

arts/entertainment

Ska, reggae, dub influence P.B.R. Band's sound

By Patti Wieser

Seven men, under the influence of Don Drummond, Huey Smith and Frankie Lyman, produced predominantly reggae and ska sounds last week at Lincoln's Zoo Bar.

Pat's Blue Riddim' Band, from Lawrence, Kan., formed about a year ago, said Scott Korchak, lead vocalist and trumpet player.

Their roots, Korchak said, are with Sam Cooke and Otis Redding, with heavy influence from jazz on the Blue Note label. Bob Zohn, lead vocalist, guitarist and drummer, said he was influenced by Ben E. King of the Drifters, Solomon Burke, Jackie Wilson and Reggae Toasters, Big Youth and U. Roy.

The band plays four styles; reggae, calypso, ska and dub, Korchak said. Ska, he said, is rock 'n roll and filtered down through New Orleans and Miami. It was started in 1959, was influenced by Fats Domino and was basically created by Don Drummond, a trombonist. Ska is what reggae evolved from.

Zohn said ska "is what happened in Jamaica when they started playing their own music," adding that it was a "converted boogie-woogie kind of shuffle."

Korchak and tenor saxophonist and percussionist Jack Blackett talked about dub. They said the band tries to get a live dub sound. Dub, they said, is the dropping in and out of instrumentation. Different combinations of instruments are played at different times.

Korchak said band members became interested in reggae when they first heard it in 1974 and 1975. Although the band members have known one another for 10 years, this combination occurred about a year ago, he added.

Pat's Blue Riddim' Band tries to appeal to everyone and keep everyone dancing," he said.

"New wave is opening the door for us," Korchak said. "A lot of people haven't heard anything other than Bob Marley and we try to give them more."

Zohn, formerly with K.C. and the Sunshine band, is from Fort Lauderdale. He came to Kansas City seven years ago and played with Rhythm Function, a band that contained most of the people in the P.B.R. band, he said. Zohn said he has played all types of music, adding that

the first recording he ever listened to was *Crazy Man Crazy* by Bill Haley and the Comets.

His list of influences goes from Bobby Bland to the Beatles to Dion to the Beach Boys.

Pat Pearce, keyboard player, said even Beethoven affected him musically.

The keyboardist said the band has played in Memphis, Tulsa, Wichita, Omaha, Leavenworth, Topeka and Arkansas. The response has been "real good," particularly at places they've played at more than once, he said. He said they are headed for Miami next.

Pearce said the band hasn't recorded anything yet but plans to do a small recording in April and release about 4,000 copies.

Other band members are: Steve McLane, drums and bass; Steve Prince, guitar; and Andy Myers, bass and trombone; Jack Allen runs the sound.

Wailers' reggae is fun, captivating

By Michael Zangari

Invariably, when late night conversations turn to reggae, someone will chuckle over the fact that everyone was claiming that it would sweep the country in short order. It is the same sort of gleeful attitude that is now being used to bury disco—and ignorantly so.

The impact that disco has had on all popular music is something you will not have to look very far for. *Some Girls* by the Stones, *The Wall* by Pink Floyd, and even Led Zeppelin's *In Through The Out Door* have marked disco influences with their boosted bass and drum tracks.

backtracks

Reggae's influences, although much more subtle have also permeated popular music. Whether it is the outright reggae of the Police, or the almost subliminal reggae strut on the Eagle's *Hotel California*, it has made a mark on how popular tunes are put together.

Outside of the brilliant soundtrack to the film *The Harder They Come*, probably the most visible of the real reggae artists is Bob Marley, and his band, the Wailers.

The Wailers' albums are marked by the things most people associate with reggae music—a heavy Jamaican cultural leaning with gentle walking rhythms and strongly religious and political overtones in a Rastafarian mode. It sounds deceptively simple, but the music employs odd rhythm techniques, including a series of false starts and stops that make the music fun, but somewhat difficult to play.

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Photo by Tom Gessner

Members of Pat's Blue Riddim' Band try to keep everybody dancin' at the Zoo Bar last week. They are, from left: Bob Zohn, Andy Myers, Scott Korchak and Jack Blackett.

World's oldest writing trick fools readers again

By Peg Sheldrick

"I should be writing."
"So? Write."
"Ha! If only it were that easy."
"Then don't write."
"But I have to. The deadline is coming up."
"Well, then write."
"You're right. I should. I really should . . . Do you think there's anything good on cablevision?"
"I thought you were going to write."
"You're right. That's what I should be doing. But what I will undoubtedly end up doing is talking about writing. Oh look, *I Dream of Jeanie*."

humor

"But you hate that show."
"I sure do. God, even the theme music drives me up the wall . . ."
"So why are you watching it?"
"Oh, masochism. Laziness. The usual."
"I think you're just trying to avoid doing anything."

Procrastination

"I don't think that. I know that. I know me. I know that as long as there is a minute left before deadline and breath in my body I will avoid doing anything. Not only that. I will talk about avoiding doing anything, and that becomes a thing in itself. Allows my conscience to let off steam. Otherwise it might work itself up into a full head

of responsibility and I'd probably end up doing something."

"And we couldn't have that."
"Oh we could, but we won't. I know me."
"Well what do you think the problem is?"
"Well . . . I'm having trouble finding ideas."
"And you think garbage TV will give you ideas?"
"No, it will take them away, so I won't care that I don't have any. Sort of like two fers, y'know?"
"I think you should turn off the TV."

Time to write

"You're right. There. Now I should go write. I really should."
"Then why did you just pick up that magazine?"
"Ideas. I'm looking for ideas."
"Are you sure that's kosher?"
"I'm not going to do what you're thinking. I'm just looking for inspiration. Like something that will make me mad."

"How about if I stomp on your foot?"
"No, no. I'm talking about some cause. Some injustice. Some spark that will, that will kindle the literary fires within me and blaze onto the page into a glorious inferno of incendiary prose."
"They left the crossword puzzle out of the paper last week."

Fight for cause

"No, no, no. I mean some *cause celebre*, some issue to bravely choose a side of, some reason to take a firm if unpopular stand and fight for with all the ink in my pen and blood in my veins."
"I'll see if we have any out in the kitchen."

"Hey, here's something. Listen to this. 'Chairman Lucy Bates says blah blah blah.'"

"Huh?"
"Chairman! They called her chairman."
"Oh. And you want them to say 'chairperson.'"
"What's wrong with 'chairwoman?'"
"That's your idea of a big issue?"

"It's the tip of a whole linguistic iceberg. Besides, if you give up on skirmishes, how do you expect to win the war?"

Passing fists

"I thought you were a pacifist."
"I'm going to pass my fist to you in about a minute."
"Don't get testy. Get busy. Write."
"Well . . . On second thought, it's too big an issue. I could never give it adequate coverage or give it the scope it would need. Nope, I'll have to find something else. I wonder what's on now? What time is it?"
"What time is your deadline?"
"Right. Time to stop all this fooling around and get down to it."

"Put down the newspaper."
"But I need—"
"You heard me. Now pick up that pencil."
"It's not sharp."
"Pick it up."
"I need coffee."
"Now write!"
"About what?"
"How about not having anything to write about?"
"Are you kidding? That's the oldest, cheesiest trick in the book. Talk about tacky. No, I think I'll watch the *Beverly Hillbillies* and see if anything comes to me."