREET SENSE

Future of relationship with Devoted to Dad is up to you

Dear Barbara,

I am a single woman in my early 40s with three teenaged children. I have been dating a man, about the same age as me, for several years. He is a wonderful person both to me and my children.

My problem is this — he has never lived away from home. He lives with his elderly, albeit healthy father and tends to his every need from cooking to laundry to companionship. His mother died several years ago and he seems to have taken over her role where his father is concerned.

He gets no help from his siblings, both of whom are married with families, but he doesn't ask for any either. His father is able to do for himself, but no one encourages any independent behavior from him. It seems he has never been able to adjust to the fact that he is a widower. Instead, it's like my boyfriend is his wife.

There have been times that my children are gone on weekends and I would love to have him stay with me during those times, however, he won't because he says his father

wouldn't approve. I find it hard to understand a man of this age needing parental approval for anything.

I care very much for him, but I feel this situation with his father is dysfunctional at the very least and even borders on unhealthy. I wonder if he'll ever be able to break away and not feel guilty about it. I've tried many times to discuss my concerns with him, but it only results in an argument. I have been accused of being jealous of his father.

I'm beginning to think I'm crazy. Are my concerns about the future of this relationship valid? Do you see this situation as abnormal or am I being overly sensitive? I'm confused.

Confused
In Northville

Dear Confused,

I don't think you're crazy. But, I do think you are angry that your friend thought he was the man you want him to be.

The man you wrote about is as you described him. He has the right to be this way whether or not it is "normal."

Your concerns about the future of this relationship depend on you. If you need a man and would be better off with one than without one, accept him as he is. You cannot change him and will drive yourself crazy if you try. I have sometimes seen this turn into a macabre situation, where a partner waits for the parent to die.

Of course, in the movies, the father would find a woman to take care of him and you would have the man you want. It is unfortunate, but the movies and reality have little in common. I sometimes think I cry at happy movie endings because I know how rare they are in real life.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,

Last week my neighbor died. She was a 30-year-old woman with two young children, ages 2 and 6.

Her husband brought the 6-year-old to the funeral parlor and to the funeral. That seems so morbid to me. Of course, I didn't say anything to him, but I wonder what do you

think. Is it too young for a child to attend a funeral?

Kathy

Dear Kathy,

To answer your question, I spoke with David Techner, funeral director at the Ira Kaufman Funeral Home. He is active locally and nationally in educating parents and children on death and funerals. He says the critical aspect of deciding whether a child should attend a funeral is relationship, not age. He has children as young as 3 attending funerals.

I told him that I have always advised parents to ask their child whether they want to attend. He agrees but adds that the child should be properly educated first. He does this by taking the child to the funeral home and walking him through the procedure. He explains where everyone will be sitting and what they will be doing.

He rehearses the child, all the while looking for signs of comprehension and interest. After the tour and explanation, then the child

is given a choice. Children are never forced to attend nor are they forbidden to go.

He agrees with you that this is morbid. But the reality is morbid and children, too, must understand reality. A child needs to understand that their parent or other close relative is gone.

Because children are concrete, they need to witness that the body of the loved one is somewhere else and that this is final. Techner says that without the actual witnessing of the event, children are left with questions that are far more confusing and harmful than the morbidity of the reality.

This outlook confirms my experience working with adults who lost parents when they were children. When they were shielded from events — and feelings surrounding death, they were less able to go on with their lives. When they were appropriately involved and educated, they felt free to go on.

Barbara



Barbara Schill

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schill, a trained therapist and expert on divorce, write to Street Sense, c/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 481-4250.