

## STREET SCENE

## Pure passes through customs and problems



CHRISTINA FUOCO

Via problems, canceled shows and skeletal performances are now in the past for the Canadian pop band Pure. But it doesn't mean that customs checks are any easier for them.

"We just came through customs about two hours ago," said singer Jordy Birch via telephone from Minneapolis. "Both me and Dave (Hadley, bassist) got stopped. The dogs went all over us. The guys were looking over us. I guess we smelled kind of funny. He (the customs officer) was quite perplexed about why we didn't have any drugs on us."

Pure should cross the U.S./Canadian border Friday, Dec. 13, to play The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall. Birch said he's excited about the show because Detroit has always been good to them.

"It's almost strange. There's some places that know us and some places who don't. Some people are just discovering us. You don't get the 'Hey, how are you doing' and meet your friends

like in Detroit," Birch said. Pure — which also includes guitarist Todd Simko and drummer Jim Hobbs — is touring in support of its latest release "Generation 6-Pack" (Manmoth), an album that just hit stores a few weeks ago in the United States. We've heard the songs all summer on Canadian radio like CIMX (89X) because a version of the album was released a year ago in Canada.

"Generation 6-Pack" is a marked difference from "Purefunalia" (Reprise), the last album released in the United States. Heavy keyboards have been replaced with swirling guitars and gritty vocals.

"We basically just cleared house. There's a certain core to the band. The core wanted to move in that direction, some people didn't want to. That's why we got off our record label. It's a more honest sort of approach. It's more stripped down. We didn't want to have to dress up for the camera, so to speak. We just wanted to be ourselves."

The first single, "Anna," tells the story of a drugged up waitress the band met in Atlanta.

"We were watching her while we were playing and she was more of a show than we were.

Afterward we talked to her and she was rambling on about her life. I could feel the pain that she was feeling. It very similar to what a lot of people feel. She was covering up for what's missing and her way of doing it was taking speed and latching on to people, being their best friend and telling people story of their life."

"Hammock" discusses the death of a close friend who, after a childhood marked by inseparability, had drifted into the home-town "hanging out" zone.

"It was so sad, because this guy had more going for him than I ever did, but he just sort of hung around. You know, if you're not careful, you can sleep your life away," Birch said.

Writing the song "Lemonade" started out simply but, Birch said, it took a twist.

"It started out as a boy meets girl story then it turned into a girl meets girl story. It's so simple that they say it's lemonade. It's almost so much about lemonade that it can't be about lemonade. I don't want to sound 'Spinal Tap'-ish. But it's not really a cliché song. It's blatant and stark."

Pure and Catherine perform an all-ages show at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13, at The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For more information, call (313) 961-0612.

• The local band Sister Seed is releasing a new record but singer/guitarist Chris Kerwin

said it was completely by accident.

Kerwin, along with singing partner Alicia Gbur, were working on demos for the new CD. The recordings sounded so good that their producer urged them to release it.

"It wasn't something that we planned. We were doing some pre-production with this guy (Dan Kellery, vice president of Jan Krist's label Silent Planet) that we have asked to produce our next CD. We were going through some of the songs and he liked the way they sounded," Kerwin said.

The acoustic album "Underground" is something with which to tide over fans until the plugged-in CD comes out next year. The 10-song cassette shows Kerwin and Gbur's knack for crystal clear harmonies and emotive lyrics.

"There's definitely growth in the lyrics because we've grown as people. In terms of putting things together, we're taking the minimalist approach more so than 'Boom, here we go!' It's kind of like we're letting the songs breathe so that the song comes out more. I listened to the first record a little while ago and I was like 'Whoa, a lot of those songs we're not letting breathe.' There's harmonies everywhere and we're both playing the guitar," Kerwin explained.

None of these songs will appear on the new CD which Kerwin expects to be released in

mid-1997. She's anxious to begin recording the CD at New River Recordings in Nashville. Sister Seed — which also includes drummer Benjamin Ridley Jr. and bassist Frederick David — will celebrate the release of "Underground" with a party and performance at 9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Tickets are \$5 for the

18 and older show. Country artist Jill Jack will open the show, followed by Sister Seed and the world beat band Waka Jawaka will close out the evening.

For more information, call (810) 544-3030.

If you have a question or comment for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her in care of The Observer & Eccentric.

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