

ART ON THE EDGE



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX

Out of necessity: The first abstract mirror Sheri Nudell made was out of a need for one in her bedroom. Now she makes and sells them at design studios.

Glass colors artist's work

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER
Sheri Nudell fuses sheets of glass into platters and bowls that deal with painterly issues. Combining geometric and organic shapes, she orchestrates a kaleidoscope of color to form imagery influenced by nature.

"In glass, I have found excitement, challenge and endless possibilities that no other medium could offer me," said the Center for Creative Studies glass student in an interview at her Farmington Hills home. "I like how the iridescent glasses give off a shine, how the light passes through. I like watching the progression, the different stages. I like cutting the glass. I like watching the image evolve. It's always a surprise when I open the kiln."

Glass first piqued Nudell's interest two years ago while attending Michigan State University in East Lansing as a pharmacology student. She tells the story of passing a stained-glass shop one day, stopping in to find out what it was all about — and after producing her first piece of jewelry, becoming hooked on glass.

Since then, Nudell has advanced to fusing the glass platters and bowls based on nature. Chin-strap penguin, panda bear, zebra and open-mouthed shark snap to life in her glass work.

"Being outdoors in an open field or forest always gives me a magical feeling. By combining the two, glass and nature, I try to convey that feeling in my work," she said. Nudell's abstract shark platter will soon proliferate into a signed and numbered series of 10.

"Sheri uses the format of the platter as a form of painterly expression. In her work, she's chosen to deal with painterly issues as opposed to just decorative art," said Herb Babcock, chairman of the glass and crafts departments at Center for Creative Studies in Detroit.

The element of surprise when working with hot glass necessitates that Nudell keep a technical diary, listing kiln temperatures, colors of glass, designs, and kiln shelf arrangement and spacing for each of the pieces she produces.

"I see each of my pieces as a little experiment. It's a step up the ladder to more architectural glass, to larger work, to sculptural furniture pieces, and it all started from the little jewelry pieces."

Ideas for future glass works come to Nudell at all hours of the day and night. She visits the library often to trigger her imagination.

"I get ideas from everywhere. I started carrying a little notebook with me to record them. A lot of the animal ideas come from picture books at the library."

The idea for her abstract mirrors sprang from necessity. She needed a mirror for her bedroom, so she made one for herself. When a friend came over and saw it, she wanted one. Before long she was producing several a week and selling them in design studios around town. It wasn't long after that that she came up with the idea for a matching perfume tray.

Two half-spheres of black, white and mauve glasses compose the abstract wall sculpture that hangs in the hallway outside her studio door. Its lyrical lines keeps the viewer's eye moving around the work.

"It's all fused together like a giant puzzle."

See GLASS, 7A

Hannibals want album, will travel

■ It sounds more like a vacation plan than what it takes to produce an album. The Hannibals started in Detroit, moved to Canton, then headed for Lancaster, Pa. A lot of miles but well worth the end result, "This Midwestern."

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

■ Sit in on a recording/mixing session with The Hannibals and you'll learn quickly that it wasn't an easy job finishing their new album "This Midwestern."

Drummer Matt Alljan is trying to spice up the song "Shine It Down" with shaker noises from a glass jar filled with popcorn kernels.

After failing numerous times to get the seeds to fall exactly right with the beat, the quartet and producer Matt King sigh and drop the idea. It looks frustrating but Alljan, formerly of Birmingham, has another word.

He's fallen victim to "shaker shock."

Aside from their minds, recording "This Midwestern" also took its toll on the quartet's vehicles. The East Lansing-based group recorded at the White Room studios in Detroit, finished recording and mixing in Pearl Sound in Canton Township, and then mastered it in Lancaster, Pa.

STREET BEATS

The recording was the end product of a three-part testing process. To prepare for the studio, the band performed all of the new songs during recent shows. Outside of gigs, The Hannibals practiced in their basements to "make sure all the parts were working well," said singer Chris Johnston. Afterward, they rehearsed upstairs with acoustic guitars to polish the harmonies.

"You play them live and everything sounds good," said Johnston. "But until you get them stripped down and you can hear what everyone is doing, you want to make sure that (a) the notes are working with each other and (b) you're not singing the same thing."

"We always try to sing harmonies as opposed to just doubling voices."

Third album
"This Midwestern" follows on the heels of two critically acclaimed albums, "Monkey Suit" and "From Can to Can't," and an EP "Hereafter." (A song from the EP, "Harbor on the Shine," appears on the soon-to-be released AIDS benefit CD "Naked Rhythm" on Steam Records.) Johnston said the group didn't feel pressured in making the follow-up.

"There wasn't any hesitation of, 'Well, will this be better than 'Monkey Suit'?' If it wasn't going to be better than 'Monkey Suit' we wouldn't have even started. We wanted to do something better," said Johnston, a former Birmingham resident.

To diversify its sound, the group hired, for the first time, outside musicians to play pedal steel guitar, flute and Hammond organ. The Hannibals feel it paid off.

"It gives the album more texture," Johnston said.

The name, "This Midwestern," gives more insight into the album's sound as well, he added.

"We wanted it to sound true to what we are and what we do. That is a Midwestern, in particular a Michi-



Travellin' band: The Hannibals — Chris Geherin (from left), Scott Owens, and Matt Alljan and Chris Johnston — went far and near to produce their new album.

gan band. We wanted to sound natural and true to what we've grown up listening to and what kind of music you'd expect to come out of the four of us."

Guitarist Chris Geherin said the album is softer yet fuller than the last efforts.

"We've taken the quieter side and let it go a little more to that end. We've done one song completely acoustic with what we've done in the past but not as seriously. There's another quiet song with some different instrumentation," Geherin said.

The Hannibals' caring about instrumentation has apparently paid off throughout their career. In March, the group participated in the South by Southwest music conference in Austin, Texas. Last year the group played in the College Music Journal Music Marathon.

Full-time job
The band is a full-time job to most of the members of the band, which also includes bassist Scott Owens. Johnston takes care of the booking, Alljan takes care of distribution, and Geherin handles mana-

gerial and legal matters. Geherin also writes most of the lyrics.

None of that garners much money for members of The Hannibals.

"We're extremely poor, the amount of hours that we work (compared to) what we get paid is miniscule. But it's been good. You learn to live on not much money. Your priorities get straightened out a bit," Johnston said.

But, he added, he's hoping others appreciate the time and effort put into The Hannibals and "This Midwestern."

"After four years of playing out, we've developed a pretty good name for ourselves other than Detroit, East Lansing, Ann Arbor." There are a lot of people waiting for the album — at least we think," Johnston said.

The Hannibals will celebrate the release of "This Midwestern" at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, in Pontiac, on Thursday, April 8, with a party and onstage performance. For more information, call 334-1899. To order a copy of the AIDS benefit CD "Naked Rhythm" call Steam Records at 1-800-795-8403.

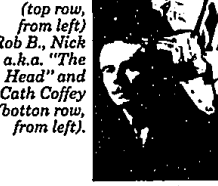
Stereo MC's connect with 'Connected'

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

"Elevate your mind and your body will follow."

That spin on the Parliament/Funkadelic song title could be the new motto for the dance band Stereo MC's. Keeping its free-spirited yet socially conscious lyrics, the London, England, group evolved musically for its third album to connect further with its audience.

Brit sound:
Stereo MC's include Andrea, Owen and Verona (top row, from left) Rob B., Nick a.k.a. "The Head" and Cath Coffey (bottom row, from left).



Tuesday, April 6
THE INCUBATORS
With The Incubators at Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (alternative rock) 996-8555

BACK PORCH BLUES
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (acoustic blues) 761-1923

CRESCEA BROS. WITH THORNTON DAVIS
Ann Arbor, 5756 Cass Ave., Detroit. (jazz) 860-2825

BLUES POWER
Ann Arbor, 11667 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. (blues) 365-4194

Wednesday, April 7
INCUBATORS
With Mercury Rev and Gumball at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. SOLD OUT. (alternative rock) 961-4627

IN CONCERT

THE SHELTER
New music dance night with ticket, CD and poster giveaways for Therapy?, who performs Saturday, April 10, at St. Andrew's Hall. 961-4627

BLACK UNBRO
With Andrew Tosh and Louie Rankin at Michigan Theatre, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (jazz) 994-4026

PAUL GERRARD
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (blues) 761-1451

THE CITS
Ann Arbor, 5756 Cass, Detroit. (country/rock) 632-2353

KARI NEWHOUSE
With Kiss Me Screaming at Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 996-8553

BACK PORCH BLUES
Altic Bar, 11667 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. (blues) 365-4194

Thursday, April 8
THE HANNIBALS
Record release party and onstage performance at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (jazz, funk, garage rock) 334-1899

B.L. KING
With Larry McCray at Michigan Theatre, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (blues) 99-4026

With "Connected," we had a lot of musical ideas. We ended up trying to take them a great deal further," rapper Rob B. explained about his group's latest album.

D.J. and remixer The Head agreed.

"This album has still got all those influences — from reggae to dance to rap to soul to funk to whatever — but because we are using live musicians instead of samples and made up the parts instead of taking the parts of records, it's really developed into something more of a representation of what we are about," he said.

"Connected" is the follow-up release to 1990's "Supernatural" which spawned the Top 40 hit "Elevate My Mind," the first UK rap single to place high on Billboard charts. During the single's reign, Rob B. explained, the press misunderstood the group's mission.

"We don't see ourselves as a rap group," he said. "We see ourselves as a group. We pay all our respects to the people who started rap, funk, reg-

gae, and soul music.

"We have total respect for rap music in America. We know we got nothing to do with the American rap scene. We're doing our music and anybody who wants to check it out is welcome to check it out."

That's part of the group's mission — to bring people together, he said.

"We try to get as many people as we can on the same train of thought. I don't think we're saying anything different. I think it can get through to a lot of people, uplift people and give people strength."

Stereo MC's opens for Jesus Jones at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit, Friday, April 16. Tickets are priced at \$7.50 in advance, \$20 at the door. Showtime is 8 p.m. Tickets for the show scheduled at The Palace of Auburn Hills are good for main floor general admission at the State. Refunds for The Palace show will be available until April 11 only. Call 961-5451 or 645-6666 for more information.

MIAMI CITY MUSIC AWARDS
With performances by Ted Nugent, Brotherhood Backless, Keith Washington, Alanon Zoric, The Christ Brown, The Clark Sisters and Dennis Robbers at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. 645-6666 or 961-5450

LAUREL
Graciosa Coffeehouse at University of Detroit Mercy campus, McNichols and Livernois roads, Detroit. (performance art) 925-1167

BLASPHEMOUS
With Bog Blast and Debaucherie at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. (metal) 368-7349

OLLIAN DEVALVE
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor (traditional Canadian music) 761-1451

See IN CONCERT, 8A