MC5's Kramer reunites with John Sinclair

CHRISTINA FUOCO

Former MC5 member Wayne Kramer is promising that his show on Saturday, June 22, at Alvin's in Detroit will be the "cultural event of the summer."

The show will mark the first time that Kramer and John Sinclair have performed together since the days of the MC5.

"We've been friends and we've hung out and we've done things together over the years, but we haven't worked together or performed. We'll tear the roof of the place," said Kramer via telephone from Kansas City.

Kramer, who lives in Los Angeles, said that the show came together by happenstance. Kramer was looking for an opening band, and John Sinclair and the Blues Scholars were looking for a gig at Alvin's. Sinclair was founder of the White Panther Party and manager of the MC5. He is now a poet and musician living in New Orleans.

Kramer is coming to Detroit in support of his second Epitaph album, "Dangerous Madness." The label, run by former Bad Religion member Brett Gurewitz, carries a philosophy similar to the MC5.

"Epitaph Records is kind of like the realization of what we were talking about in the MC5. The revolution and all its applications, take responsibility and make things happen. That's what Brett has done."

Tickets for Kramer's 18 and older show are $8 in advance at Ticketmaster. Alvin's is located at 5756 Cass Ave., Detroit. For more information, call (313) 832-2355.

• Last year, one of the most hotly reported stories in Canadian music was the "break up" of the pop band Sloan. Ironically, according to vocalist/guitarist Jay Ferguson the band never did "officially" break up.

"We thought we probably wouldn't continue to do the same stuff," Ferguson said. "We really didn't do much else besides what we had to do. We didn't announce to the press that we were breaking up because if we didn't we'd have to defend ourselves. So we really didn't say anything."

But Ferguson said, he's flattered about all the attention they received.

"It would suck if nobody cared if Sloan broke up. It is kind of flattering in a way that people would care enough to make it a national music story in Canada."

Everything is fine in the Sloan camp and the band is now touring in support of its third full-length album "One Chord to Another" (MCA Canada). Sloan is set to headline the 89X Birthday Bash on Friday, June 21. Originally, the album was slated to be a collection of extra songs that didn't make it on Sloan's previous albums "Smeared" and "Twice Removed." Once the recording process began, the band decided it would be "fun" to make a proper new album.

"It was the most fun we had making a record. It was a bit more relaxed, there was no pressure, no time line. We put it out when we wanted."

"One Chord to Another" takes Sloan's hook-laden pop sensibilities and Beatlesque melodies and rolls it into the band's best effort yet.

On Friday, Sloan will be joined by Screaming Trees, Girls Against Boys, Seaweed, Jale, Rusty, 7-Year Bitch, Triple Fast Action, 3 Lb. Thrill, and Elephant Ear. The show begins at 1 p.m. at the Phoenix Plaza, 10 Water St., Pontiac. Tickets are $8.90 for the all-ages show. For more information, call (810) 335-4850

• Besides CIMX, the album rock station WRIF (101.1) is also celebrating a birthday. In honor of its 25th anniversary, the band has invited Peter Wolf, The Verve Pipe, Stabbing Westward and Charm Farm to play the State Theatre in Detroit on Friday, June 22.

The rock band Stabbing Westward is visiting Detroit hot on the heels of its hits single "What Do I Have to Do" from the album "Wither Blister Burn + Peel" (Columbia). Drummer/guitarist/programmer Andy Kubiszewski, the latest permanent member of Stabbing Westward, said the song's success is bittersweet.

"I wrote that song in 1991 (for another band). We had a deal with a really lame independent label and that was a song that I had sent to the label in anticipating of putting out another album. The A&R guy said, 'This song sucks.'"

When Kubiszewski joined Stabbing Westward, he pulled out the demo and played it for the band.

"Everyone went, 'Wow. This is a lot like what we are about.' There's a certain sense of justice about (the success of the song.). What was once deemed useless has now turned out to be what hopefully will be one of many steps toward success."

The band's next single is "Shame" with a video directed by Paul Cunningham, whose first video was Radiohead's breakthrough video "High and Dry."

"It deals with twisted, weird humor, which is something that bands in our genre never seem to want to deal with. Those of us who are unfortunately lumped into the industrial genre are misinterpreted as dark or sinister, or miserable people who long for a death wish. That couldn't be farther from the truth. We're very normal and very human. We're tired as being pigeon-holed with the industrial rockers."

Tickets for the WRIF anniversary concert are $20 in advance, or $23 at the door. There is a limited number of balcony seats priced at $10. For more information, call (313) 961-5451 or (810) 645-6666.

If you have any questions or comments for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her in care of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, or via e-mail at cfuoco@aol.com, or you can leave a message for her at (313) 953-2047, mailbox number 2130.

Suggest a zany contest

With the Olympics just around the corner, isn't it time you got into the spirit of things? The Second City — Detroit has "Slipped a Discus" and invites you to suggest a wild and zany contest for the Olympics. Limit your suggestion to 50 words or less, and send your entry by noon, Friday, June 21 to: Keely Wygonik, Arts & Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax: (313) 591-7279. Include address and daytime phone number with your entry.

You must be 18 or older to enter, and Observer & Eccentric employees and their families are not eligible.

The winner, to be picked by the cast of The Second City — Detroit, will receive dinner for two at Risata, a pair of tickets to a future performance of "Slipped a Discus," and two Second City T-shirts.

Three runner-ups will each win a pair of tickets to "Slipped a Discus." Winners will be notified by phone. Look for the winning entries in Arts & Entertainment on Thursday, June 27.

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