

Soul Reaction do their own thing

by Tony Van Dorston

Kirk Basement will tremble beneath the trouncing rhythms of St. Paul's Soul Reaction at the T.G.I.F. tonight at 9:00.

Soul Reaction could very well be the brightest young talent in the future of hard, funky rock and roll. By the way, they are not a Living Colour clone.

Now that Bad Brains have broken up yet again, bands like 24-7 Spyz and Psychefunkapus will attempt to take advantage of the void left in the wake of the Brains' accomplishments.

Yet in terms of vision and originality, no one has really achieved such levels of acclaim.

While Soul Reaction may appeal to fans of this genre, they are dedicated to developing their own distinctive musical voice.

Their upcoming album will add a much-needed jolt of variety to the local music scene, even if the songwriting will not revolutionize music as we know it. Give them another year.

Songs like "Neo-Gothic Facelift" and "Open Your Eyes" demonstrate a surprising level of musical sophistication for a band that has only been together for seven months.

The band's musicianship is currently the main attraction, with Marty Glynn's precocious guitar playing and Malo Adams' amazing vocal abilities.

Contributing an equally diverse, competent background are bassist Jeff Bailey and drummer Aaron Bellany.

The seven song record will be released April 15, on Takeover Records, a new label created by Macalester students Bruce Fisher, Dave Gardner and Bill Boulger. Soul Reaction will be the first record they put out. "Hopefully there should be more," said Boulger. "Probably hardcore after this."

Me: I heard your tape, and I'm impressed.

M&M: Thank you.

Me: Who writes the words?

Malo: It's a collaborative thing, pretty much.

Marty: So far, everybody's put a part into it.



Me: Marty, you were previously in Blind Approach?

Marty: Yes I was. As a matter of fact Bill funded that [Blind Approach 7"] record pretty much.

Me: What made you decide

to take this musical route?

Marty: Blind Approach was a fun band to play with. But it didn't have that option of going the way that I wanted to. There was no possible chance Blind Approach could ever take that route. It was just something that I wanted to do for quite a while and so I just broke free and got hooked up with these fellas. Hardcore is fun to play, and I played it for five years, but I just gotta change music.

Through the time I played with Blind Approach we always played the same style. With this new band we're more versatile.

Me: What would you cite as influences?

Marty: In the music that I write, there's some hardcore influences, with different hard intros and hard breaks and stuff, and different funky inspirations.



Malo: Our style just happens to fall into that kind of category, but we try to combine so many aspects of what we dig; what we think is really funky or really intricate, and we come up with our own styles. No one can say, 'Oh that's just like that.' They would have to name five different people before they could pretty much see our style.

Marty: Everybody in the band was brought up on totally different kinds of music. I was brought up on hardcore, Malo was brought up strictly on funk, our drummer was brought up on some crazy stuff. When we all get together everybody has their different influences and we kind of show it when we play.

Malo: Like Jeff, he's a real big Jaco Pastorius [of the Weather Report] fan, and Rush and Pink Floyd.

Me: Aaron was in a band before, right?

Marty: He was kind of in a pop band, kind of like Depressed Mode or something. Depeche Mode, excuse me. [Laughter]

Me: How did you come into the band?

Malo: I've known Jeff Bailey since I was in third grade, back in Webster. I played in a band with Jeff which never really got out of the basement.

Marty: I think the oddest thing about this band is that when I quit Blind Approach, I had a goal in mind of starting another band. I



Soul Reaction is: Malo Adams - vocals, Aaron Bellany - drums, Jeff Bailey - bass, Marty Glynn - guitar.

didn't have any idea who I would play in a band with. I met Malo in school and we always used to talk about how cool it would be if we got together and did it. It wasn't like we searched for people. All of a sudden Aaron wasn't in No ID, Jeff wasn't playing with anybody and it just kind of came together.

Malo: Singing has always been my number one thing, but I also play guitar. I was playing guitar in the practice room at school. Then Marty comes in with this Kramer and starts wailing on it. He says "Hey dude, do you play guitar?" I said, 'Ah no, it's not mine.' I set it down, you know.

Me: From the sound of your singing on the tape, you sound really experienced. How old are you?

Malo: I'm seventeen.

Me: How did you train yourself?

Malo: My family is really musical. My mother was a singer, she was in a band. My father has been in many bands, he's a singer and guitarist too, and he plays everything pretty much. And my older brother sings. I was brought up on Stevie Wonder. That was a big influence on my voice because it's kind of my range, along with Luther Vandross and those kind of black singers. Dudes like H.R. are kind of a new aspect to me, but I'm trying to make my own style.

Me: I'd guess people would think of the Bad Brains/24-7 Spyz/Living Colour/Red Hot Chili Peppers/Fishbone scene when they hear you. Yet you do sound like your own band.

Marty: People already assume . . . "Oh you guys have that Bad Brains/Living Colour sounding influence." It's automatically if you're black there's a stereotype right there, you know? We didn't say "We need a black guy. We wanna be different." It just worked out this way. I love everybody's talents and they're really easy to work with. I personally don't feel that Living Colour and Bad Brains

have been that much of an influence to us. I've listened to Bad Brains since I was 13 years old, and these guys were just introduced to them less than a year ago.

Malo: Yeah they're pretty new to me. People see me and my hair and the first thing they think is "Corey Glover." They want to put us in that category, which is not necessarily a bad category to be in. This is a new thing that's happening you know, which is why people say what is that? They're not used to having that hard guitar with the funky stuff. You know, it's been done, but it's always been kind of underground. Bad Brains would never hit the outside like Living Colour did.

Marty: The first thing people say is they sound like Living Colour, they sound like Fishbone, they sound like Bad Brains.

Malo: Black guys that rock.



Marty: In fact, we may have a little bit of their sound, but we could sound like John Denver and they would still say, [in redneck twang] "Oh yeah, they sound like that new Living Colour group, they look just like 'em," you know, and shit like that. That's not what music is about. You've just got to listen to the music.

Malo: With color, it does not matter. Look at the Chili Peppers, man. Yeah I dig the Chili Peppers. That's what they're brought up with. It's kind of like Third Bass. They're white guys and they rap. They're way harder than some of the black rap artists like Tone-Loc and those lightweights. You know, these dudes are pretty hard. And you can't categorize. People say oh, these white guys are trying to rap, but it's something

all photos by Peter Bischoff

they've been brought up in, and it's not born to them. It's just like breathing, and waking up every morning, you know. And this is our style.

Marty: That's what I like about Malo and everybody else. You can hear people like Stevie Wonder and his other influences. He doesn't try to sound like H.R. to get a more hard sounding voice.

[They talk about Funkadelic.]

Malo: They changed everything, man. When jazz first came out, people said jazz would never last. It's too complicated. It's too hard to listen to. Then a time came when they'd hear the progressions and they'd go, "Oh, I could go for some Jazz right now, because it's really soothing music," or it can be really exciting music.

And then, when funk came out, for a long time you couldn't say "funk" over the air because it's too close to, you know, and they wouldn't say that word. Larry Gram came out with the slapping, spanking and thumping and people would say that technique would never last. Now it's the basis for almost any bass player who plays a real hard bass line. Now what we do, we do the bass lines, but we also added the guitar.

Marty: We're expressing ourselves the best way we know how. We'll do the hardest tune possible that I think we can do, and next song we'll kick into something totally on the light tip.

Me: What about reggae or hip-hop?

Marty: No we don't do that. Malo: I used to rap. My personal opinion is if you're gonna rap, be the hardest rapper, but if you're gonna sing, just sing. When you try to make hip-hop, like say, hip music, or hop music or something, it doesn't really click.

Me: What are your ex-

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