

CONNECTICUT ROCK REPORT

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ROCK SCENE

WIN
THIS
GREAT
OVATION
VIPER

ENTER
NOW
IT CAN BE
YOURS
FREE!

See
Page
33
for
details



CLASH
IN CONCERT

DO
YOU THINK
TED
NUGENT
IS SEXY?

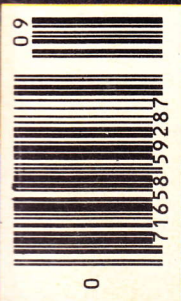
ON TOUR WITH
BOOM—
TOWN
RATS

POLICE
ON THE BEAT

CHRISSIE HYNDE
OF
THE
PRETENDERS

KISS

THE
BOYS
IN
BLACK
ARE
BACK



**"The boys
next door
are ready!!!"**

Connecticut ROCK SCENE

by Derek Parker

Musically, there is a lot happening in Connecticut right now. And while record labels have curtailed new signings because of the soft market, many aware eyes are watching what is emerging here.

It started about a year ago when the Simms Brothers Band received a record contract with Elektra Records. Up until then, Connecticut talent was always overlooked and could not gain the support of key radio stations and the press. In the Southern part of the state, the closeness to New York prevented local programmers from using their own good judgement when it came to airing music by Connecticut bands. The "ratings game" was always quite intense so music directors followed a very strict format and adhered to it implicitly. This policy meant that little consideration would be given to new material from "the boys next door." In the Northwestern part of Connecticut, the population density is strangely distributed, and the only major anchor city is Hartford, the state's Capitol. The attitude there was "old school"—never venture into new waters, keep the stream of things simple. Only one "rebel" station, WHCN, existed, and changing times forced it to also adapt a tested format guided by a national consultant.

Even before the Simms Brothers signed a record deal, their popularity built to a point where radio stations could not avoid the issue any longer, so moderate air time was given to their tapes. One particular station, WPLR in New Haven, took the initiative and supported the group's first release more so than expected based on past performance. WPLR had pushed another local act, Jasper Wrath, when it released a very requested tune called "YOU" on a local label, forcing



THE CRAYONS • Steven Head, Spenn Benderson, Rip Curtin, Bobby Bullet and Don Riff.



FLYING TIGERS • David Stackman, Neal Smith (drums), Paul Roy (bottom) and Dennis Dunaway.

other stations like WDRC and WAVZ to take notice. But it was a strain just to get moderate air play, and this song, picked as a "sleeper" by Billboard, lost its momentum before it

had a chance of leaving the state, although several major labels (including Capitol) were watching.

What will happen in the unpredictable eighties? Connecticut has added

Major Conn. Rock Centers

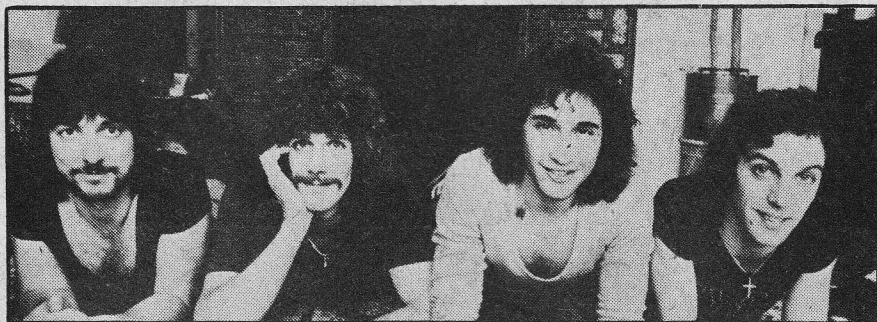
Rock-It (Stamford)
Good Times (Norwalk)
Nite Owl II (Norwalk)
Barnaby's (Bridgeport)
Pinecrest (Shelton)
Silver Sands (Milford)
Great American Saloon (New Haven)
Great American Music Hall
(New Haven)
Toad's Place (New Haven)
Keg House (New Haven)

Ichabods (Madison)
H.L. Wilfred's (Hamden)
Good Time Charlies (Waterford)
Bach Dor (Waterford)
Gatsby's (Middletown)
Nite Owl I (Wolcott)
Stage West (West Hartford)
Shaboo (Willimantic)
Stage III (Brookfield)
Beverly's (Bantam)
Boney's (Winsted)

"Although New York stations still blanket more than half the State, Connecticut residents are starting to prefer their own stations . . ."



LYTES • Dave Sturdevant, Lori Folger, Jim Filgate (top) and Mike Filgate.



EYES • Jimi Christian, Phil Stoltie, Jeff Batter, T.H.E. Cat.



FAST FINGERS • Jimmy, Robert, Danny and Ted.



JETT • Chris, Jeanette, Barry, John and John.

a few significant stations, like I-95, WCCC-FM, WTIC-FM and KC-101 and caused some upheavals in the radio industry. Although New York stations still blanket more than half the state, Connecticut residents are starting to prefer their own stations instead. Except for WNBC which is very strong all along the coastline to Rhode Island, the penetration from the Big Apple is significantly diminishing. Perhaps now, Connecticut programmers will take a giant step and stick their necks out to support their own more than ever before. I certainly hope so.

While attending last year's Annual Outdoor Picnic at the Pinecrest in Shelton, I saw at least a couple of powerful acts perform to a sold-out audience of over 9,000 who came to relax in the sun and listen to a wide variety of talent from Connecticut and neighboring Long Island. The two are Fountainhead and The Crayons.

Fountainhead succeeds because it blends the best of Southern Rock with some very rowdy originals. Any club owner smiles when this band plays because they draw huge audiences no matter what night of the week they appear. What Fountainhead did is no secret. For some reason, the strength of Southern Rock in this region has not diminished as it has elsewhere in the country, and the packed clubs confirm this fact. Fountainhead has also hired a manager to give them more direction, and it won't be long before a major label will scoop them up because a few key stations have given their tapes considerable air play already.

The Crayons have many things besides an outstanding act going for them. They are owned by F.M. Enterprises out of Hamden, and because of the influence of one of the partners, had The Crayons record a catchy jingle for a submarine sandwich chain called SUBWAY which is opening shops coast-to-coast. Its success as a commercial in many big markets has caught the ears of many influential disc jockeys who are already calling for product by "Connecticut's Most Colorful New Wave Band." The Crayons are great merchandisers when it comes to pushing everything from sandwiches to shoes, so why not a hit record too? They are readying a new release on their own which will be out shortly, but The Crayons could easily be intercepted by a major label

(continued on next page)

NUTMEG STATE ROCKERS

with insight very quickly. The Crayons, although they have resorted to gimmicks to gain initial impact in this market, are very entertaining and blend just the right mix of material to please any rock fan to the max. In addition to several solid originals, they can cover groups like the Cars, the Knack or Blondie with ease. Because The Crayons also generate great traffic into key clubs like Toad's Place in

New Haven and the Shaboo in Wilimantic, they are primary contenders to break out of the Nutmeg State and make positive impact elsewhere.

Although the number of new bands forming in the state does seem to be on the decline, acts like Eyes, Napi Brown and Cryer are still past the half way struggle for identity and potential, and will obviously sustain their appeal.

If Connecticut people pushed hard enough for their own, there is now no reason why this state can't break a national act within this new decade. After all, being next to New York should be a logical stepping stone, instead of a barrier. A gradual attitude adjustment will yield positive results for the many great groups who are proud to call Connecticut their home □



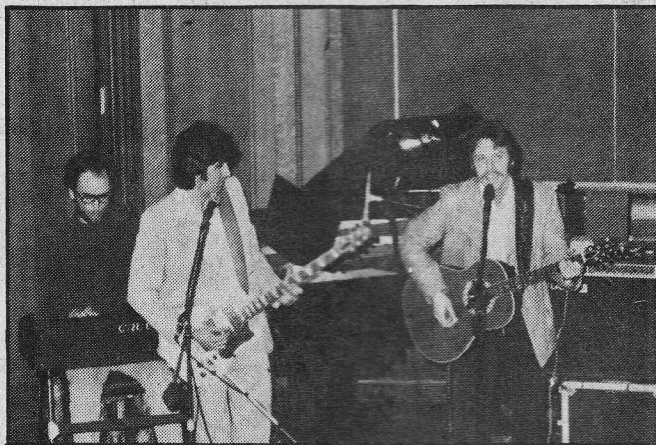
NAPI BROWN • Vic Steffans, Nick Bagnasco (top), Don Gulino (bottom) and Paul Rosano.



SIMMS BROTHERS BAND • George Simms, Rob Cavino, Bud Tunick, Frank Simms, Mickey Leonard, Shimmy Maki and David Spinner.



TOYS • Paul Zimmerman, Jay Barone (top), Barry Betlinski (bottom), Susan Christian and Dave Peterson.



FRANKINCENSE & MYRRH • Chris Drum, Nick Champton and Tom Totton.



THE ORANGE GROUP •



BACK TO EARTH BAND •