

## STREET SOUNDS

### Home on the Range

#### — LaTOUR

The 1990s pop music world is primarily composed of digital synthetic sounds dubbed with samples of other works. Practically everyone does it from MC Lyte to the Stereo MCs. So what could be different or possibly new anymore?

Nothing. The state of today's pop world has become a vicious circle of artists making and remaking, stealing and using whatever everyone else is using, which, of course, was never theirs in the beginning.

Unfortunately, LaTOUR's "Home on the Range" (Smash Records) is just another scream in a musical vacuum, and it will ultimately be another.

The 10 original tracks and two re-mixes are camouflaged in a colorful, abstract retro-1980s compact disc case. Once the CD is placed into the player, the retro feel continues with the same old techno sounds over the same old beats, all housed in the same old plastic, as all previous similar releases.

Computers, keyboards, drum machines, sampling and occasional horns and strings — it's all been heard before. The only difference here is LaTOUR's rough vocals placed simply over the melody, which tarnishes the sound even further.

"Home on the Range" has the potential and the appeal to be a solid dance release, but it hobbles along pulling its own dead weight behind it.

The two remixes of "Crazier Kowboy" and "Don't Jump" are actually much more concise and appealing than the originals.

Current modern music is a cut-throat market full of simple and mindless songs. Possibly the simplest has gone too far.

— Kyle Green

### Wheel of Fortune

#### — John Renbourn,

#### Robin Williamson

Two legendary figures in British folk circles, John Renbourn and Robin Williamson, mark their recording debut as a duo with "Wheel of Fortune" (Flying Fish Records, Inc.), and it's as charming, musically magical and as full of blarney and gospel truths as fans of either have every right to expect.

Just for Williamson's reading of "Finn And the Old Man's House," I'd freely recommend this live set. That there are an even dozen tunes filling up 66 minutes here is the more reason to celebrate this masterful teaming.

Renbourn was, along with the great Burt Jansch, a founding father of the most celebrated of British traditionally rooted folk bands, Pentangle. Williamson and his partner Mike Heron were the core of Scotland's Incredible String Band who, for those oldies among us, were a major sensation when they signed with Elektra Records in 1968.

As Renbourn (I guess) says at the beginning of the instrumental track of "Eunoy's Hymn/I Saw Three Ships/English Dance," they haven't come up with a name for the duo yet, though they're leaning toward the Impenetrable Stringtriangle.

The music, as you would expect from Celtic harp and virtuosic acoustic guitar, is often airy, always delicate. That they cover a piece by avant jazz pianist Randy Weston tells of their brilliance in many ways, though the bulk of the program is rooted in the traditional British Isles or from the fully amazing pens of the protagonists.

It's as mesmerizing, truly gorgeous and wonderful a collection as either has ever been involved with.

John Renbourn and Robin Williamson perform Tuesday, March 29, at the Ark, 637 1/2 St. Ann Arbor. For information, call 761-1451.

— Mark Gallo

## THE READER'S CHOICE

### Lincoln Center Jazz

#### — Hill Auditorium

Question: Why would a group of musicians tour the country playing jazz standards older than most of the performers?

Answer: To educate. The lesson was on the freedom of jazz. And the lesson was hip. So hip that Detroit's legendary trumpeter Marcus Belgrave showed up just to watch.

And there was plenty to observe. Some of the brightest newcomers on the scene joined established giants to expound on what jazz was and is about.

See REVIEW, 7A

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

- Christina Fuoco talks to Us3, rappers with a jazz sound.
- John Monaghan takes a look at the alternative movie scene.

# 'Over 21' stymies young bands

Underage kids often complain that they can't get into "21 and over" clubs to see their favorite bands play. It causes interesting problems for bands with underage members. Groups who have encountered that give advice to struggling young bands trying to get exposure.

By CHRISTINA FUOCO  
STAFF WRITER

Seattle rock band Sweet Water played what should have been a dream gig a few years ago — opening for the now-legendary Mother Love Bone. But instead of watching the headlines in the warm confines of the club, Sweet Water members were forced to stay outside and watch through a window until it was time for them to go on stage.

It wasn't because of an ego problem with Mother Love Bone. The club owners wouldn't let the band enter because some members were younger than the legal drinking age.

"There were many a day when we'd watch the shows from outside, playing acoustic guitar for the people walking by. . . . Or we'd have our faces pressed up against the window watching the show," said Adam Ciesler, lead singer of Sweet Water, who is now signed to Atlantic Records.

The problem is a common one but not something that crosses many minds. Record deals don't make it easier for bands to get exposure. Mutha's Day Out, whose members average age is 17, released their debut record "My Soul Is Wet" on Chrysalis Records in mid-1993, but they still

## STREET BEATS

feud with bar owners.

The rap/rock band, which has played with the Skatennis, Overkill and Sir-Mix-A-Lot, has also been told to stay outside until five minutes before they were scheduled to hit the stage, said rapper/vocalist Brice Stephens.

### Two-fold problem

Musically, the drinking laws pose a two-fold problem. And from keeping underage bands out of clubs, it prohibits teens from seeing shows at 21 and older clubs. Glen Wiseman of the Birmingham funk band Fig finds it frustrating that even when his band can get into clubs to play, their friends can't see their shows.

Conversely, he can't see the bands he enjoys. "They let us play, but we can't go in and watch our friends' bands. It's OK when we're making money for them, but we can't spend it there," said Wiseman, whose band is now mostly of age.

Bandmate Karl Faulhaber agreed.



BILL HANSEN

"It (the drinking age law) dissipates our whole crowd. We've got this whole suburban high school crowd now," he said. To accommodate their underage crowd, Fig rented a hall during the Christmas season to host a concert.

Halls are one way to get exposure. Coffeehouses, all-age venues, and school functions are other places where young bands can play their music and be heard by their peers. Layr Fron of Plymouth is opening a Hamtramck coffeehouse/concert hall with teens in mind. Starship Earth, which will be located at 2954 Caniff, will feature early shows for teens and late shows for the 21 and older crowd, beginning in April.

"In the last year or so, I've seen quite a number of things where the kids feel uninvolved," said Fron, who is also the president of the committee organizing the 1994 Earthfest concert. "Obviously, there's the 21 and older problem, but I've seen bands (at private parties), and the kids come in on droves. They're very excited about the music, but they rarely get to see it," he added.

### Kids count

Kids, he said, are the key to a band's success. "If the band's going to have a long-term following, you have to get to the kids because they're the ones setting the trend."

For some bands, however, coffeehouses may not be appropriate. "At Gotham City (in Ferndale), I used to play in an acoustic band. But with Fig, we're kind of loud and hard. Coffeehouses just wouldn't work right," said Wiseman.

School functions are another way for bands to get exposure. Third Street, a Grosse Pointe-based 1970s-flavored band, has played at venues throughout town, but bassist Law-



rence DeLuca sometimes prefers playing at school.

"Sometimes it's in a sense better; we get paid more for doing it," DeLuca said.

Finney's Pub in Detroit is one of the few clubs that allows underage bands to play. The musicians are closely watched to make sure they don't drink, according to Sue Summers, who looks shows for Finney's. She recognizes Fig's concerns about their friends.

"They're allowed to play but unfortunately a lot of their crowd is under age. (But) it gives them exposure to the over-21 crowd," Summers said.

Mutha's Day Out, which hails from the heart of the Bible Belt (Batesville, Ark.), frowns on being closely watched at shows.

"Yeah, (club owners) give us a hard time. They just hassle us, (but) they have to let us in. Then they tell us we

can't do this, we can't do that," said bassist Jeff Mogan, who inked his record deal at age 15.

Many clubs simply "overlook" the fact that band members are underage even when it's obvious, DeLuca said.

"Our drummer is 15 but looks about 9. He has really, really rosy cheeks. He doesn't have acne or anything because it looks like he hasn't hit it (puberty) yet. He's really small, but he's really good. The people at the club didn't say anything, but when they went to get complimentary beer (for the other bands), they were hesitant. We just told them we wouldn't drink."

Seattle's Sweet Water, now of age, found a good way to make all their fans have the chance to see them. They book their shows at mostly all-ages venues.

## IN CONCERT

### ACNE SPEED QUEEN

Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (313) 996-8555

### DINOBAUR JR. AND THE LEMONHEADS

Video appreciation night. 3:30, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (313) 569-3344

### Wednesday, March 23

#### THE DETERRANCE

With Bermuda Mohawk at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (313) 996-8555

### MARY MCGUIRE AND DON ELLMAN

The Durango Grill, 222 Sherman Drive, Royal Oak. (acoustic guitar and violin) (313) 544-2687

### "FERNDALE TONIGHT"

Hosted by John D. Lamb at the Magic Bag Theatre Cafe, 22918 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. (313) 544-3030

### Thursday, March 24

#### PANTERA

Makes an in-store appearance 2-4 p.m. at Harmony House, 37824 Van Dyke (north of I-96). Starting Heights. (313) 939-6969

#### ROBALIE BORRELLS

The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (313) 761-1451

#### SPANK

With Caelum Biss at 3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (313) 569-3344

#### BEYOND THE LIGHT

With The Light at 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (rock) (313) 334-9292

#### COWBOY BUNDLES

With Freddy Johnston at the Michigan Theatre, 503 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (rock) (313) 668-8397

#### MORSEL

With Metta and Whiplast at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (rock) (313) 996-8555

#### SOUL REVIVE

With 5755 Cass, Detroit. (313) 832-2355

#### "BLISS SUPERSESSION"

Featuring Eddie Hensch of Black Crowes, Mini Harris, Paul Randolph, Skeeto and Mark Pearson, and special guest Zorod at Botsford Inn's Blues Barn, Farmington Hills. (313) 459-6969

#### FOR LOVE NOT LIES

With Higher at The Ritz, 17580 Frazho, Roseville. (rock) (313) 778-6404

### MARY MCGUIRE

Brendan's Pub, 33210 W. 14 Mile, West Bloomfield. (acoustic) (313) 856-6220

### JASON D. WILLIAMS

Sully's, 4756 Greenfield, Dearborn. (313) 846-1920

### OFF-WHITE BLUES BAND

The Cantage House, 2400 Grand River, Detroit. (blues) (313) 535-3440

### Friday, March 25

#### THE PRETTY GREEN

New Way Bar, 23130 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. (alternative rock) (313) 541-9870

#### WIDESPREAD PANIC

Michigan Theatre, 503 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (rock) (313) 668-8397

#### UNCLE TUPelo

With The Bottle Rockets at the Majestic, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit. (roots rock) (313) 833-9700

#### RFD BOYS

The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. (country/bluegrass) (313) 761-1451

#### SUNNY WILKINSON

With Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor. (jazz) (313) 662-8310

#### BLACK WATER STATION

With Subliminal at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (rock) (313) 334-9292

#### BLANSTERN FUN

Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (313) 996-8555

#### UNREX

With Volbeat and Apollo Nine at Ahn's, 5755 Cass Ave., Detroit. (alternative) (313) 832-2355

#### SCORCHED EARTH

With Skat Dole and Somebody's Friends at

See IN CONCERT, 6A

Oh, say: Verve Pipe, The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' Band of the Year which sang the National Anthem before a recent Detroit Pistons game, will perform April 3 at St. Andrew Hall with Groovespoon and The Hannibals.