

STREET SCENE

Detroit rockers come together to help one of their own

In its heyday, Detroit rock band Tyrone's Power Wheel was known as one of the more difficult bands with which to work. Egos formed a barrier between Tyrone's Power Wheel and other Detroit bands, some of which refused to share a stage with it.

But the band, which broke up Dec. 31, 1997, and a host of Detroit acts are putting egos aside to help out Joe LaFata, the former drummer for Tyrone's Power Wheel and the Final Cut. He was diagnosed a year ago with brain tumors called germinomas.

Tyrone's Power Wheel will return to make a guest appearance during a benefit for LaFata at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 23, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$10 for the all-ages show.

The benefit will also feature performances by StunGun, Give



Bands rally: Joe LaFata, former drummer for Tyrone's Power Wheel and the Final Cut who has been diagnosed with a tumor, will be helped by a benefit

and the Howling Diablos. CIMX-FM (89X) morning personality Kelly Brown will serve as host. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT or visit <http://www.961melt.com>.

961-MELT or visit <http://www.961melt.com>. Posegay said that around 1 a.m., the reunited Tyrone's Power Wheel - with a replacement drummer - will hit the stage.

"They'll play about three songs and start a jam session. (Radio station) 89X, does a club night downstairs. (DJ) Clark Warner approached a friend of mine and he's been talking about wanting to spin," Posegay said.

Give is the new friend from former Tyrone's Power Wheel members Ferris George and Ray Eddins.

"It's a Jeff Buckley kind of thing. Ferris always wanted to be Jeff Buckley," Posegay said with a laugh.

The bands were chosen on their ability to bring in fans. The Howling Diablos played at the wedding of LaFata, who is now separated.

"It's not going to be a way to showcase somebody's new band. The key is to get people in the place. StunGun draws people. I asked the Howling Diablos,

"They played at Joe's wedding," he explained.

"I don't care who comes to the benefit. I just want to pack this place but at the same time pay tribute to Joe."

Posegay, the promotion and marketing director for the Bingham Farms-based CIMX is organizing the event along with Brad Cousens, general manager of Clutch Cargo in Pontiac, and his brother Graham Cousens, the former guitarist for Tyrone's Power Wheel.

They had been talking about doing a benefit for about a year.

"When we first found out, we said we've got to do a benefit. But we didn't want it to be pretentious. We didn't want Joe to think that we're putting a nail in his coffin. He's not critical. He's fighting this thing," he explained.

"We're doing this out of love. He's a talented musician, the stuff that he did with the Final Cut and Tyrone's Power Wheel was amazing."

Graham Cousens talked to LaFata and mentioned that they were planning a benefit for him.

"Joe was really touched by it. He's totally moved by it," Posegay explained.

According to the National Academy of Neuropsychology Web site, germinomas are tumors that arise from germ cells and are most common in the region of the pineal gland. They are thought to arise from cells that should have migrated to the gonads during development. Germinomas are highly infiltrative and rapidly growing.

LaFata told Posegay that only 3 percent of cancer patients have the same type of cancer. LaFata has gone through four sets of radiation to shrink the growths that keep returning.

"From what I understand, just one day they won't come back. He feels great and then these things grow again. He goes into the hospital feeling great and then they get zapped and he has to rehabilitate for three to four weeks," he said.

"He just keeps going in. This is his life now."

LaFata, a Grosse Pointe Woods resident, also worked as

a freelance producer working on commercials with Grant Hill and Sergei Fedorov. LaFata, in his early 30s, served as a grip on the set of the movie "Grosse Pointe Blank" and as a cameraman for Red Wings games on UPN 60.

St. Andrew's Hall has donated the building and its services for the event. All the money made will go to LaFata.

"My whole thing is that money doesn't solve his problem. If it can help pay his bills, that's great. I don't care what he does with the money. I just want it to help him in some way. If he suddenly feels completely feeling better and he wants to go on a trip around the world, well go for it."

Christina Fuoco is the pop music reporter for The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. If you have a question or comment for her, you can leave her a message at (734) 963-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or write to her at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Mich. 48150, or cfuoco@ec.homecomm.net.

Artist creates with a furnace, ductwork

They say that art imitates life. We've got an example that really hits home for those who have made just staying warm a focal point of their lives during this brutal month. In the dead of winter, Backstage Pass introduces you to an artist whose latest work features a large furnace with ductwork embracing a bed?

As far as we know, Nelson Smith isn't a Weather Channel addict. The contemporary artist's latest installation/performance at the Center Galleries of the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, "Forced Air," is a continuation of his 1995 work, "Electricity."

"Forced Air" is actually a prequel to "Electricity." I see it as a part of the same work, with logistics and finances being the biggest obstacles to presenting them together," says Smith. There has been another

unforeseen obstacle to the installation of "Forced Air." Can you imagine trying to convince a heating and cooling expert that your exhibit deserves priority with the weather we've been having? Patience and good humor helped Smith deal with delays in completing the furnace and ductwork elements, which will be ready for performances on Jan. 22, 29 and Feb. 2.

In fact, it's not unusual for Smith or his audiences to be amused by something in past performances of his work that wasn't intended to be funny. "I was surprised to find the audience laughing, although I wasn't really discouraged. After all, I've been amused when cre-

ating my work by the quirkiness of the combination of the materials. I like to think of my work as entertaining. It's challenging in a cerebral way like a puzzle or a game."

Nelson Smith
artist

22nd Ann Arbor Folk Festival, set for Jan. 30.

Mark and Carol Palms founded the band in 1989. He'd been a fiddler and banjoist of traditional music, she's a classically trained violinist. When you add instrumentalist David Mostert's passion for bluegrass, and violinist James Sneyd and his background in folk rock, jazz and Celtic bands, you've got a mix of the best qualities of bluegrass, old time, and swing.

"The preferences of the individual band members always surface when we're working on original music, with each of us trying to shape the piece in a certain way. It helps the creative process. You're going to play best what you like best," says Carol Palms.

The band is excited about performing for the first time in the festival, which has a reputation for attracting fresh national acts that make it big in the next year.

The Raisin Pickers bring their distinctive sound to the Detroit Public TV studios of Backstage Pass, airing Sunday at 7:30 p.m. and repeated Thursday at 5:30 p.m. and Friday at midnight.

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