

SUE MASON, EDITOR 953-2105
CHRISTINA PUOCO, MUSIC WRITER 953-2130

LET'S GO! STREET SCENE

STREET BEATS

Karmic Debt — Glazed Baby

PRECISE blasting, ultra-heavy, "Karmic Debt" (Red Decibel) is everything one would expect from a band called Glazed Baby. The Rhode Island trio plays squealing, Primus-like noise guitar vs. a bloated, constipated bass that must be tuned so low you'll swear you can actually hear the low E string flapping. But a goofy press photo and the right punk rock credentials (previously produced by Steve Albini) belie the dread rock thud of Glazed Baby's first full-length album, "Anais Anais," which features the disturbingly distorted voice of singer/bassist Andy Newman shrieking ominous lyrics over a soundgarden magma flow. Newman's all-encompassing bass also manages to turn a cover of John Lee Hooker's "Mad Man Blues" into a jerking, uncomfortable low-end blast.

Interesting tape loops and weird instrumental passages make it hard to tell when one song (for example, "That Much Closer to Hell") ends and another (oh, say, "Michael Meyers") begins.

At its best, "Karmic Debt" resembles early, early Nirvana, like "Aero Zepplin" played on a Walkman with nearly dead batteries: kind of cool if you're in the mood, grating otherwise. At worst, which is about two-thirds of the album, it lapses into stereotypical death rock, mostly a tortoise speed.

It's notable for one of the more interesting bass sounds of the decade, but otherwise not recommended.

— Todd Wicks

A Rochester Hills resident, Todd Wicks is a student at Michigan State University.

Back in the Day: The Best of Bootsy — Bootsy Collins

BOOTSY Collins is the American legend that few people know. He has been involved in writing some of the most recognizable (and sampled) riffs in music as a member of the Parliament Funkadelic, but he is still not known as such.

Warner Bros. Archives hopes to change that with "Back in the Day: The Best of Bootsy." It carries on the P-Funk tradition with the funky grooves and crazy lyrics that have influenced thousands of bands and albums the world over, and it shows why Bootsy is considered "the clown prince of funk."

"Back in the Day" is an essential collection for anyone fresh to the funk. It gives an overview of Bootsy's early solo material, containing some gems, such as "The Pinocchio Theory," "Bootsilla," and a live version of the previously unreleased song "Psychobumpachoo."

"The music is so much fun that you do not even realize how great the musicians are who are laying down the grooves, from the horns of Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker to the keyboards of Bernie Worrell, not to mention the amazing bass work by Bootsy himself.

"Back in the Day" is also an incredible party soundtrack guaranteed to make bodies of all ages shake vigorously. Put it on for Christmas time and watch Grandma get down like never before.

— Eric Darling

A freelance reporter from Vassar, Eric Darling is the former music director at WUDM at the University of Detroit Mercy.

Gringo Honeymoon — Robert Earl Keen

Robert Earl Keen is a member of that rarified company of Texas singer/songwriters that includes Jerry Jeff Walker, Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark and Joe Ely. On most days, he stands at the head of the class.

The opening cut on "Gringo Honeymoon" ("Sugar Hill"), "Think It Over One More Time" became one of my favorite songs of the year the first time I heard it. "Dreadful selfish crime," the closer, is almost as stunning. The good news is that everything in the middle is of equal caliber.

Living life on life's terms is the constant theme at work throughout Keen's songbook. Life might be nuts at times, he tells us, but we're nuts not to enjoy it as often as possible. His insights into love, sought, love gained and love lost are of the smiling variety more often than not. With a post's tone and a grizzled seeder's running commentary, Keen gives the impression that he's been around the proverbial block more times than most, but has come to grips with the long road.

"It's a long stretch of highway at midnight in New Mexico/It's a small colored light that glows from your car window/It's the old man who says sleep on my roof/It's the very last one you see his pot/It's a lonely feeling it's what you're, he sings. It's an amazing album is what it is, I say.

— Mark E. Galle

Mark E. Galle is a freelance critic from Farmington Hills.

Duo helps market 'Christmas'

A brother and sister have teamed up to form their own music distribution business that is helping a Grammy-nominated musician from Rochester reissue his 1991 recording, "An Intimate Christmas."

BY KYLE GREEN
SPECIAL WRITER

The mailbox has become a vital vehicle for the retail industry over the last few years, counting for billions of dollars worth of sales. The simple housing object allows people to shop in the comfort of their own surroundings by a catalog and telephone, while the state, across North America, and even in independent music retail outlets in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York City.

"We are coast-to-coast now. (Debbie and I) are worried, to be honest, that we will run out of material, but we are not to that point yet," said Derek, a 1983 North Farmington High School graduate who started the distributing company from his Royal Oak apartment about six months ago.

The distribution radius is not a surprise to Derek, who used a 600-name mailing list to issue order forms through the postal system for the release, originally issued in 1991 with solid music reviews and equalizing matching buyer appeal.

The release now sells for \$7.99 per cassette and \$11.99 for compact disc through a mail order. Shipping and handling costs are included and the release can be order gift wrapped at no extra cost.

Reaching out
"We are not a big corporation; we are local and we are reaching out to people who might not have heard of (Bajor's music) before," said Debbie, a 1976 North Farmington High School graduate.

"An Intimate Christmas," which contains 12 holiday songs with Bajor playing solo piano as well as accompanied by a jazz ensemble, was originally issued under Bajor's own Rochester-based recording label, JBX Records. The company folded a few years ago, leaving Bajor at odds with his then two business partners.

In order to avoid a court-staged legal battle, the trio settled out of court, leaving him with a back log of releases, including the third pressing to the 1991 holiday music release.

Earlier this year Bajor was signed to a seven-year contract by the instrument-based Sugo Music recording label. Previous JBX releases were picked up and included in Sugo's library.

"An Intimate Christmas" was not. Derek, an inspiring musician himself, recently joined forces with Bajor, who has received notoriety from being featured on local radio personality Alan Armando's "Pillow Talk" program and received a Grammy nomination for his 1988 release "Awakening." Derek decided the mailing list would provide the opportune avenue for reissuing the release.

Bajor needed little convincing, knowing his assistant possessed the solid business and marketing techniques he lacks.

By the near future the sibling team hopes to expand To Daze Music's catalog to carry other independent local musicians and works from artists. Currently, "An Intimate Christmas" is a good launching point for the company.

"It is unique in the sense that we are representing one musician, but we have to keep in our heads that this is a side line business and that we have to treat it as such, and we will be selling other people's music, especially when some record stores won't take on local artists unless they are on labels from New York or L.A.," Derek said. "So we are really doing some thing of a favor."

Bajor knows he is not taking a hand-out, instead he is just happy to be sharing some holiday cheer, a second time around.

"I have been collecting Christmas music for years now and everyone has an album out now... everyone except Madonna has one," said Bajor, who also has his own Sugo holiday music release, "Christmas Memories," as well as appearing on other holiday music compilations.

"It seems as if people always want Christmas music even though they know the songs; it sounds different when performed by others," he said.

To hear a sample of "An Intimate Christmas," call (810) 901-8643.



Wrapping away: Debbie Hood and her brother Derek, formerly of Farmington Hills, wrap tapes in his Royal Oak apartment for their company, To Daze Music, which sells Grammy nominee and Rochester resident Jim Bajor's jazz cassettes and CDs of Christmas music, entitled "An Intimate Christmas."

"Great idea"
"I thought it was a great idea. A lot of the time I don't put the pieces of the puzzle together because I tend to focus on (the creative) end and Derek set me down and explained that this was a solid move," he said. "With Derek involved I knew it would fly."

Marketing this release does not interfere with his current recording contract, Bajor said.

To Daze Music actually began with a right push from Derek who convinced his older sister Debbie, a medical assistant, to collaborate on the business venture. To Daze Music began in the middle of the summer with the two compiling names and addresses, drafting fliers and order forms and acquiring a post office box and voice mail space.

Debbie, who confesses to having no marketing or selling experience, is finding the venture educational.

"I've learned a lot," Debbie said. "It is really interesting to see how much creativity can go into the project. I guess I have learned that a dream begins with small thought. Before (Derek) wanted me to get out into the spotlight. He thinks I can sing and dance or act or manage... but I just haven't been trained for it and my heart skips when I think of it."

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1-2 punch sends Veruca Salt to top



Seething with pent-up energy: Veruca Salt's debut "American Thighs" on the Minty Fresh label in Chicago has led them to a record deal with DGC, a division of Geffen records.

BY CHRISTINA PUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Chicago alt-rockers Veruca Salt show no mercy. Musically, they quietly slither along until exploding into a wall of guitars, high-pitched harmonies and seductive melodies.

Nina Gordon and Louise Post's one-two vocal punch on the single "Seether" captivated radio programmers earlier this summer. When Chicago's Minty Fresh label sent Veruca Salt's full-length debut album "American Thighs" to stores, the fledgling band's popularity exploded.

Record companies took out the heavy artillery to fight for Veruca Salt. The winner: David Geffen's DGC records, but not after a round of teasing by Veruca Salt.

Sitting in a circa-1970s chair in the Burns Room at St. Andrew's Hall, Gordon is tucked tight inside her leather coat save for a rail-thin leg slung over her chair's arm. Gordon is trying to talk over Madder Rose's soundcheck about how the Veruca Salt buzz began at the South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas. At that time, teaming up with a major label wasn't high on their agenda.

"We wanted to work on becoming a better band before making any decisions," said the sharp-tongued Gordon with her little-girl voice. "When 'Seether' took off, they became even more hot and bothered."

Realizing her band's position, Gordon sent out a good-natured warning to the drooling DGC.

"We're not signed just yet. If they don't behave, they're out of here," she said with a grin.

"The deal was behind because DGC is now owned by Geffen, so Geffen basically takes over distribution of 'American Thighs.'"

This isn't your everyday pop album. In "Spider-Man 75," Post, a dead-ringer for TV's Kelliher, desperately admits her love for the comic-book

hero. ("You're so nice you tie me up in a web and cradle me 'til dawn. You're so deadly that I can see your breath beneath me when you're gone. You're so windy I'd like to pin you down and tack you to the wall.")

"Seether" tells of an indescribable pent-up anger that Gordon sometimes can't keep inside. ("I try to rock her in my cradle. I try to knock her out. I try to cram her back in my mouth. Can't fight the seether. Can't fight the seether. Can't fight the seether. I can't see her 'til it's foaming at the mouth.")

The song went on to be wildly successful in Detroit and MTV threw the video, directed by Red Red Meat singer Tim Rutili, into the coveted Buzz Bin. Not bad for a song that Gordon thought might not have been Veruca Salt material.

"I brought it into the band apprehensively because it was so poppy," Gordon said, only to be interrupted by bassist Steve Lack.

"I hated it the first time I heard it. I thought it was the most annoying thing," Lack said.

That's news to Gordon, who lets out a squeal.

On stage, Veruca Salt's playfulness is just as apparent. A twenty Post sings while besting mercilessly on her guitar. Her vocalist/guitarist partner, Gordon stands cool and collective behind her mike. The energy is nonstop as Gordon's brother Jim Shapiro flails his arms within his drum set, and bassist Lack thrives around the stage.

The stage is where Gordon is able to come to grips with her career choice.

"When we play a really good show, which is rare, we feel really good," she said.

"This whole radio thing is cool, but it's kind of abstract. When I hear (Veruca Salt) on the radio, I always think it's someone joking around with me, pressing play on my tape player."

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