

## STREET SOUNDS

### Detroit 1999: The Big Ugly — various artists

Whoever said Detroit musical talent is not worth listening to lied. The compilation disc "Detroit 1999: The Big Ugly" proves that Detroit musicians are not only worth the time, but that talent has, does and will exist in the Motor City.

The 17-track release contains one cut each from local acts, some old, some new, some strong and some blue. All arranged on plastic from a local recording company which has been releasing material since 1977 and has six other compilations under its belt.

Each track is unique in its own right giving only a taste of each act's potential. Nevertheless, it's a good way to get exposed and possibly contaminated. Majority of the cuts have a rock feel to it, but what could you expect from a city of middle class, beef and potatoes, Bud Light drinkers.

The first thing that hits you are the hearty vocals on an interesting broken heart story entitled "Papa's Arms" from the now-defunct Strange Bedfellows. The release continues along with a bouncy-abstract Cincedy's "Slave Wages" to a soulful country-feeling "When You're There" from the Volebeats.

The big release travels to a fun-filled look at hating school with the Happy Accidents' "All My Teachers," the outcropping sounds of The Opague's "Political Machine," the trials and tribulations of loathing working with See Dick Run's "I Hate My Job," and to the abstract, orchestrated sounds of Jim Olenki's "High Noon at Mojave."

Each piece has its own feel, like all compilations, but considering this is Detroit based, it acts as a voice for the groups and performers which they might not otherwise get. If nothing else, "Detroit 1999: The Big Ugly" is the perfect way to taste a variety of home-based sounds.

— Kyle Green

### Crossing Borders — Kukuruzo

This may or may not be the finest bluegrass disc of the year (I think it's one of the five best, at least), but it is the most unusual. The U.S. label debut for this brilliant Moscow-based octet, while steeped in a stock bluegrass framework, reminds me more of Fairport Convention than Alison Krauss most of the time.

Certainly, lead vocalist Irina Surina has absorbed every nuance of the Sandy Denny songbook and emerges as the best new vocalist of the year, hands down. That she is surrounded by madolinist/clarinetist Georgi Palmov, dobro/banjo player Andrei Shepelev and fiddler supreme Sergei Moselev enhances the magic, and makes the fact that 13 of the 14 tunes here are sung in their native Russian that much less of a problem. It isn't that hard to imagine the lyric content of the songs. The delivery is a notch this side of heaven, and the song titles are given English translations, so how much more can you expect.

"Go With God My Lovely" sounds like Denny backed by David Grisman; "The Wanderer" sounds like it wanted to be the "Wings of a Snow White Dove." "The Secret" has the best fiddle break this side of "White Bird"; "Love Takes Work," the only English language piece, reminds me of "Tennessee Stud"; and "Enough" could have been a Peggy Lee song.

... This is just about as amazing as acoustic music gets! Highly recommended.

— Mark Gallo

### "In The Name of the Father" (soundtrack) various artists

Daniel Day-Lewis has been called an early Oscar contender for his portrayal of Gerry Conlon, a petty thief wrongly convicted along with his family for an IRA bombing, in the film "In the Name of the Father." But what has been lost in the shadow of the movie's hype is the quiet return of Sinead O'Connor, who contributed the song "Thief of Your Heart" to the film.

The song is trademark O'Connor, who has vowed a few times never to record again. Her angelic voice is accompanied in most of the song by only drum beats, keyboards and strings — a sound as chilling as some of the lyrics of the song: "Winter's cold, but you're colder still." The song increases in tempo as it progresses and frantically fades.

See FATHER, 7A

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

■ Christina Fuoco talks with Gangster Fun about its new single.

■ Mark Gallo says good-bye to Steve Gornall who recently moved his blues band to California.

## 'Tommy': Rock as an art form

■ Twenty-five years after the debut of "Tommy," fans of The Who are once again seeing, feeling and hearing the story of the "deaf, dumb and blind kid."

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER



Actor Roger Bart spent childhood months being sickeningly nice to children as "Dickon" in the play "The Secret Garden."

Now he gets to torture them in his role as the conniving abusive "Cousin Kevin" in the rock opera "Tommy," which plays the Masonic Temple in Detroit through Sunday, Feb. 6.

"After 'The Secret Garden' and being so nice to the little girl, it's divine justice now that I'm able to torture a child," the boisterous Bart said with a laugh.

In "The Secret Garden," "Dickon" teaches the young Mary Lennox to make her garden flourish. His tenure in the role included a three-week stint at the Fisher Theatre in Detroit.

In "Tommy," "torture" aptly describes Cousin Kevin's treatment of Tommy, played by 1992 Detroit Music Awards host and ex-MTV veejay Steve Isaacs. One line in a song Cousin Kevin sings hints at his plans for his "deaf, dumb and blind" cousin: "There's a lot I can do with a freak."

"I got to stick him in a garbage can. . . I was a little scared about what my parents would think when they saw me up there," he said. But as Kevin and some local children are harassing the young boy, Tommy discovers his penchant for playing pinball.

Cousin Kevin's role in the play is much more pronounced in the stage production than the cameo he had in the 1975 movie, which starred Ann-Margret, Tina Turner, Roger Daltrey and Eric Clapton. Once Tommy's talent is discovered, Cousin Kevin takes advantage of his young relative's newfound fame.

That's one of the many differences between the movie and the play. Without divulging too many secrets, Bart offers a blunt comparison of the two productions.

"It's extremely different from the movie," Bart said from Boston where "Tommy" was playing prior



Realizing future: Cousin Kevin, played by Roger Bart (center), discovers his cousin Tommy's ability to play pinball while harassing the boy with two "local lads" — Anthony Galde (left) and Clarke Thorell (right) — in the rock opera "Tommy."

to the Detroit shows. "In the play version, the people actually sing well," he said. (The most surprising talent in the show is Isaacs who proves to be a phenomenal singer with exceptional range.)

"If you want to refresh your memory (about the play), the last thing I'd want you to do is rent the movie.

"Ann-Margret rolling in baked beans. . . Maybe the guy who directed it was turned on by that or something. This is much more sort of along the lines of what Pete (Townshend) was trying to do. The ending reflects a little more maturity. . . I think he imagined it to be like this."

The most obvious change takes place in the beginning of the play when Tommy's father kills his mother's lover. In the film, it's the father who dies. Although it may irritate those who respect the original movie, director Des McAnuff said it's the right of The Who's Pete Townshend to change his creation.

"There are people who really feel like they own this, that this has been part of them, and they don't want anything to change. They want nothing other than the original album and a concert version by The Who," said director Des McAnuff in the book "Tommy."

"But Pete certainly has the right to return to his own work and do what he pleases. It's a sacred right that a writer has. And what I think happens to those folks who are open to 'Tommy' is that they get completely caught up in the theater and the music — they're experiencing a true development and extension of the original album."

Part of the development of the 1990s version of "Tommy" is the result of the creative minds of the cast as well. Bart recalled one of his first meetings with Townshend: "He said, 'Have a great time, kids, and make it your own.'"

Tracey Langran, a dancer who has toured with the English pop band Pet Shop Boys, also didn't feel intimidated by performing material by Townshend in front of the rock legend.

"Pete Townshend is what made this very similar to doing a concert tour; he knew everyone's name," said Langran, who is the cast's dance captain and understudy for most of the women's parts. "He has this energy that's unbelievable."

Fans of the play must possess similar energy. Tickets are scarce for the Broadway performance, and the shows at the Masonic Temple are selling briskly. Bart said he believes

this was the right time for "Tommy" because fans of the original album are now financially stable and able to spend \$50-\$100 on tickets for the show.

"I think you look at the target audience of Broadway: People who can afford it are over 50. The people who grew up on the album can come and enjoy it on Broadway."

He said it's also appealing for the "twenty-something crowd," many of whom were too young to remember the album.

Although he admits to not being a big Who fan prior to auditioning for "Tommy," the music is what makes Bart excited to sing "the hardest music I've ever sung" including the song "Pinball Wizard."

"Every night I hear the overture and I can't wait to jump in," he said. "It's really a terrific piece. Thanks to bands like Nirvana, rock 'n' roll is still around. They've saved it. They've proved that 'it's a valid American art form as opposed to something that's just a fad.'"

"Tommy" is at the Masonic Temple, 500 Temple, Detroit, through Sunday, Feb. 6. Tickets are priced at \$25-\$47.50. For more information, call (810) 645-6666 or (313) 832-6900.

## Artists show off new-found success at Ark

Starting over: Dan Navarro and Eric Lowen have found the support they need to revive their musical career with Parachute Records.



BY CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Dan Navarro and Eric Lowen have written successful tunes for a host of performers including Pat Benatar, the Bangles, David Lee Roth, Dave Edmunds, the Temptations and the Four Tops.

Yet two years ago the duo found that they couldn't revive their own career after releasing "Walking on a Wire" on Chameleon Records in 1990. Despite unsuccessful attempts at getting another record deal, they kept plugging along, touring as "Lowen & Navarro."

"We continued to tour without any tour support," Navarro said from a tour stop in Ardmore, Pa.

They wanted to make sure that their fans "knew we didn't just go away," he added.

One of their supporters who didn't stray was Tom Vickers, director of artist and repertoire for Mercury Records. He had the perfect home for Lowen & Navarro's music — Parachute records, which he recently re-

vived. A former rock label, Parachute is geared toward adults who grew up listening to rock music but aren't interested in modern rock, Vickers said.

"... the adult progressive market is an up-and-coming format that encompasses a mixed bag of compatible musical styles, including singer/songwriter, acoustic and electric folk, country and some aspects of jazz and blues," Vickers said. "These consumers grew up with rock and still love many of the artists that have shifted into the acoustic arena, like Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart."

"In their search for new artists and good songwriting, a lot of people have gravitated toward country music, which is now more popular than ever. Parachute's goal is to have that kind of quality songwriting but geared more toward people who grew up with rock music."

Lowen & Navarro's album "Broken Moon," which includes guest appearances by Navarro's cousin Dave Na-

See SUCCESS, 7A

## IN CONCERT

SLIDE OUT SATURN  
With Twitch at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock) (810) 956-6555

3 MILKMAIDS FROM EARTH  
Ann Arbor & Gt. 3982 W. Auburn, Rochester Hills, (acoustic) (810) 852-2707

NAME INCH NAILS VIDEO APPRECIATION  
3.0, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak, (video) (810) 509-3344

JAZZ AT SWEET LORNAINE'S CAFE  
Featuring Alma Smith and W. Austin at Sweet Lorraine's Cafe, Greenfield Road north of I-24 Mile Road, Southfield, (jazz) (810) 558-5265

Wednesday, Jan. 26

FERNALDEZ TONIGHT  
With host John D. Lamb at the Magic Bag, Woodward at Nine Mile Road, Ferndale, (jazz) (810) 544-3030

MICHAEL ZAPOROSKI  
Followed by Ron Brooks Trio at Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor, (solo piano) (313) 662-6310

PAIR CASE  
With Youth Corps at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock) (313) 662-6310

UMMA JAZZ ENSEMBLE  
Featuring Quincy Stewart at Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw, Pontiac, (jazz) (810) 334-7401

LOWEN & NAVARRO  
With Bill Falcon at The Ark, Ann Arbor, (renowned songwriters) (810) 645-6666

"EXILE ON MAIN STREET"  
Alternative dance tunes spun by 80X's Darren Revel at The Ritz, 17580 Gratiot, Roseville, Free with college ID, (alternative) (810) 772-6404

ROCK TRAVINO  
And Cooley Pope perform a free concert at Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren, (country) (810) 756-6140

Thursday, Jan. 27

FOUR BARS  
Ann Arbor, 5756 Cass, Detroit, (acoustic folk rock) (313) 832-2355

See IN CONCERT, 8A