

STREET SCENE

Motley Crue gives fans a sample of new album



CHRISTINA FUOCO

For the last 16 years, listening parties have become routine for glam rockers Motley Crue. Critics sit around, jabber and drink while the Crue's new album provides background music.

To celebrate the return of singer Vince Neil, the band decided to do something a little different — this time for its fans. The foursome will travel to eight cities including a stop at Detroit's State Theatre on Friday, June 20, and perform its new album "Generation Swine" (Elektra) in its entirety before it hits stores Tuesday, June 24.

"We're playing the album in the order that it is on the album from top to bottom. That's the show. If we get an encore we'll come out and crank a couple oldies," bassist Nikki Sixx said succinctly.

After each show, a local DJ will host a question and answer period and autograph session with the band. WRIF's Doug Pedell will emcee the event at the State Theatre.

"We wanted to make it a little more special for the fans," said guitarist Mick Mars calling from the Elektra Records office in New York. "We thought we would do this rather than fly to the cities and play the CD and have everyone sitting around and schmoozing and not paying



Live listening party: Motley Crue — from left, singer Vince Neil, bassist Nikki Sixx, drummer Tommy Lee, and guitarist Mick Mars — will perform its upcoming album "Generation Swine" in its entirety, followed by a question and answer period with fans at the State Theatre in Detroit on Friday, June 20.

attention to the music."

Detroit was chosen, according to Mars, for its ability to "rock." "You guys smoke. It was hard to pick the cities, but Detroit is one of the cities that really stick

out."

"It was hard to only do a few cities but because we're playing before the album comes out, we couldn't go for two months and play every city in America. We

had to pick some of the cities that are a little bit more yeh-hem and destruction oriented."

With many of the shows selling out in less than six minutes, Motley Crue realizes that it

could play bigger venues. But Sixx said the band specifically wanted to play clubs.

"That's not the issue," Sixx said about playing bigger venues. "We wanted to do something special for the fans. The look and the vibe of the stage matches the vibe of the music."

The proceeds of the event will go to the Skylar Neil Foundation, named after Neil's toddler daughter who died of cancer.

"It was a horrible thing that had to happen," Sixx said. "I have four children myself. I spoke to Vince about it many times and I don't know how I could personally survive some thing like that. ... The fact that the band is back together is helping him. Brotherhood is very important for him as far as helping him gain his footing."

In conjunction with Neil's return to Motley Crue, the non-alcoholic soft drink "Motley Bru" hit the stores in early May. The beverage — available in coffeehouses, skate shops, underground clubs, record stores, book stores, and clothing stores — is the first one created for a rock band by the Skelsteens, the duo responsible for the off-beat soft drinks Brain Wash, Black Lemonade, and Love Potion #69.

The "Bru" is the drinkers' mouths and wants products bright blue and features ingredients such as jalapeno, caffeine, ginseng, mad dog weed, skullcap. "It has some really cool ingredients. It gives you a nice buzz —

a nice natural buzz. We're coming up with three new flavors and there will be a collector's edition that has our band's signature on the different bottles," Sixx said.

"Generation Swine" is a marked difference from the pop-rock sensibilities of its hit singles "Home Sweet Home," "Girls, Girls, Girls," and "Dr. Feelgood." This time around Motley Crue dabbles in industrial rhythms and pure hard rock. Sixx and drummer Tommy Lee even retitled their 1983 hit "Shout at the Devil."

"It's sort of nice cross between the older material and newer material. You just consciously go in creative circle. You grab your own tail at some point and by adding certain elements of production, that makes it fresh as well," Sixx said.

He added that he and Lob wrote most of the songs for "Generation Swine" before Neil came on board.

"Vince isn't what you would call a songwriter. He's a stylist. He stamps the song. That's how it's always been. There's a thing that works with Motley Crue and that's one of them. It was really awesome to be in the studio together again."

Motley Crue's "Live Swine" listening event begins at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 20, at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. The all-ages show is sold out. For more information, call (313) 961-6451.

Backstage Pass invites songwriters into an Austin circle

BACKSTAGE PASS



ANN DELISI

Things will be a little different tonight at the Channel 56 studios. Like every other week, there's so much going on in Detroit that we really had to struggle with what to include on the big Backstage Pass show. Many happenings which we won't have time to feature as full-blown segments will get squeezed into lists of opening and ongoing events. We'll even have our segment hosts recommend events we didn't have time to cover at the end of the show. All this is usually tightly packed around four feature stories that go more in-depth about the scene, artist, venue or process we're exploring. But this week's Backstage

Pass, while still checkful of information, will be built around only three features. No, we're not slacking off — we needed to find extra time in the show to give you a peek at a truly symbiotic creative process: an Austin-style songwriter circle.

Many singer-songwriters who participate in songwriter circles are on my play list, but I wanted to give some ink to a guy who has helped to make the music sound so good on our show: our music segment producer, Ron Pangborn. Ron's a seasoned pro with chops to spare the currently plays with the Chisel Brothers and Chicago Pete), and I asked him for his take on the phenomenon.

First, he explained why they're called Austin songwriter circles. "Austin's a small town, but it's so into music that it seems like everybody's there to get a band started or to work on their music. Songwriters circles grow

out of informal get-togethers that songwriters in Austin had. They'd get together, pass the guitar around and write songs." This casual informality freed the musicians up to take creative risks and work on raw, untested material. Says Ron, "They're with friends, so they don't have to do their standard stuff. They evolved into sort of informal workshops."

The writing process became a performance style when a New York city promoter got wind of it. "Alan Pepper, who books the Bottom Line in Greenwich Village, started booking songwriter circles as tours. People who book venues found that they could give exposure to solo singer-songwriters they liked by having them play as part of a circle, and they'd fill their rooms because each performer would pull in his or her audience." The songwriters coming to the

Channel 56 studio tonight — Jan Krist, David Folks and Michael King — work as a circle because of their individual strengths. "Each performer is totally self-contained, different from each other. And they don't need a band to do what they do. Their stuff works as solo acoustic performance, they won't be doing acoustic renditions of what was meant to be played by a larger ensemble."

Ron wrapped it up nicely: "Detroit has a strong, vibrant musical scene, but I don't think people think of this kind of music when they think of Detroit. But the Raven (which hosts monthly songwriter circles) has been around for 30 years. For acts like Ron Coden and Joni Mitchell, it was a regular stop. It's another chance for us to round out the picture of Detroit entertainment."

Also on tonight's Backstage Pass, we bring you the story of

the East Dearborn Arab International Festival. Jessica Bassett, the festival's director, told me about the event's evolution. "Last year, we held a festival to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ACCESS. Well, 100,000 people showed up. It was so successful, we decided to make it an annual festival."

Notice the event is called the Arab International Festival. "The entire festival is multicultural, both the food and the entertainment — Mexican, East Indian, African, Arabic. The artisans, too. East Dearborn is opening itself up to families from all over the Metro area. Jan noted that the festival is "good, wholesome fun for the entire family. No alcohol will be served anywhere at the event. Last year, even with 10,000 people, there were no incidents. It's really a must-see festival, because it's so unique. There's not another festival like this anywhere."

Our own Kim Hunter will welcome Arabic calligrapher Rafat Zaighloul to the studio. As Kim explains, calligraphy has become part of the Arabic flavor. "Calligraphy has traditionally been very important as visual art in Arabic culture. Many other visual art forms were avoided because of religious taboos regarding graven images and idolatry. Written language evolved as an art form to fill that void."

Finally, we'll visit the madcap environs of "The Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever," a national video guide published right here in Detroit, and Thomas Video, purveyors of one of the largest cut film collections in the entire Midwest. That's right on Backstage Pass on Channel 56 at 7:30 p.m., rebroadcast Friday night at 11:30.

That's all for now. Now get out there!

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