

STREET SCENE

Bran Van 3000 looks forward to weird Detroit karma

James Di Salvo, the leader of Bran Van 3000, is anxious to come to Detroit.

"We've got this weird karma with Detroit. Sue Hynes did our logo and James Smolka did our photographs. I just met them in New York but they're from Detroit," the Montreal resident explained.

"I meet a lot of people from Detroit in Montreal too. It's kind of strange. I'm very anxious to go there. I feel very close to the city."

Di Salvo gets his chance Thursday, April 16, when Bran Van 3000 plays The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit.

Bran Van 3000 shipped its debut album "Glee" to U.S. stores Tuesday, March 10. The album

was released last year on Audion Records in Canada and already achieved gold status in that country.

Bran Van 3000 fans who own the Canadian version will have to make the trek back to the record store. Capitol Records has added three new tracks to the U.S. release — "Rainshine," "Carry On" and "Old School."

"Glee" is not only Bran Van 3000's debut album, but Di Salvo's first foray into music. Two years ago, Di Salvo was pursuing a career as a filmmaker and a music video director. On the side he was working as a DJ and remaking songs. Then the musical bug bit him.

So he took the money he made from directing a video for Manfred Mann and bought studio

equipment to record "Glee."

Di Salvo recruited 20 Montreal musicians, producers, singers and rappers to work on "Glee" but whittled his permanent band down to eight — DJ keyboardist "Electronic-Pierre" Bergen, vocalist Jayne Hill, Sara Johnson and Stephane Moraille, rapper Steve "Liquid" Hawley, bassist Gary McKenzie, guitarist Nick Hynes and drummer Rob Joannise.

His project has proved to be successful. The first single off "Glee," "Drinking in L.A.," has become a certified hit in Canada and on urban and alternative stations in the Detroit area.

"I can't complain about the reception," Di Salvo said during a recent phone conversation from the Capitol Records build-

ing in Hollywood.

"You do this little album just kind of for fun, almost as therapy, in the living rooms of all kinds of people. Then all of a sudden people are listening to it. It's really funny."

"Glee" kicks off with a frenetic sampling of music and public service announcements, and leads into the low-fi, hip-hop track "Couch Surfer" which couples vocals with a kazoo. On "Drinking in L.A." he trades off vocals with the soulful Moraille. The latter part of the CD dips into pure pop on "Everywhere" and "Exactly Like Me," during which Johnson and Di Salvo are paired with violins and acoustic guitars.

Buried in the middle of the CD is a stripped-down cover of

Slade's "Cum on Feel the Noise" sang by Johnston, Hill and Moraille.

Nearly every pop genre is addressed on "Glee."

"I wanted to make a record that spanned all my loves. I have the theory that you do it (an album) as if it's your last record. As a DJ you make mix tapes for friends. If one of my friends was only into punk, I'd sneak other things on there. When you have to hold a bar for four or five hours, you get pretty good at pacing."

Now that Di Salvo has dabbled in music and filmmaking, his next venture will be in comic books.

"I never thought I'd make a record, so maybe I'll make a comic one day. I can't even draw

my own foot, but I don't know 'do re mi' and I pulled off a record."

Lilith Fair and Levi's are hosting an "Acoustic Talent Search" Friday, April 24, at the Mill Street Lounge, 65 E. Huron. Contestants must submit a two-song demo before Thursday, April 16, to Ritual Inc./Lilith Contest. Attention: Maria Cukr, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, Mich., 48226. Female-fronted acoustic acts (three-piece maximum) are eligible. Finalists will be notified by phone and their names will be posted on the Ritual Inc. website at <http://www.961melt.com>. Runners up will win Levi's prize packages and Lilith Fair concert tickets. The winner will play this year's Lilith Fair show in Michigan.

Well-oiled machine keeps Backstage Pass humming along

BACKSTAGE PASS



ANN DELISI

We at the Backstage Pass offices at Detroit Public Television are in the dog days of production. Oddly, that doesn't mean we're sleeping for about 22 hours a day and turning around three times before lying down. It means we're in the thick of the production season, a week-to-week grind of putting together programs that showcase the best of Detroit's visual and performing arts.

Just how does this well-oiled machine work? Well, let's use this week's show as an example for one of those "behind the scenes making of" specials.

Every week, we have a production meeting. The production meeting is attended by any and all Backstage Pass contributors. Of course, we all have other gigs (I do a little radio show), so not everyone can make it every week. Not a problem. Their ears are to the rail for new artists, venues and exhibits in the area.

Our stellar roster of genre hosts is the real strength of the show. They're all tops in their fields, and their experience spreads a wide net over area happenings. In the visual arts, we have long time area critic and Cranbrook archivist Marsha Miro and the curator of the

Wildlife Interpretive Museum at the Detroit Zoo, Gerry Craig. In theater we have Blair Anderson from the Wayne State Theatre Department; faculty and Gary Anderson, the producing artistic director of Plover Theatre. In film, we have Elliot Wilhelm, curator of film at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the director of the Detroit Film Theatre at the DIA. WDET's W. Kim Heron helps us out with jazz, along with Kim Hunter, who is also immersed in the spoken word scene. Peter Sparling takes time from his own company to keep us up on Detroit's dance scene. WDET's Nkeng Zola covers just about everything. Paul Russell covers classical music. Gary Graff helps me cover pop music and rock and Lex Kuhn is our eyes and ears in pop culture.

Now, the producers know what's coming up, because they practically live under the deluge of press releases, letters, and demos that are sent in every week by artists, venues, promotions people, press agents, managers and record labels.

For instance, last season W. Kim Heron mentioned that pianist Mr. B has been on a one-man crusade to preserve the art of boogie-woogie piano. A few years ago at Detroit's Montreux jazz festival, Mr. B played with Detroit-area boogie blues piano legend Rob Seeley. The act was so hot it instantly became the stuff of legend. How about we bring these guys in?

Well, Mr. B doesn't gig in the area all that often; we kept miss-

ing him. Finally, we saw that he had put together a show at the Ark in Ann Arbor, "Mr. B's First Annual Boogie Blues Piano Orgy." The show boasts four of the world's top boogie and blues pianists, among them Mr. B and Bob Seeley. Backstage Pass music producer Ron Pangborn (himself one of the area's top musicians) invited them to the Detroit Public Television studio

to play. They agreed, finally fulfilling W. Kim Heron's suggestion of almost a year ago!

A few months ago, Marsha Miro told us the art world was buzzing about Jane Lackey, a former Cranbrook student who had just been appointed to head up the school's fiber department. The producers thought this had something to do with cereal until Marsha Miro explained that

fiber is one of the key material disciplines in art, and that Ms. Lackey was one of the best fiber artists going. When Marsha told us that the Sybaris in Royal Oak was exhibiting Ms. Lackey's work, we contacted the gallery about taping the work, and Marsha sat down to talk about it

with Jane. The result is a segment that informs and heightens one's appreciation of some beautiful, layered work.

We're also covering the hit musical "Rent." All this on Backstage Pass tonight at midnight, repeated Friday at 7:30 p.m. on Detroit Public Television.

"A PERFECT DATE MOVIE! IF YOU LIKED 'GHOST' YOU'LL LOVE 'CITY OF ANGELS'."

DAN DINICOLA - CBS-TV

★★★★★

A LOVE STORY WITH HEART AND SOUL."

MIKE CIGONE - ABC-TV

★★★★★

"A HEAVENLY ROMANCE IF THERE EVER WAS ONE!"

NICHOLAS CAGE AND MEG RYAN create one of the screen's most appealing love story duos. DAVID SHERMAN - CBS-TV

★★★★★

"A GREAT LOVE STORY... CAGE AND RYAN ARE CAPTIVATING... A MUST-SEE."

ANN BRITTLER - UPN NEWS

★★★★★

"A ROMANTIC ENCHANTMENT THAT WILL LIFT YOUR SPIRITS."

BARBARA A. SCOTT SIEGEL - SYNDICATE

★★★★★

NICOLAS CAGE MEG RYAN

CITY OF ANGELS

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AMC STERLING CTR.

GCC NOVI TOWN CTR.

SHOWCASE

STAR GRATIOT

STAR SOUTHWEST

AMC LAUREL PARK

BEACON EAST

SHOWCASE

STAR LINCOLN PARK

UNITED COMMERCIAL TWP. 14

UNITED WEST RIVER

AMC ARBY

BIRMINGHAM 8

SHOWCASE

STAR ROCHESTER

UNITED WEST RIVER

THE #1 MOVIE IN AMERICA!

"SIMPLY OUT OF THIS WORLD!"

FROM THE WINSTON. AMERICAN URBAN RADIO NETWORK.

"BLAST INTO SPACE WITH A THRILL RIDE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!"

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LOST IN SPACE

RENAISSANCE 4

SHOWCASE

STAR GRATIOT

STAR SOUTHWEST

UNITED COMMERCIAL TWP. 14

UNITED WEST RIVER

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SPECIES II

THERE IS LIFE ON MARS... AND NOW IT'S HERE.

RENAISSANCE 4

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STAR SOUTHWEST

UNITED COMMERCIAL TWP. 14

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FELIX OSCAR

Some arguments stand the test of time.

RENAISSANCE 4

SHOWCASE

STAR GRATIOT

STAR SOUTHWEST

UNITED COMMERCIAL TWP. 14

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