

STREET SCENE

Spring inspires art and music from the heart in Detroit



ANN MIKOLOWSKI
DELUSI

After our first weekend of warm weather, do you find that your thoughts are drifting a bit? Don't knock yourself for having an eroding attention span. There's a good chance that you're just opening your mind to the possibilities of spring. It's a season that fosters meaningful reflection on important issues — such as the amount of time you spend stuck in your office.

Most of us are in a constant quest for the right balance of work, family, recreation and spirituality. When it seems that I'm doing a pretty lousy job of balancing all the things that matter to me, I usually find solace in the arts.

Maybe that's what photographer Russ Marshall had in mind when he drew upon his family's working class roots to document the evolution of labor and industry in an inspiring exhibit which runs through July 28 at the Henry Ford Community College gallery in Dearborn. *This Working Life* consists of stark black and white images that reflect his childhood memories of the coal

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mines near Pittsburgh and his more recent experiences in the auto plants of Detroit. Marshall's exhibit is made even more powerful by a series of working class poets who contribute works that accompany the photos.

The son of the late Michigan painter and alternative press co-

founder Ann Mikolowski has developed a unique tribute to his mother, who died last August. She left a treasure trove of work to Michael Mikolowski, who turned it into a heartfelt memorial by enlisting the talents of nearly 260 prominent artists who were friends and admirers of her work. On the next edition of Detroit Public TV's *Backstage Pass*, airing at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 14, visual arts segment host Gerry Craig visits the Alley Culture Alternative Gallery to give viewers a look at this very moving remembrance and the loving story behind it.

Let's not forget the rejuvenating effect of experiencing the arts and the people-watching potential of the coming festival season. The first major event is the Greektown Festival, which runs from Friday-Sunday, May 19-21. It offers the finest in arts, food and music, with this year's bill featuring legendary rhythm and blues artist Sir Mack Rice, who also performs in the Detroit

Public TV studio for the May 14 episode of *Backstage Pass*.

I've been impressed with the growth of the Greektown Festival over its 10-year history. The pleasure of being part of such a community event is difficult to describe, but we know when we feel it, don't we?

If it has been years since you've been in the area, you'll be amazed at all that is new in downtown Detroit. It is uplifting to see the activity in the Greektown area, especially compared to a decade ago. Since it's a prime season for reflection, pause to imagine where we can be ten years from now.

SOUNDING OFF

MP4: DAYS SINCE A LOST TIME ACCIDENT

Michael Penn
Epic Records

Though *Lucky One*, the initial song on Michael Penn's latest album, might give the impression that his fourth release is merely a collection of over-produced pop drivel, nothing could be further from reality.

The saccharin lead — which, incidentally, is the only tune on *MP4: Days Since a Lost Time Accident* that Penn didn't produce — has some intriguing chord shifts, but the deeper tracks are what will satisfy fans of this wry songwriter.

Lately, it's been Penn's wife, Almee Mann, who's taken the limelight, having received an Academy Award nomination for *Save Me* from her *Magnolia* soundtrack.

But with *MP4*, Penn's older brother shows that he can carve out intelligent lyrics and passionate observations while keeping within the confines of the four-minute pop song. His tunes seem perfectly formatted for mass radio play, and yet, except for his hit single *No Myth* with its winsome refrain, "What if I



COLE GUERRA

was Romeo in black jeans," Penn's work gets little notice. His first two albums, *March* and *Free-For-All* aren't even in print.

Perhaps *MP4* will change that. In *High Time*, Penn's hard-edged guitar punctuates his classic turns of phrase ("You've done bereaved and been bereft enough") as he resonates about heady life choices. Over-instrumentation in *Perfect Candidate* masks Penn's natural ability to enhance quirky lyrics with his low voice that easily swoops to falsetto, but he is still a master of sly narration. One could speculate that *Bucket Brigade*, the album's final cut, offers an example of what music would be like if Warren Zevon had been the fifth Beatle.

Bleak and haunting, yet oddly upbeat, it exits — leaving the listener with a bittersweet longing, and a taste for more of Penn's distinctive sound.

ALL THIS AND MORE

Cole Guerra
Not Funny Records

This Southfield native headed to North Carolina, but his music never left. On *This and More* Cole Guerra gives a

glimpse of his East Coast state-of-mind through moody guitar work, delicate piano and his inspired words. With a little help from friends Jerry Keo on bass and drums, Mackie McKinney on drums and Mike A. Williams on bass, Guerra weaves this sentimental tapestry that sounds both autobiographical and all-too-familiar.

Songs like *Undone*, *You're Not Funny To Me*, and *Forcibly* are reminiscent of The Lemonheads on a sluggish day or perhaps early R.E.M. It's contagious music, the kind that spins around you with flecks of wit and heartfelt exasperation at love and life. *Believer* blends a beautiful arrangement of guitar and piano which holds a steady pace even as he sings, "And all she ever wanted was to see you around." Of course, he's not all weepy. *My Glass Mountain*

COLOUR MOVING AND STILL

Chantal Kreviazuk
Columbia Records

The newest CD by the artist named Best Female Vocalist by Canada's prestigious Juno awards — over legendary singer Joni Mitchell, no less — has some interesting moments but is disappointing overall.

A beautiful pianist and stunning voice are the best features of Chantal Kreviazuk's latest release *Colour Moving and Still* on Columbia records, but the lyrics, riddled with clichés, are uninspiring and sometimes dull ("I was a train wreck waiting to

happen on the way to nowhere," from the song *Before You*).

Drawing obvious inspirations from Tori Amos and Sheryl Crow, *Colour Moving* takes listeners through the loneliness and heartache experienced by Kreviazuk, but the storytelling just doesn't provide anything that other angst-ridden vocalists haven't already accomplished.

Produced by Jay Joyce, *Colour Moving* does have its highlights with Kreviazuk's eerily beautiful voice, sweet piano and scattered spiritual, earthly rhythms. Still, much of the CD is too Tori Amos-like with not as much self-discovery.

It is an exploration of the soul, the liner notes of the CD read. And, for what it's worth, the lyrics and range of emotion by Kreviazuk seem at least honest.

Kreviazuk does have a worthy message to her music. "So much of today's society is geared toward an unsustainable goal of youth, beauty and wealth. This album explores love, loss, hardships and all the experiences in life that I think are real true," she writes.

Is it worth the purchase? Barely.

Interesting songs like *Sauls*, *M*, and *Exc*, obviously inspired by personal and witnessed love and loss — the kind of songs anyone suffering hardships can



relate to at some point of their life — are comforting. It's refreshing to see an artist who has earned honors is still writing and performing songs with heart.

Chantal Kreviazuk performs 8 p.m. Thursday, May 11, Majestic Theatre, Detroit. Call (313) 833-9700.

—LANA MINT

STAY TUNED...

Fresh off a 7-week North American tour that included opening dates with No Doubt, The Suicide Machines are welcoming a new addition — sort of. Singer Jason Navarro's wife, Sandra, gave birth to Adeline Grace April 25 at Huron Valley Sinai Hospital in Commerce, Mich. Congratulations to the new mom and dad! The band's taking a short break from touring, but there will be no Suicide Machine shortage on the airwaves — Hollywood Records will release the second single off their self-titled album, *Permanent Holiday*. While life may feel like a permanent holiday for the band whose roots stretch back to Livonia. They'll be gracing the main stage for this year's Van's Warped Tour soon enough. Then it's off to Europe next fall.

Speaking of hard-working bands, The Workhorse Movement is looking forward to a June 6 release of their album *Sons of the Pioneers*, on Roadrunner Records. Touring with Kittle, The Workhorse Movement performed last night at Harpo's. For those who missed it, the band will be back June 3 to play St. Andrews Hall with Factory 81.

Just signed to Mojo/Universal Music Group, Factory 81 is ready to celebrate and will release *Mankind* on the label this summer.

Speaking of summer, the heat is on for The Brothers Groove as Chris Codish, Mike Carkey and Jim Simonson pack for a performance at Toronto's North By Northeast Music Festival. The word so far is that the band will play 11 p.m. Thursday, June 8, at Cafe Havana in the Canadian music capital. Fans of the groove can get together and caravan on down to show some support.

Those wacky guys who called themselves The Neptunes and then changed it to The Moody

Elevators just dropped the "x." Now they want us to call them The Moody Elevator. It's a good thing the band's music can stand alone, because keeping up with all the name changes could become a full-time gig. Ask the pop trio what'll be next when the band opens for Versus Friday, May 12, at Detroit's Gold Dollar.

JOHN TRAVOLTA
BATTLEFIELD EARTH
TAKEBACK THE PLANET

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AMC WONDERLAND
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"VIBRANT, SEXY AND JOYFUL!"

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ZOE SALDANA SUSAN NAH PRATT PETER DINKLAGEER DONNA MICHELLE AND ERIAN STEVIL
GEORGE CANTON MICHAEL HECKEN
NICOLAS HYTNER

STARTS FRIDAY, MAY 12

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"FREQUENCY" IS 'BACK TO THE FUTURE' MEETS 'FIELD OF DREAMS' MEETS 'IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE' MEETS 'THE SIXTH SENSE'!"

FREQUENCY
DENNIS QUAID JIM CAVIEZEL

NOW SHOWING

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