

STREET SCENE

Farmington Hills rockers open for idols Ratt

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Growing up in Farmington Hills, John Sepetya and Brian Saputo sat around and listened to old Ratt albums. This summer they are getting the rare opportunity to bond with one of their favorite bands.

Their Los Angeles-based band Hair of the Dog - which also includes vocalist/guitarist Ryan Cook and drummer Johnny "Thunder" Evans - are spending the summer opening for Ratt. The tour comes to Detroit's State Theatre on Sunday, July 13.

"We're having a great time. It's like a childhood dream. We used to sit around and listen to the old albums and just get so excited about Ratt and rock 'n' roll," said Saputo, Hair of the Dog's bassist.

They owe the opportunity to Sepetya's sister Ruta, who manages Hair of the Dog, and does publicity work for guitarist Jos Satriani in Los Angeles.

"She's been just working her butt off," Sepetya said. "We got the tour through her persistence. We were only scheduled through the 28th of June, but we all got along so well that they asked us to do more dates with them."

Hair of the Dog's self-titled debut album hit stores Tuesday, April 1, and has garnered loads of good reviews. The Album Network described the band as "a great Guns N' Roses swagger telling tales similar to Jim Croce's famous song/stories."

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Times reported that "Hair of the Dog is a tight, well-rehearsed unit that plays great straight-

ahead rock that's metal-sharp around the edges."

Sepetya, a 1984 Farmington Harrison High School graduate, and Saputo, a 1985 Harrison graduate, have been playing music together since high school. Ruta, who was then dating Saputo, introduced the two.

"After hooking up with Evans through a newspaper advertisement, the band renamed itself Hair of the Dog."

"We finally found the perfect match. It's like a four-way marriage," Saputo said.

Upon graduating from the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, the two relocated to Los Angeles pursue a career in music. While performing under the name Prize Fighter, the duo formed up its current lineup after meeting singer Cook through singer/song-writer/producer Desmond Child. "I had known John for about a

year," said Child who has penned No. 1 hits for Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, and Kiss. "He had a great project going, but it needed the right singer. When I met Ryan in Nashville, I knew I had found the perfect match. Within a week, the guys had met and were writing songs."

After hooking up with Evans through a newspaper advertisement, the band renamed itself Hair of the Dog.

"We finally found the perfect match. It's like a four-way marriage," Saputo said.

Hair of the Dog opens for L.A. Guns and Ratt at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, July 13, at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$17.50 in advance or \$20 at the door for the all-ages show. For more information, call (313) 961-5451.



Opening for Ratt: Hair of the Dog featuring former Farmington Hills residents John Sepetya on lead guitar and Brian Saputo on bass opens for Ratt and L.A. Guns on Sunday, July 13, at the State Theatre in Detroit.

Setzer to rock this town with his big band sound

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Former Stray Cats guitarist/singer Brian Setzer has fallen in love and he hates the thought of leaving her to go out on tour.

The object of his affection? His weeks-old daughter Dane Lily.

"We named her Dane Lily because it kind of sounded like a '40s torch singer," Setzer said.

"I've been waiting to get on this tour for months and now the baby's here. I've fallen in love with her. I also have a 10-year-old son, but he's like a buddy

now. We buy motorcycles together and all that. Having a baby girl is a whole different thing."

The five-week tour includes a stop at the State Theatre in Detroit on Friday, July 11, with his 17-piece big band in support of their latest album "Guitar Slinger" (Interscope).

Setzer explained that playing with the big band isn't much different than his work with the rockabilly band Stray Cats.

"I don't feel like I'm doing anything that different on guitar. It's just that I've written all the horn parts to go behind it. It's pretty unique," he said.

"Guitar Slinger" carries the same rockin' energy as the Stray Cats from the opener "The House" to "Rumble in Brighton" to "The Legend of Johnny Kool" to "Ghost Radio."

Setzer said that his inspiration for starting a big band came from the old "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson.

"They wanted the Stray Cats to play 'Rock This Town' and they wanted to use Doc's big band. A light bulb went off and I thought, 'What a great idea.' I thought the guys could just play all their own parts. I had no idea what charts were or anything."

Although the Stray Cats never did perform "Rock This Town" on the "Tonight Show" the idea stuck. Five years ago it came to fruition.

"The Stray Cats were on tour and we were ready to take a break. I started to do a few shows with the big band, not thinking it would play out. It's so big and the money it takes to get the guys together. Now we're making a couple bucks and everyone's happy."

Setzer described his band as "first-call players" from around the Los Angeles area. Some of them played with Frank Sinatra,

and most of them appear on the soundtrack to the movie "Speed 2."

"They were really into this idea of playing with a rock 'n' roll big band. A big band is every musician's idea of really having fun. We get a lot of young kids out there who go to see us. It's such a good musical experience."

The Brian Setzer Orchestra and Big Rude Jake perform at 7:30 p.m. Friday, July 11, at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$18.50 at the door for the all-ages show. For more information, call (313) 961-5451.



Bringing the band: Brian Setzer and his 17-piece big band orchestra will play the State Theatre.

Gossard's Brad embarks on first tour



CHRISTINA FUOCO

Timing is everything, but it certainly wasn't "the thing" for the rock band Brad when it released its debut album "Shame" (Epic) in 1993.

Guitarist Stone Gossard was with that other band of his, Pearl Jam, and drummer Regan Hagar and lead singer/pianist Shawn Smith were committed to Satchel.

"There was a lot of different frustrations with the last record," Hagar said.

Everything is falling into place now for the foursome, which also includes bassist/vocalist Jeremy Toback. Brad released its second album, "Interiors" (Epic), on Tuesday, June 24, and it is planning to hit the road for the first time. Toback, however, will be replaced with Satchel's bassist Mike Berg while Toback promotes his solo album "Perfect Flux Thing" (RCA) on Lollapalooza.

Toback, speaking via telephone from a Lollapalooza gate in Virginia, said his departure from the band may be permanent.

"Basically, Brad touring and sort of becoming a more serious band entity kind of occurred surprisingly," Toback said.

His solo material "is kind of where my heart's at. It's physically impossible to be two places at once. I'm going to be on the road for the next year. I can't really afford to take time off and risk losing my band who are a bunch of great young musicians who will get snapped up instantaneously."

Toback will perform at Lollapalooza Tuesday, July 15-Wednesday, July 16, at Pine Knob, while Brad's tour comes to St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit on Saturday, July 12. Hagar said that finally touring with Brad has been a blessing.

"It had been four years since we played together. We just had such a great time that we thought we should do it," Hagar said.

"Stone hasn't been able to do that much touring (with Pearl Jam). I think he's really excited to play live. It's been probably eight months since Shawn and I have been on the road."

Pearl Jam has been unable to organize an extensive tour because it refuses to play in venues that sell tickets through Ticketmaster. Don't tell Pearl Jam singer Eddie Vedder but Brad's tickets are available at the outlets.

"I don't know what to think of that. I'm not involved in that fight," Hagar said with a laugh

admitting that no one had approached him about the irony.

"I'm sure that Stone, if he had his choice, probably wouldn't want to have it that way. (But) we're playing clubs and we want to get in these cities and play in these places where they have contracts with Ticketmaster."

Pearl Jam fans shouldn't expect to hear PJ Jr. on "Interiors" or "Shame" for that matter. "Interiors" is an elegant album of piano-laden pop/rock songs leered with distorted guitars, cellos ("Upon My Shoulders"), unexpected falsetto vocals, eerie keyboards ("I Don't Know" and "Funeral Song").

Gossard's Pearl Jam bandmate Mike McCready lends his guitar playing to "The Day Brings Me."

"I think that Brad really reflects Shawn Smith more than it does Stone Gossard. (But) I

hear a lot more of Stone on this one than I did the first one."

Performing with Brad, Hagar said, is a nice break.

"Songs like 'Secret Girl' or 'Sweet Al George,' Satchel would never have had on a record. We don't tend to have a whole lot of aggressive guitar sounds. But we really enjoy them."

Brad and special guest James Hall perform Saturday, July 12, St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 7 p.m. for the all-ages show. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT.

* Random notes: Blackstreet has canceled its tour including the Saturday, July 19, date at The Palace of Auburn Hills. Refunds available at point of purchase ... The new date of the

postponed Rick James & The Stone City Band performance is Friday, Oct. 10. The original date was Saturday, July 5. Tickets already purchased for the July 5 performance will be honored for the Oct. 10 date. Full refunds are also available at point of purchase. For further information, call Olympia Entertainment Customer Information at (313) 983-6611 ...

The Motor Lounge in Hamtramck is seeking bands to donate their time for the Motor Hamtramck Storm Relief Benefit from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Wednesday, July 30. The owners of the club, Steven Sowers and Dan Sordyl, and general manager Tom Bloom have offered their club as a shelter to Hamtramck residents affected by the July 2 storm. For more information, call (313) 369-0090.

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