



SOUND CHECK

MUSIC NEWS AND VIEWS

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Miracle Legion's quartet to take a bow at the El 'n' Gee

By ROGER CATLIN
Courant Rock Critic

■ POP / ROCK

New Haven's Miracle Legion, certainly the state's best band if not one of the nation's, is now a four-piece again.

After searching through up to 300 hopeful musicians who auditioned to be bassist and drummer, surviving Legionnaires Murk Mulcahy and Raymond Neal have come up with a winning pair — bassist Dave McCaffrey and drummer Spot Boutler. The two, who hail from Rhode Island, formerly played in a band called What Now.

The Miracle Legion show Friday at the El 'n' Gee Club in New London will be only the second gig for the new quartet, Neal said. It begins a tour of mostly the eastern United States that continues through May. A tour of Europe follows in June and July, with a more extensive U.S. tour set for the fall.

Their new single in Europe, "Ladies in Town" is backed by "Johnny's Dilemma," a collaboration with the Sugarubes, with whom they toured last summer. A live collaboration with the art-rock band Pere Ubu, taken from a second generation tape of a spontaneous live New York gig, turned up on their earlier EP, "Glad."

The Sugarube collaboration isn't on the band's new album "Me and Mr. Ray," it is mostly a dual effort that's getting some good response. "Personally, I think it's the best thing we've done by far," says singer-lyricist Mulcahy. "And I hope we can continue in that direction."

Therefore, they're still smarting from a Courant review that said their band efforts sounded better. "We don't take bad reviews well, I'll say that," Mulcahy said.

But they haven't received many bad reviews either.



Matthew Polansky

Miracle Legion has regrouped and is appearing for its second gig as a foursome at the El 'n' Gee in New London Friday.

Neal said he could understand the shock of hearing a two-piece after expecting a band. "Dylan went electric. We went acoustic."

But Mulcahy said the point was to focus down. "Me and Mr. Neal" was recorded at Prince's lavish Paisley Park studio in Chanhassen, Minn. "We had 24 tracks and we could have filled them up," he said. "The trick is in making a concise statement — to shave it off."

Mental Gymnastics, 17 Relics and John Kruth open the show Friday at the El 'n' Gee.

WHAT'S NEW

Imagine: Johnny Rotten in greater Bristol-Southington.

But it may well happen. The summer tour that some are already calling the Monsters of Post-Modern Rock — which, from here, looks like one of the most promising bills of the year — features New Order, Public Image Ltd. and the Sugarubes.

There's already a confirmed date for the triple bill July 19 at the Meadowlands Arena and a probable stop July 11 at Lake Compoence Festival Park, though officials there won't confirm.

Of their officially announced shows, however, tickets go on sale Saturday for a two-day stop at Lake Compoence by the reunited Doobie Brothers, minus Michael McDonald,

July 1 and 2.

CroMags, Destruction and Wargasm play the West Hartford Arena this Saturday. On April 22, its soul show featuring Starpoint, Ready for the World and Evelyn "Champagne" King.

The Iron Horse Cafe is still planning for the Plastic People of the Universe show in the newly expanded space April 23. Also coming up at the Northampton, Mass., club are rai king Kanda Bongo Man April 25. Yousou N' Dour May 8; T Bone Burnett May 13; Fairport Convention May 16; Sun Ra and his Arkestra doing their Disney Tribute May 22, and Janis Ian June 10.

The Iron Horse will present Toni Childs May 28 at the Pearl Street in Northampton; and a Bonnie Raitt-Richard Thompson double bill June 11 at the John M. Greene Hall on the Smith College campus in a benefit for the Northampton Center for the Arts.

Tom Chaplin, Steve Chapin, David Roth and members of the Harry Chapin Band headline a "Hartford Cares" benefit concert Saturday night at the University of Hartford Lincoln Theater. Proceeds benefit World Hunger Year and the South Park Inn emergency shelter in Hartford. Gov. William O'Neill has declared April 15 Tom and Steve Chapin and Friends "Hartford Cares" Concert Day in Connecticut.

Zero, a San Francisco-based jazz rock band that's been described as a cross between the Grateful Dead and Weather Report, plays Lloyd's Sunday.

Among its members are former Quicksilver Messenger Service guitarist John Cipollina and Martin Pьерro, the saxophonist best-known for his work with the Merle Saunders-Jerry Garcia Band.

The Bluesbusters, the L.A. band that consists of Bonnie Raitt bassist Freebo, ex-Jackson Brown drummer Larry Zack and now Brian Auger, formerly of the Oblivion Express, plays the Hartford club April 23.

Also coming to Lloyd's: Townes Van Zant

and Guy Clark May 8; Original Byrd Gene Clark May 10; and Jorma Kaukonen April 25.

And April 22, a "Gatsby Party" to benefit Big Brothers and Big Sisters will feature Eight to the Bar at Lloyd's. Tickets are \$30.

K-9 Posse is no longer headlining the "Stop the Violence" rap show at the Elk's Club April 28. The lineup now includes Super Lover Cee and Casanova Rud.

OTHER NOTES

■ Are you obnoxious enough to be on MTV's "Remote Control?" College students between age 18 and 24 are being sought for the show. Open auditions are set for 6 p.m. Monday at the University of Hartford Gengras Student Union South Cafeteria and 2 p.m. Tuesday at the University of Connecticut student union ballroom in Storrs.

■ Highlights this week include: Royal Court of China at Toad's Place tonight. Claudia Schmidt and Fred Koller at Lloyd's tonight. A.C. Reed and the Sparkplugs at the Night Shift Cafe in Naugatuck Friday. Rambli's Jack Elliott and Bruce Pratt at Lloyd's Friday. James Cotton at Gemini's Cafe in Simsbury Friday. Hunter S. Thompson at the Palace Performing Arts Center in New Haven Friday and the Paramount Performing Arts Center in Springfield Saturday. Johnny Cash at the Warner Theater in Torrington Saturday. Morton Downey Jr. at the Palace Performing Arts Center in New Haven Saturday. Third World and The Wallers at the Palace Performing Arts Center in New Haven Sunday. M.O.D. at Toad's in an all-ages show Sunday. Charlie Sexton at Toad's Monday. Jan Butcher at Citilites Tuesday. Masters of Reality in an all-ages show at Toad's Tuesday.

Write to Roger Catlin in care of Sound Check, The Courant, 285 Broad St., Hartford, Conn., 06115. Please include a telephone number.

Iron Horse Cafe launches spring jazz fest tonight

By OWEN McNALLY
Courant Jazz Critic

■ JAZZ / CONTEMPORARY

The Iron Horse Cafe gets its Spring Jazz Festival on track tonight with performances by Oregon at 7 and 10.

The Northampton, Mass., cafe's jazz rites of spring will also feature: the Bill Barron Quartet, with pianist Kenny Barron, Friday at 8:30 p.m.; the Fringe, a Boston-based trio, Saturday at 8:30 p.m.; and Ponceo Sanchez and His Latin Band, a West Coast octet, Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. The cafe is at 20 Center St.

Formed in 1970, long before New Age and World Music became pop vogues, Oregon fashions exploratory, sometimes meditative

pieces from a rich bag of sources, including American jazz, contemporary European concert-hall music and many ethnic musics, including music of Africa and Indian and Native American music.

The chamber ensemble consists of Ralph Towner, Glen Moore, Paul McCandless and Trilok Gurtu.

Using an array of more than 50 instruments, the quartet thrives on interaction, collective improvisation and juicy textures.

Towner's guitar playing is usually more than enough in its own right to guarantee a worthwhile concert.

The Barron brothers' concert also holds much promise.

Pianist Kenny Barron is the more famous of the brothers and is one of the most sought-after sidemen.

But Bill Barron has long been a formidable talent in his own right, both as a composer and instrumentalist.

Few jazz composers match his intelligence and versatility, which make him as much at home with the 12-tone scale as with the 12-bar blues. He's one of many

distinguished tenor saxophonists from Philadelphia, an honor roll that includes Jimmy Heath, Benny Golson, Archie Shepp and Odean Pope.

For tickets and information call the Iron Horse: (413) 584-0610.

OTHER NOTES

Jazz diva Ella Fitzgerald performs Saturday at 8 p.m. at a benefit performance for the Stamford Center for the Arts at the Palace Theatre, 61 Atlantic St., Stamford.

The Stamford Center for the Arts presented her at the Palace last year. The center has brought many jazz luminaries to the Palace, including Herbie Hancock and Dexter Gordon. Box office: 323-2131.

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band performs tonight and Friday at 8 at the University of Connecticut in a cabaret setting at Jorgensen Auditorium, Storrs. Box office: 486-4226.

Pianist Dave Brubeck will perform in a benefit concert May 4 at 8 p.m. at Jorgensen Auditorium.

The concert is sponsored by the Greater Mansfield Council for the Arts as a benefit for special arts programs in Storrs-area schools. Tickets: \$10 to \$15, general admission; \$25, patrons. For reservations through Monday, call: 487-1824. After Monday, make reserya-

tions at the same number or with the Jorgensen box office.

Trumpeter Clark Terry will be featured in concert with the Sonny Costanzo Jazz Orchestra Tuesday at 8 p.m. at Alumni Hall, Quinnipiac College, Hamden. David Amram, the composer and french-horn player, will also perform. There is no admission charge.

Jazz is booming on the Quinnipiac campus. Saxophonist Jimmy Heath performed recently with the Costanzo Jazz Orchestra, which is currently in residence at Quinnipiac. Costanzo is a noted trombonist, arranger and orchestra leader.

Vocalist Etta Jones and tenor saxophonist Houston Person will perform Sunday night at Beale Street at the Depot, located on Pleasant Street in Northampton, Mass. The soulful duo will perform at a dinner show at 7 and a late show at 10.

Tenor saxophonist George Coleman is scheduled to perform April 30 at the restaurant, which is starting a new jazz policy. For more information, call: (413) 586-1333.

The Adam Makowicz Duo performs Tuesday at Lloyd's Restaurant, 60 Washington St. For more information, call: 549-4322.

Write to Owen McNally, The Hartford Courant, 285 Broad St., Hartford, Conn., 06115.



BILL BARRON