

MUSIC NOTES



CHRISTINA FUOCO

The "father of gangsta rap" Schooly D has few words for activists who give him a bad rap. He does, however, have a lot to say about his recent appearance on Geraldine Rivera's CNBC show with fellow rappers Luther Campbell and Freddie Foxxx.

During the hourlong impassioned segment, the trio along with MTV's Dr. Dre and Ed Lover traded harsh words with Rivera and anti-gangsta rap black activists. On the air, Rivera desperately tried to end the bickering but during commercial breaks, he did little to ease the tension instead encouraging it, Schooly D said.

"All of my valid points, they didn't want to hear. They wanted to keep the tension flowing," he said.

It was clear what the activists' motives were, he explained, when one of them shouted that he wasn't going to be "interrupted by the likes of you." I knew exactly where he stood. It's no wonder he didn't want to be in the same room. He probably would have gotten hit."

Anyway, he said, he doesn't classify his new album "Welcome to America" as gangsta rap. He looks at it as more reality based. Lyrics like, "I killed 40 people in 30 seconds and I still got away." That's the kind of stuff that's entertainment. What I do is reality," Schooly D said during a phone conversation from his Philadelphia-area home.

On his album, he touches on violent feelings someone has toward the person who gave them the HIV virus, the inability of politicians to understand the problems of black men and, ironically, the obscenity of talk show hosts.

"It's a very dark record. I don't think I should have watched CNN, or read the newspapers every day."

He and his seven-piece band will play St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, Wednesday, April 6. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT.

Possum Dixon doesn't hold back on its self-titled debut album. "I hate work. I'm a mailroom clerk. I need you to stop me from making mistakes, but you nerve me" singer/bassist Rob Zabrecky sings on the first track "Nerve." It's those angst-ridden twentysomething lyrics that have brought his band the attention that they've been striving for. However, sometimes Possum Dixon is lumped in with rockabilly bands — a sound that doesn't come close to describing Possum Dixon.

"Down to the shoes, we are so unrockabilly. Never have been, never will be," he said.

He attributes the misconception to two reasons: First, "Possum Dixon" makes them sound like a southern band; second, Zabrecky sometimes plays a standup bass.

The sound of Possum Dixon, which got its name from a criminal they saw on "America's Most Wanted," instead infused abrasive guitars with mob-friendly rhythms and Zabrecky's rough-yet-polished, sing-songy vocals.

"Honest" is still the best way to describe the band. The jovial Zabrecky is even blunt in discussing his feelings about the band's headlining tour which was sparsely attended.

"What we were doing was playing to no people — to there were no nerves to work; nobody knew who we were." Since then, tour dates with the Dead Milkmen and X have created a buzz for the band.

"It beats stamper mail."

See MUSIC NOTES, 7A

Tick Weasel: A musical army

■ There's one member who's shown up for gigs dressed in a white fur coat, bridal veil and diaper. A trombonist who aims for the ceiling to keep from stabbing his bandmates. Crazy? No, just Tick Weasel.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER



Collision insurance is one thing that Tick Weasel probably should invest in. After all, when they cram their 10 band members on the tiny wooden stage at Finney's Pub in Detroit, an accident is bound to happen.

They practice safe musicianship, however. Trombonist and Livonia Symphony member John Kachnowski plays his instrument pointing straight up to avoid stabbing vocalist/guitarist Alex Porbe or lead guitarist Terry Trout. Percussionist Ron Wright is tucked so far behind Porbe, Trout, bassist Dave Smith and keyboardist Rob Troxler that he's barely noticeable.

However, none of this tames a Tick Weasel show, Trout said.

"It probably makes it look funnier. We collide once in awhile, but accidents happen," he said with a laugh.

Despite increasing the energy level on the stage and in the audience, there aren't too many negatives to having a band that resembles a musical army. For one, Tick Weasel's horn and percussionists can make the band sound fuller.

"Well, it's really nice soundwise. There's a million things you can do. It's not always easy to fit everyone someplace, or get everyone at the same place at the same time," Trout said.

Having a line-up that you can't trust on is mentally relaxing for the band, too, he said.

"All these people have never all been there at the same time. . . . It keeps it fresh. You never know who's gonna be there," Trout said. "Predictable" isn't one word that can be associated with any aspect of



HAM HORN THRAPSON

Good for a laugh: Detroit funk band Tick Weasel wants people to laugh at them for their stage get-ups. During a recent show at Paycheck's Lounge in Hamtramck, Tick Weasel members, from left, Rob Troxler, Terry Trout, Alex Porbe and Dave Smith donned women's clothing.

Tick Weasel. Besides the achizopheric funky music style, something that changes frequently is the stage appearance of the band. At a recent Finney's Pub show, Trout donned a white fur coat, diaper, and bridal veil. Last week at Paycheck's he wore a glistening gold number. Bassist Smith, a Livonia resident, looked straight out of a Green Jelly video in his big red Dr. Seuss hat and sunglasses at Finney's. At a later show, he chose a polka-dotted sundress. If it sounds funny, Tick Weasel has accomplished one of its goals.

"We want people to laugh at us when they come to a Weasel show,"

Trout said. "We hope that people stand around and point at (us)."

"The costumes are a way to relieve boredom. If the music was the same, and if I was wearing the same brown suede jacket with fringe, it would get boring," said lead singer Porbe, whose band opened for the Counting Crows at St. Andrew's Hall last year.

It may be all laughs to the band, but their musicianship is serious. Trombonist Kachnowski is a six-year member of the Livonia Symphony Orchestra, while trumpeter Todd Bolton and saxophonists Marty Montgomery and Joe Cunningham are studying music at the presti-

gious Wayne State University School of Music.

"It's not all a joke obviously if you listen to the music. The music is very serious in an unceremonious way," Porbe said.

"A silly kind of serious," said keyboardist Troxler.

Tick Weasel will perform Saturday, April 9, at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit. Must be 21 to enter. For more information, call (313) 832-2355. For more information about upcoming shows, contact Tick Weasel at 1535 Sixth St., 3rd Floor, Detroit, MI 48226 or call (313) 963-4569.

STREET SOUNDS

Sahara Blue — Hector Zazou

"Sahara Blue" testifies to the universality of art.

Beginning with the poems of France's best-known poet, Arthur Rimbaud, Hector Zazou brought in artists from around the world to bring the poems to life. The music ranges from ambient to slow jazz to the house remix of the first single, "I'll Strangle You." Rimbaud's poems are spoken, chanted and sung in English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic and Hebrew. The effect is a hauntingly beautiful collaboration between some of the best artists in the world.

Among the artists Zazou brought in are John Cale, a founding member of the Velvet Underground; Tim Simenon, the U.K. house pioneer known as Bomb the Bass; Gerard Depardieu, France's foremost actor; Ryuichi Sakamoto, best known for his work scoring films; and Bill Laswell, who co-wrote and produced the song "Rockit" for Herbie Hancock.

"Hunger" features John Cale's spoken word over a jazz backing track which recalls the best of the Beat Generation. "Sahara Blue (Brussels)" has the same disturbing quality as the music in "Twin Peaks."

"Sahara Blue" brings out the beauty of Rimbaud's symbolism and takes the listener to a level of feeling that is both frightening and comforting. The CD is available on Tristar Music.

— Eric Doring

13 Above the Night — My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult

"Join the children of hell . . ." invites My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult on its latest release, even though all you would be doing is

joining the party. "13 Above the Night" is the second release by Intercope for the band which prefers to have it on the go. Nevertheless, this release does not cover any new ground.

The 13 tracks predominantly comprise a glossy dance album full of sampling and techno feedback with its pulse rambling from guitar-based "Velvet Edge" to computer-activated "Badlife." Each track focuses on the

beat of the music leaving the lyrics a bit disguised even though it seems as if it should be taken seriously.

With poetry such as "Kiss the mirrors that sing the blues/Heels so high, go Scorpio groove/City alien, watch her move/as he rides the spirit of taboo/ Callin' Daddy Daddy Bad-Bad, Callin' Daddy Bad-Bad" from "Disco Fleshpot" the Thrill Kill Kult is taking stabs at social dilemmas with a ghostly vengeance, but is taking the blows itself.

If nothing else, "13 Above the Night" is a fun, mindless mass of mayhem interwoven with funk-up rhythms. Once heard you might as well join in, what the hell.

— Kyle Green

IN CONCERT

Wednesday, April 6

THE SAMBLES
With The Hammers at Michigan Theater, 503 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (w/away jangle rock)
(313) 508-8397

BECK
With The Dog and Lyric at the Detroit Science Center, 5020 John R, Detroit. Tickets, \$6, available only when the doors open at 7 p.m. (alternative pop)
(313) 577-8400

SCHOOLY D
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (father of gangsta rap)
(313) 961-4617

RENEGADE
Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren. (country)
(810) 756-8140

VIOLET WINE
And Kasey Deep Shag play a Live Politics Campaign Fundraiser at Band Pk, 208-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (punk rock)
(313) 966-8555

Thursday, April 7

DETROIT BURGUNDIA ALLIANCE BENEFIT
With The Verve Pipe, Trust Fund, Beach, Cannonwood Forest, Crooked Tree and Spirit at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (variety of alternative rock)
(313) 961-4617

AND PRETTY
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. Can.
(810) 334-1600

CITY LIMITS BLUES BAND
Hosts jam session at Doc Flocks, 7305 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. (blues)
(810) 674-7200

SACRED HARMONY
Studio Lounge, 6921 Wayne Road, Westland. (rock)
(810) 776-2540

THE MUTES
With R-World at Grif's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (acoustic folk rock)
(810) 334-0292

LELLIAN REX
With Fall From Grace at The Ritz, 17500 Frisco, Roseville. (rock)
(810) 776-6024

FRANK ALLISON
Disco, 18 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (acoustic)
(810) 333-2233

RENEGADE
Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren. (country)
(810) 756-8140

THE ATTS
Plays a reunion show with The Bertonese at Band Pk, 208-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
(313) 966-8555

YOUNG HIPPLES
With Hope Orchestra at 3-0, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (alternative rock)
(810) 585-3344

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