

Skanking

Rudies vary in age and that's part of what makes it interesting for the bands.

"When we go to Chicago, there's mostly older people; around here it's mostly younger people," Hofer said.

He attributes that to the wide variety of influences that are absorbed by the primarily assembled musicians. Hofer, Gene Corwin, and Todd Bolton of The Exceptions are Detroit Music Award nominees, Montreux Jazz Festival veterans and/or students in the prestigious Wayne State University School of Music. Gangster Funk's lead singer, John Bunkley plays the accordion in the string-influenced The Ollies.

(They play the Candlelight Jam at Industry in Pontiac on Wednesday, Dec. 22.) But they and other ska bands take in other music as well.

"A lot of bands here incorporate a lot of metal and that sort of attracts the same crowd," Hofer said.

"That, in turn, has opened the eyes of radio station programmers who otherwise wouldn't have considered adding the genre to its playlists. For example, the satellite hard rock station Z-Rock has been playing 'Swim' by Fishbone and 'Someday I Suppose' by the Mighty Mighty Bosstones since mid-Mighty.

"When we got into ska about

four years ago, it was very underground. I think it's just more widely known now. You have bands like the Bosstones that are breaking through. Alternative is becoming more mainstream now and more underground types of music are coming out to a more mainstream audience.

"If you go to Europe, ska is regarded more in the mainstream. It has been around in the U.S., but it is becoming more mainstream (now)."

At least it should be since "American Ska-Thic" will be distributed throughout the United States, Reeves said. But the trend still lends itself to frustration.

"Hopefully some radio stations

will get hold of it. In Detroit, it probably won't get any exposure except on public or college radio," Reeves said.

The "American Ska-Thic" record release party is on Monday, Dec. 27, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and all ages will be admitted. Cover is \$6. For more information call 961-1611. CDs will be available at the show, independent record stores, or by faxing a letter with a name, address and phone number to (810) 347-3767. CDs are \$12 including shipping and handling.

Staff writer Christina Fucos contributed to this story.

Wally

Aside from playing around the Midwest, Pleasant is a veteran of the College Music Journal Music Marathon in New York and the Southeastern Conference in Austin, Texas. Although being on the road is usually an educational experience, he decided to rethink his career strategy after attending CMJ last fall.

"I don't think my strong suit is guitar playing," he said. "At CMJ, they were really good at playing guitar. I thought maybe it might not be such a bad idea to take a few guitar lessons."

Pleasant's 1992 album, "Songs About Stuff," won the 1993 Detroit's Music Award's Best Local Record prize in the "folk" category. The irony in that is his 1993

release was "Welcome to Pleasantville."

"I didn't pick up the award last year so maybe they had it laying around," he said.

Winning the award, however, confirms his philosophy on watching sports that he offered prior to the awards.

"I root for the underdog, especially since I'm an underdog."

Wally Pleasant will perform Tuesday, Dec. 21, during the Lili's Christmas Party along with Chris Moore of Crossed Wire, Alex Lumsley (aka. Mooshka), Scott Fab, Sal D'Agliano of Bermuda Mohawk, Priscilla Ederle formerly of Cylinderhead, and Adam Druckman at Lili's, 2930 Jacob, Brooktramck.

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