

## CHEAP EATS

Lisa Rudy takes a gastronomical journey through metropolitan Detroit, looking for good food, good atmosphere and a meal for two for under \$25.

BY LISA RUDY  
SPECIAL WRITER

Whether it's 2 a.m. or 5 p.m., Piper's Restaurant guarantees they'll satisfy your every desire, as long as it's in the kitchen. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, this versatile eatery has been serving up everything from pot pies to primavera for more than 25 years.

Piper's is famous for being comfortable, with its homey-type atmosphere, complete with several oversized puffy booths and diner-like dinner counter. No unnecessary frills here — the walls reflect color schemes familiar to the average chain restaurant and even the curtains and blinds tend to blend into the nondescript background. No occasion to fret, however, because Piper's saves all its energies and decorating dollars to ensure that when their patrons leave, they leave with full stomachs and sporting hefty carryout bags.

Appetizers offered are pretty much the norm — battered and deep fried veggies and the like make up most of the list. Breakfast is served night and day, with the cajun omelette and raisin french toast scoring high as all time favorites. Piper's entrees are versatile enough to cater to just about anyone's taste. Pasta, seafood, sandwiches, steaks, ribs and chicken are all prepared with familiar ingredients in familiar ways, minus a few Mexican dishes that are pumped with a little secret pizzazz.

Daily specials are featured that patrons have gone wild over every Monday night for years. Huge homemade chicken and turkey pot pies are also a big hit and Piper's veteran diners admit that they haven't seen anyone finish one yet.

Dessert is the main event at this place. Most every confection is made from scratch and done up in a big way. The All-American Chocolate Cake is Piper's pride and joy, layered about 12 inches high and covering an entire dinner plate (and then some). No one should leave without at least sharing a piece of this unbelievable fudge monster. Cheesecakes, fruit pies and sandwiches are also offered and Piper's outdoes itself with a delicious orange nut bread accompanied by raisin orange maple butter.

One of the most refreshing things about Piper's is that its philosophy about comfort and comfort food is totally unpretentious. Like one old-time diner told me, "It's just a comfortable, warm place to have coffee and cake, or breakfast, or dinner — anytime you feel like going, it's always there. Can't say that about too many things."

### PIPER'S RESTAURANT

25418 Telegraph Road  
Woodhaven  
782-3300  
Hours: Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you're looking to make a gastronomical pilgrimage and are tired of the same old same old, Union Street on Woodward in Detroit is a great destination to head for.

Impervious to trends, yet always in style, Union Street carries on a fine culinary tradition while making a whole new one by throwing a ball at conventional cooking wisdom, boldly blending old favorites with a bite of spice.

A dimly lit generous sized dining room, heavily accented with beautifully crafted dark woodwork about covers it as far as decorum goes. However, Union Street pulls off this attempt at understated elegance quite well, and the booming business adds just about the right noise level to make you feel like you could really be at home.

A full daily-rotated menu is available, with items offered according to the chef's whim, and an old stand by menu is always on hand, featuring items both unique and adventurous. It's a good idea to keep the menu at your table all through dinner, if possible, because this place is fearless in its presentation of unusual combinations and you might tend to forget just what's in this, anyway.

See CHEAP EATS, 6B

### UNION STREET

4145 Woodward Ave.  
Detroit  
831-3965  
Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Monday-Friday,  
5 p.m. to 2 a.m. Saturday and closed Sunday.

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

- Christina Fuoco's report on the "See the Light" tour that's coming to Industry in Pontiac.
- What's happen behind the music scene in Music Notes.
- John Monaghan's look at the latest in alternative movies.
- Some good Street Sense from Barbara Schiff.

## The The finds dawn of success

When Matt Johnson visited the Metro Music Cafe in Royal Oak last week he may well have cemented the future for his band, The The. At the least he left his handprints in the "Walk of Fame."

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Enter Matt Johnson's hotel room and you're immediately filled with the smell of incense. He's sitting at his portable computer, somberly trying to send a fax. Johnson finishes, folds up his computer and begins chatting about his band, The The, currently on the road with Depeche Mode.

He rarely looks people in the eye and calmly sits back and discusses his often heart-wrenching emotional lyrics.

### STREET BEATS

Finally, 45 minutes later, Johnson cracks a smile. He's pleased that his solo album, "Burning Blue Soul," released in the early 1980s has finally joined the The The family.

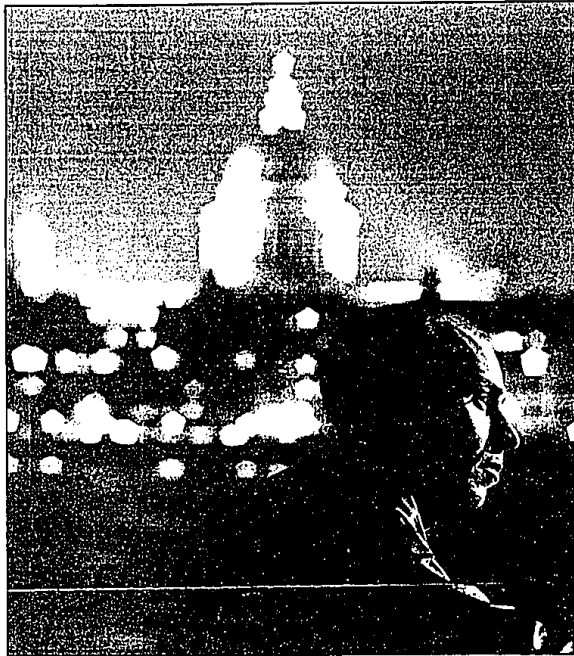
"That was my idea," he said with a grin. Earlier this year the album was re-released under the name The The.

"I wanted it raked with 'Soul Mining' and the other albums. It was lonely there stuck out on its own. No one could ever find it. It was pining for its younger brothers," said Johnson Thursday at the Hilton Suites in Auburn Hills.

Johnson and Depeche Mode were in town early for their two-night stand at The Palace of Auburn Hills Oct. 22-23. Along with doing interviews on his day off, Johnson put his hands in cement at the Metro Music Cafe in Royal Oak for the "Walk of Fame." Later, Industry in Pontiac was swamped with fans after a radio station announced that Johnson, along with Alan Wilder and Martin Gore of Depeche Mode were going to be hanging out at the club.

Events like this and nearly sold-out headline shows, hint that The The is starting its upward climb toward fame in the United States. Although Johnson feels his latest album, "Dusk," is marginally one of The The's most popular in the United States, he still has yet to feel the full effects.

"It's marginally one of the most



successful. It's still not getting a great amount of radio play. MTV only plays it (the videos) on Sundays (during "120 Minutes")."

However, throughout his two U.S. tours, Detroit's been one of the most receptive audiences.

"Detroit's always been good for me. Last time, we did three nights in Detroit (the Royal Oak Music Theatre). Local radio has always supported us," he said. "Detroit, Boston, Chicago, and Atlanta have been stronger areas for us than, say, New York or Los Angeles."

Johnson is known for his often painfully emotional lyrics. However, danceable, upbeat songs like "Infected" and "Dogs of Love" has captured more ears. It doesn't fare Johnson that perhaps some of his

best work is being overlooked.

"No, I'm not bothered; I'm not really aware of it," he said. "I try not to worry about what's being said. I think it's unhealthy."

Often, Johnson said, he's criticized for singing about subjects close to his heart — politics and relationships. Blues artists, he said, were never chided for that years ago. He considers his style a lost art-form.

"Things always go in cycles. At the moment... attitude is more important than the pursuit of truth."

He doesn't relate to that, nor the "alternative music" label that's frequently tacked onto his band. "It's (alternative music) just a '90s version of progressive rock..."

Awareness: Earlier this year, The The's song "Love Is Stronger Than Death" was used in a soundtrack for an AIDS awareness video by Vanderpool Films. The band is led by Matt Johnson.

I've never felt any kinship with any other alternative artist," he said.

He does feel "kinship" with blues and country and western singers. For his next project, he's going to do a Hank Williams Jr. album. Johnson admits it will be a challenge. "It means I'll have to really experiment with my voice," he said.

It'll be part of a recurring series of albums covering other people's work. Johnson's excited about doing it. It'll be close to a vocation for him.

"It takes the pressure off. With writing, singing and producing, you tend to overanalyze. I'm not a very prolific songwriter."

It goes to prove that quality, not quantity, certainly applies to Johnson.

## Reggae's 'boom time' has Xpression

Yah, man: Universal Xpression blends its true Caribbean roots with a danceable reggae beat in its music.



BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Spring break trips have boosted profits of hotels, restaurants, bars and other tourist fare in southern states.

Detroit's Richard Parris has experienced another consequence of the annual flings — popularity of reggae bands like his, Universal Xpression.

"It's (reggae) boomin' compared to when I got here first," said Parris, a native of St. Thomas. "It has a lot to do with the fact that more people travel. Based on college crowd, when they graduate they're still keeping with the reggae flavor."

Universal Xpression keeps the "reggae flavor" going long after its shows with its recent release "Xpression" distributed by its own UXP records.

The tape chronicles the band's many influences — Lover's Rock, Dance Hall, Hip Hop, Mellow and Conscious Reggae, Soca, Dance Hall Soca, Zouk, House Soca and Calypso. For example, "Rite Man," fuses

Dance Hall and Hip Hop, while "Can't Stand It," could be a reggae 40 crossover.

"That's the marketing tool I've developed. When a person listens to the tape or a show, there's always something they will enjoy," said Parris, the band's keyboardist, manager and vocalist.

The marketing has apparently worked. The band has auditioned for the nationally televised "Star Search" and has shared the stage with some of the top Caribbean groups, including The Mighty Sparrow, Arrow, Shabba Ranks, Yellow Man, Burning Spear, Shaka Demus, Maxi Priest and Third World. Playing with such established bands has been educational for Universal Xpression.

"It's a growing experience on our part. We know what we're up against," he said.

Universal Xpression has also appeared on cable and television

See XPRESSION, 6B

### IN CONCERT

Monday, Oct. 25

CHEAP THRILL  
Michael's, Kennett Street, north of Dixie Highway, Pontiac. (rock)  
338-1100

HORIZON  
Featuring Bobby Watson with Kenny Barron  
Trio at Magic Bag Theatre Cafe, 22281 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. (jazz)  
541-3030

Tuesday, Oct. 26

TRAIN OF THOUGHT  
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (rock)  
996-8555

CHEAP THRILL  
Michael's, Kennett Street, north of Dixie Highway, Pontiac. (rock)  
338-1100

Wednesday, Oct. 27

ROCKY HORROR SHOW  
On stage at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward, Detroit.  
396-7600

IN CITY DREAMS  
Allen's, 5765 Cass, Detroit.  
832-2355

BATALION  
Blind Pig at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.  
996-8555

RADE AGAINST THE MACHINE  
With Quickstart at the Stato Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. SOLD OUT (pappy rock)  
961-5450

LIJIMA JAZZ  
Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (jazz)  
334-7411

JIMMY CLIFF  
With Black Market at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (reggae)  
334-1999

Thursday, Oct. 28

ROCKY HORROR SHOW  
On stage at the Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward, Detroit.  
396-7600

VERVE  
With Acetone plus Music of the Spheres at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (swifty alternative rock)  
961-MELT

BANG TANGO  
The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, Roseville. (rock)  
776-6404

CHRONIC BOOM  
Allen's, 5756 Cass, Detroit.  
832-2355

BLACK MALL  
With Whiplash at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (alternative rock)  
996-8555

BEEN MOORE AND THE BLUES EXPRESS  
Band  
American Made Grill, 31630 Plymouth Road, Livonia. (blues)  
513-9911

NIYAKA  
With the Boredoms at Michigan State Fairgrounds, Eight Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, Detroit. (alternative rock)  
334-1999

See IN CONCERT, 6B