

STREET SCENE

The Flys remember when as they judge others

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
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The Flys vividly remember the days of lugging gear up stairs, running a van into the ground, and begging for gigs in L.A. clubs. Although the band, which has scored a hit with "Got You (Where I Want You)," has been together for 10 years, those days aren't so far off.

All those thoughts are coming back to the quintet as it headlines and judges the "Bandemonium" contest. It comes to St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, in Detroit on Friday, Feb. 5.

Sponsored by Sam Goody, Pepsi, Loreal, and Gibson guitars, "Bandemonium" will feature two local bands competing for the chance to play MTV's "Spring Break." There are four to five judges at each Bandemonium event, including a member of The Flys.

"It's been pretty cool. We see some pretty cool bands, although we have to judge people, and I don't like to judge people," guitarist Peter Perdicchizzi said. "It's a bit weird. I see myself in a lot of these people and how we struggled for so long. I just don't want to make a judgment on anyone because everyone's doing their best and struggling," he added.

The Flys struggled for nine years before landing a record contract with Trauma Records, home to Bush and No Doubt. Its debut album "Holiday Man" will land at No. 1 on Billboard's "Heatseekers" chart in the Feb. 5 issue.

Perdicchizzi, who formed the band with vocalist Adam Paskowitz and bassist James Book, calls The Flys, "an



Headlining contest: The Flys - from left, guitarist Peter Perdicchizzi, singer/rapper Joshua Paskowitz, bassist James Book, singer Adam Paskowitz (front), and drummer Nick Lucero - headline "Bandemonium," a local battle of the bands at St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit on Friday, Feb. 5.

overnight success story in the making of 10 years."

In 1994, The Flys released "25 cents," and supported it by touring Europe and western United States.

"Even though we were based out of L.A. places like Salt Lake City and other cities were like our second home. We could go up there once a month or twice a

month and play gig and make enough money to pay our rent at our studio, to pay our van payment, to pay our insurance payment, to keep our head above water and still be a band."

"We would tour around Europe and the United States in our van with our dog, all of us, and our gear in the van. We would book the shows. We would make sure

everything happens.

Soon after recording "25 cents," The Flys added two new members to the band - vocalist/rapper Joshua Paskowitz and drummer Nick Lucero.

"We got rid of our old drummer. We found Nick, he was just sort of moping around L.A. looking for a gig. That relationship has worked out really cool because he's an amazing person. He's also on the cover of the record (Holiday Man) skydiving. He's the craziest one to do that."

Tagging along on one of the European jaunts was Joshua, Adam's brother.

"Adam got sick really bad. He got some kind of Euro-flu. Josh had to step in and sing his brother's parts. He was helping us out. He just hung around and did his thing, and it was all good. We never made a ceremony to say, 'Hey man, you're in the band.' If you got something to say, step up and do it. If it's good, it's good. It was very natural. We still haven't let him in the band."

But it was Joshua Paskowitz who contributed the hook to The Flys' first hit, "Got You (Where I Want You)" from "Holiday Man" (Trauma Records). The melancholy, bass-heavy "Got You" builds from a simple melody to Joshua Paskowitz's Jamaican dub rhythms.

Joshua Paskowitz offered the suggestion during the recording session at producer Chris Goss's studio.

"Before he did that it was just like a guitar break, a riff and big loud guitar. He said, 'Well, I've got something I wanted to try over that middle section.' He came up with the whole dub part. It really worked out. The

first time we heard it, we said, 'It's done.'"

Most of "Holiday Man" was written about a year ago, except for "Take U There," a frenetic blend of Josh Paskowitz's rhyming, Perdicchizzi's crafty guitar work, and Lucero's drum work.

"That was last minute. They were pressing the record that week and we said, 'Let's put it on.' We had to stop the presses literally as they say."

A striking aspect of "Holiday Man," is the slow grooving "Afraid." Booming drums break up the psychedelic feel of the song.

"It's Nick's real drums. It's just a little studio trick that Chris Goss did. You're in a big drum room if you can imagine. You put room mics at the end of the room and then you put a distortion pedal in the board in the studio. It overdrives everything so you have this big roamy distorted drum sound," Perdicchizzi explained.

But, shyly, he added, "We don't really do that part live because we don't know how to do that. It's a studio trick but we rock live. Live is our strong point."

After all, The Flys spent 10 years refining its live performances.

"We worked very hard and never gave up any of our dreams. We just went forward and we hooked up with Trauma Records and they've been very passionate about it too. It's sort of come out in a very big way. Obviously, it sort of blew up with this one song," he said about "Got You (Where I Want You)." "But we've been a band touring and writing together for 10 years."

"A lot of people say, 'Oh wow,

where did this band come from?' In reality, we've been around the block many, many times, working for this though. It's a great position to be in."

The Flys headline "Bandemonium" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Tickets are \$7. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT or visit <http://www.radioedge.com>. The Flys can be reached via e-mail at adamfly@aol.com or pep71@man.com, or by writing to 501 10th St., Santa Monica, Calif., 90402.

Besides "Holiday Man," "Got You" also appears on "Hope in Hockeytown III," a benefit CD for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit. It will be available for \$14.99 beginning Friday, Feb. 5, at major record stores or by calling 1-800-WINGS-25.

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Dovetail Joint changes attitude and comes out ahead



CHRISTINA FUOCO

Dovetail Joint can prove that with a change in attitude, dreams can come true. The rock band had the opportunity to record with hit maker Glen Ballard, who was at the helm of Alanis Morissette's two albums, and unreleased Aerosmith material. But they turned it down to make a record for the indie label Aware Records.

"In retrospect, we're very happy it didn't happen - not because of not working with him but because we weren't ready then. He's brilliant and everything. We would not have gotten the sound that we wanted," singer Chuck Gladfelter explained.

"He makes very produced-sounding records. I wanted it to sound rawer. I heard some of the Aerosmith songs that he did, and I'm not sure if we wanted our stuff to sound that glossy and that poppy. Once we had a mental change of attitude about the whole thing, good (stuff) started to happen."

That includes the release of its major-label debut "001," which hit stores Tuesday, Jan. 26, and the first single "Level on the Inside." It was the most added song to radio that week.

Although Gladfelter's first inclination is to celebrate, he's keeping a level head.

"We're trying to keep the driving force musical and not think about all the peripheral things going on," he said.

Dovetail Joint entered into the majors thanks to Aware Records, an independent label affiliated with Columbia Records that is often credited with "discovering" Hootie and the Blowfish, Dave Matthews' Band, The Verve Pipe and Matchbox 20.

The band simultaneously recorded a debut EP for Aware and its first album for Columbia in Minneapolis with producer John Fields. Jack Joseph Puig mixed "001" at Ocean Way Studios in Los Angeles. Working in L.A. proved to be interesting in its own right.

"It's an experience," Gladfelter explained. "We're just Midwestern boys going out to L.A. to work with Jack. You get the full-on L.A. picture when you go out

there. When you work with him, you realize the industry is based in New York and L.A. for sure."

"The way things run out there is it's much faster paced and it's a lot more demanding. You get kicked into line pretty quickly. This one time JJP told us, 'Listen, kid, take this seriously. Do you want to be successful or not. I didn't do this record to make money. I want to see you guys get somewhere.'"

Puig is best known for his work with Hole, Semisonic, and the Black Crowes, so Gladfelter and his bandmates listened.

"He's quite the revered guy. When you go out there, you basically hand the project over to him and trust that he knows what he's doing. He turns your music into the JJP flavor. That's part of the whole experience."

Dovetail Joint and Bliss performed Saturday, Feb. 6, at the 7th House, 7 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac.

ac. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for the all-ages show. Tickets are \$1.05. For more information, call (248) 335-8100 or visit <http://www.961melt.com> or <http://www.radioedge.com>

Vega chats

Singer/songwriter Suzanne Vega, best known for the hits "Luka" and "Tom's Diner," will chat about her new book "The Passionate Eye: The Collected Works of Suzanne Vega" at 10 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, at <http://www.border.com>.

Vega's book, published by Spike, is a collection of poetry, song lyrics and stories which explores a range of topics including solitude, fantasy, oppression, dreams, relationships and death. The book also contains Vega's interview with songwriter Leonard Cohen, accounts of her travels in Portugal and Liverpool, personal journal entries and reflections on

several events in her life.

Misc.

WXDG-FM's "1999 Snowfest Big Air" snowboarding competition has been rescheduled for Saturday, Feb. 6, at Alpine Valley. For more information, call (248) 887-4183.

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) 953-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or write to her at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Mich., 48150, or cfuoco@ec.homedm.com.

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