Eels' single slithers through need for numbness

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STATY WHITEA

Eals fans have had high expectations for the quirky alternapop band were since the Mark
Romanek-lensed video for its single "Novocaine for the Soul" was mared an MTV "Burz Clip."

"We really know how to fly," singer/guitarist/keyboardist E said during a recent phone concerts people are expecting us to fly. But we could either fly orchannel all our energy into rocking as hard as we can and giving them the best show that we can. If they want flying, they should go to a Kiss concert. We might spit blood, though, maybe not intentionally."

Fans can try to convince the band otherwise when it opens for Poe at the 7th House in Pontiae the band otherwise when it opens for Poe at the 7th House in Pontiae on Wednesdon, Oct. 9.

Eels formed after Virginia native E (ne Mike Edwards), who put out two solo albums—1992's "Am Called E" and 1993's "Broken Toy Shop"—oplydor Records, met his bondmates during a jam session at Mint, a Los Angeles club.

"I was perfectly happy being a solo artist and figured I always would be one," E explained. The song on "Beautiful Freik were actually meant to be my third solo album But I met Butch and Tommy along the way. I was so live band, I decided to swallow my pride and be a band member. It's really functed the sun letter of the band, I decided to swallow my pride and be a band member. Ha really functed and the letter of the letter of the letter of the band, I decided to swallow my pride and be a band member. Ha really functed and the letter of the went of the letter of letter of the letter of the letter of the letter of letter of le

After gigging around town in late 1995, the band met Michael

We're modern version of Motown, I think, in a way because what we do is we try to put this life-affirming element in the music that's like an extending the music that she whole Motown thing was about. It's obviously a different from the others that are wallowing in depression. That was all was a great mismonth of the said.

"It's aya," I'm sad but it's OK to be sad. I'm gona survive. I've a lready gave up and bounced

Simpson of the production team the Dust Brothers (Beck, Benstic Boys), who was by then an A&R rep for DreamWorks. Earlier this label and began selecting songs for 'Beautiful Freak'. We could have gotten a biggor deal with another label, but I really wanted to sign with DreamWorks because of the people who work there. These are some of the most well-respected people in the business."

The label is founded by David Geffen and run by the legendary Warner Bros. executive team of Mo Oatin, his son Michael, and Lenny Warnker.

Although Simpson, Mark Goldenberg, and Jon Brien co-produced 'Beautiful Freak, 'E was the primary knob-turner.

I'm the beautiful Freak, 'E was the primary knob-turner. I'm the beautiful Freak, 'E was the primary knob-turner through pop-soul, hip-hop, guitartick, jozzy samples, and a touch of Motown influence as heard in the opening to 'Novecaine for the Soul.' To pay homage to his influence, E said that he hopes to visit the Motown Museum while has in town.

"We're a modern version of Motown, I think, in a way because what we do is we try to tut this life-affirming element in the music that's like an extra lyric. That keeps our record dif-



Offboat band: Eels – from left, vocalist/guitarist/keyboardist E, bassist/vocalist Tommy, and drummer/vocalist Butch – will perform songs off its debut album "Beautiful Freak" when it opens for Poc at the 7th House in Pontiac Wednesday, Oct.

kind of the opposite of what the record's about.

The album's about getting to the bottom of whatever's on the surface; to get in touch with what you're feeling. That's what it is for me. I wanted to be unblinkingly naked on these songs and 'Novocaine For The Soul' is a complicated song. It's unblinkingly naked about the

Poc, Eels and Pure perform Wednesday, Oct. 9, at the 7th House, 7 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. Tickets are available at

Ticketmaster for the 18 and older show. Tickets from the originally scheduled show, Sept. 2, will be honored. Doors open at 8 p.m. For more information, call (810)

Songwriter likes musical experimentation



Mark Kozelek, singer/gui-tarist/songwrit-er for the San Francisco band Red House Painters, appre-ciates the art of musical experi-mentation. So

Mark Kozelek.

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Blue Guitar he continued that tradition — much to the dismay of his label, AAD.

They liked about 80 percent of it. They wanted to release that same record. They just wanted to leave some stuff off of it.— Silly Love Songs," and "Make Like Paper," Kozelek explained.

True to Kozelek's form, he took the Paul McCartney staple Silly Love Songs and turned it into a 10 minute and 67 second somber tale.

tale.
"I think I can listen to songs "I think I can listen to songs that aren't very good and I can always hear a redeeming quality in them... I can listen to a song like 'Silly Love Songs' or 'Shock Me' by Ace Frehley and I can hear something that's good. It's just fun and challenging to cover songs that way – to take some-

'They liked the real pretty side of our band. We have a side that to them is ugly but is beautiful

Mark Kozelek Red House Painters

thing and make it something to make it yours," Kozelek explained.

Blended with the minimalist acoustic tracks are songs like "Make Like Paper," a rollicking, ragged song reminiscent of Neil Young and Crazy Horse. Pleased with his collection of songs, Kozelek wosn't about to leave either off the record.

The things they wanted to do with the record I just felt like we would have been putting 'Ocean Beach' out again. I felt that those elements that they didn't like was what was growth for us. It was a change. ... They were caught up in a certain thing that we did. (On 'Songs for a Blue Guitar' the bare, acoustic track) Trallways' is a good example of that. They liked the real pretty side of our band. We have a side that to them is ugly but is beautiful in our way."

When talks broke down,

Kozelek and his band left 4AD for Supreme Recordings/Island Records. Red House Painters, which formed in 1989 in San Francisco, had been with 4AD since the early 1990s and released five albums on the label including "Down Colorful Hill," which was a remixed version of their demo tape.

In 1993, the band recorded 23 sones which were released as

In 1993, the band recorded 23 songs which were released as two self-titled albums. Red House Painters followed that up with "Shock Me" EP, a cover of Ace Frehley's Kiss song, and 1995's "Ocean Beach."

1995's 'Ocean Beach.'
"Songs for a Blue Guitar" origi-nally was intended to be Kozelek's solo album for 44b. During the recording process, Kozelek passed on his band — guitarist Phil Carney, bassist Jerry Vossel, and drummer

Anthony Koutsos – and opted for John Hiatt's musicians to back

him.
"I thought it would be more of an experiment to play with different musicians which I hadn't done in six or seven years," he

done in six or seven years," he said.

He ended up calling the record a Red House Painters project since the "whole switching labels thing took a really long time."

"It was in everybody's best interest to keep the name Red House Painters."

He has since reunited with his band and is touring with John Cale. The tour comes to St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, at 8 pm. Sunday, Oct. 6. Tickets are \$15.50 in advance for the 18 and older show. For more information, call (\$13) 961-MEUR.

If you have a question or com-ment for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her e/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, or via e-mail at cfuoco@aol.com.

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