

Rolling right along with Detroit's Dream Cruise CD



STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

I can still hear the blaring sound that my first set of car keys made as my mother slipped them into my delicate hands the day I turned 16. Despite the virtual blizzard brewing outside, I couldn't wait to hop into the driver's seat, pile my closest friends inside and just take off to places unknown — Freedom at its purist.

But times have changed since my parents and even my older sisters started to drive. The stories I heard about my sister Michelle cruising around town in her jet black classic '66 Ford Mustang convertible sounded so far from my own reality. The same suburbs of Rochester Hills weren't much of a place for cruising during my teenage years, but for so many other metro Detroiters cruising defined a time in their lives.

Songs for the road

In Detroit — where the automobile is something sacred — what would cruising be without Highway One, without classic convertibles, and without the radio cranked to 10?

A group of local musicians recognized that connection and created "Cruisin' Songs From the Motor City," a compilation of 14 classics that may induce the

"It's unbelievable and it all sounds like Detroit," said Brian Pastorla. He considers Detroit to be a 'melting pot of a lot of different music: R & B, blues, gospel, rock and pop' all with a blue collar energy and a constant groove. Most of the artists were people he knew who not only showed interest in the project, but those who would 'deliver great songs.'

temptation to speed. The compact disc, available at all Harmony House locations, was produced by Mark and Brian Pastorla of Harmonie Park Creative Group in Detroit. It was released last week during the Woodward Dream Cruise.

"I didn't believe they didn't have a set of soundtracks for the Dream Cruise," said Brian Pastorla. So he and his brother created one. Choosing from an A-list of tunes, which all relate to cars, local artists recorded their own versions of hits like The Beatles' "Drive My Car," and Alice Cooper's "Under My Wheels." The songs cover diverse musical ground, from rock to blues to swing, and even hip-hop.

The Detroit Vibe

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music: R & B, blues, gospel, rock and pop' all with a blue collar energy and a constant groove. Most of the artists were people he knew who not only showed interest in the project, but those who would 'deliver great songs,' said Brian Pastorla.

One of them, Liz Larin found out about the project shortly after returning from Los Angeles. After cutting two records with a major label, Larin returned to the Detroit area and was "wowed by all the talent" she came across in the area. Larin took Tracy Chapman's always fabulous hit "Fast Car" to new levels by transforming it into her own techno version.

"Everyone came and worked for free," said Larin. "Everyone was into playing on it for fun." Chris McCall happened to be working on her own CD in the studio when the opportunity arose to work on the compilation.

"Brian suggested I do 'Mercedes Benz,'" McCall explained. "I love 'Mercedes Benz' and I love Janis Joplin but I didn't want to do it. It's a signature song. It's usually a good idea to avoid them."

After she was talked into it, McCall brought family members into the studio to sing the song's chorus. She admits that now, she's quite happy with the result.

"It was great to have this excuse to work with all these talented people," she said. Like Larin, McCall agreed that "it's a nice time to be hanging out in Detroit."

More to come

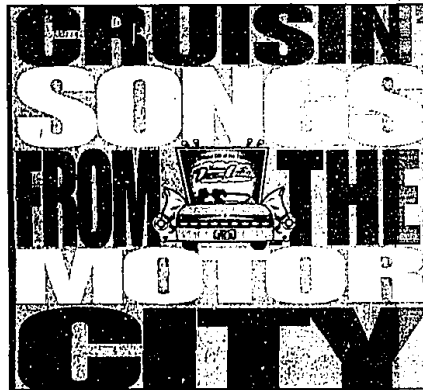
The project began in May and it took about six weeks to complete the CD. Larin called it "genuine" work by some of the best local artists.

Leonard Moon, of Bon Temps Roule, said the CD is something you could have in your car all year that will let you "drift back to summer" every time you play it. He envisions several versions of "Cruisin' Songs" in years to come.

Pastorla sees this project as expanding. He said "Cruisin' Songs II" is a possibility in the future.

"It's really indicative of the kind of talent we have here," he said.

Pop "Cruisin' Songs" into your CD player, drop the ring top down, rev the engine and hit the streets. Experience freedom at



its purist one more time.

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CD REVIEW

Fall 'Under' the spell of Marilyn Mack

"Under" — Marilyn Mack Group
Dirty Cow Records

Give it a chance, relax, and let yourself fall "Under" the dreamy spell of Marilyn Mack Group's debut album.

Marilyn Mack's chiming voice reveals undertones reaching the caliber of Sarah MacLachlan and Paula Cole, while the band meshes seamlessly to produce an honest songwriting style that probes the curiosities and questions we all face in life and love.

Marilyn Mack Group is Livonia native Marilyn Mack on lead vocals and percussion, Scott Peterson on acoustic and electric guitars, Philip Dahor on electric guitars, Michael Fredericks on bass, Mark Konwinski on drums.

Also contributing on the debut CD are Michael Kopos, also a Livonia resident, on drums, Tim Lemke on saxophone, Scott Dawson on guitar and Bob Miller, who arranged strings and percussion on "Under."

Crunching guitar riffs fade into muted tones while Mack adds her pleading vocals in songs like "Tell Me Why" and "Wishful Thinking." Catchier tunes like "Simpler Times," allow

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Marilyn Mack Group to ponder the frustration of modern life: "Everything's so complicated / This broken world with too much hate / Families cryin', children dyin' / The money's comin' in too late."

Emotionally-charged music coupled with true talent forms the backbone of this Ypsilanti-based group's sound. With "Under," Marilyn Mack Band reels listeners into its own world — a world of contemplation and hope, a world that questions our every move and treasures simple delights. The title track offers a dark, melodic retreat into the group's own musical realm, while



"Ease My Mind" is as soft, bitter-sweet and beautiful as an unexpected summer storm.

Naming influences as diverse as XTC, Tragically Hip and Van Morrison, Marilyn Mack Group developed its own sultry style of

pop rock. As if that's not enough to pique interest, buy it for the sole reason of supporting quality local rock.

By Stephanie Angelyn Casola

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SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE	STAR GRATIOT AT 15 MIL
STAR GREAT LAKES CROSSING	STAR JOHN R AT 14 MIL	STAR LINCOLN PARK 8
STAR ROCHESTER HILLS	STAR SOUTHFIELD	STAR TAYLOR
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FROM THE AUTHOR OF JURASSIC PARK
AND THE DIRECTOR OF DIE HARD

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SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE
SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE	STAR GRATIOT AT 15 MIL
STAR GREAT LAKES CROSSING	STAR LINCOLN PARK 8	STAR ROCHESTER HILLS
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