

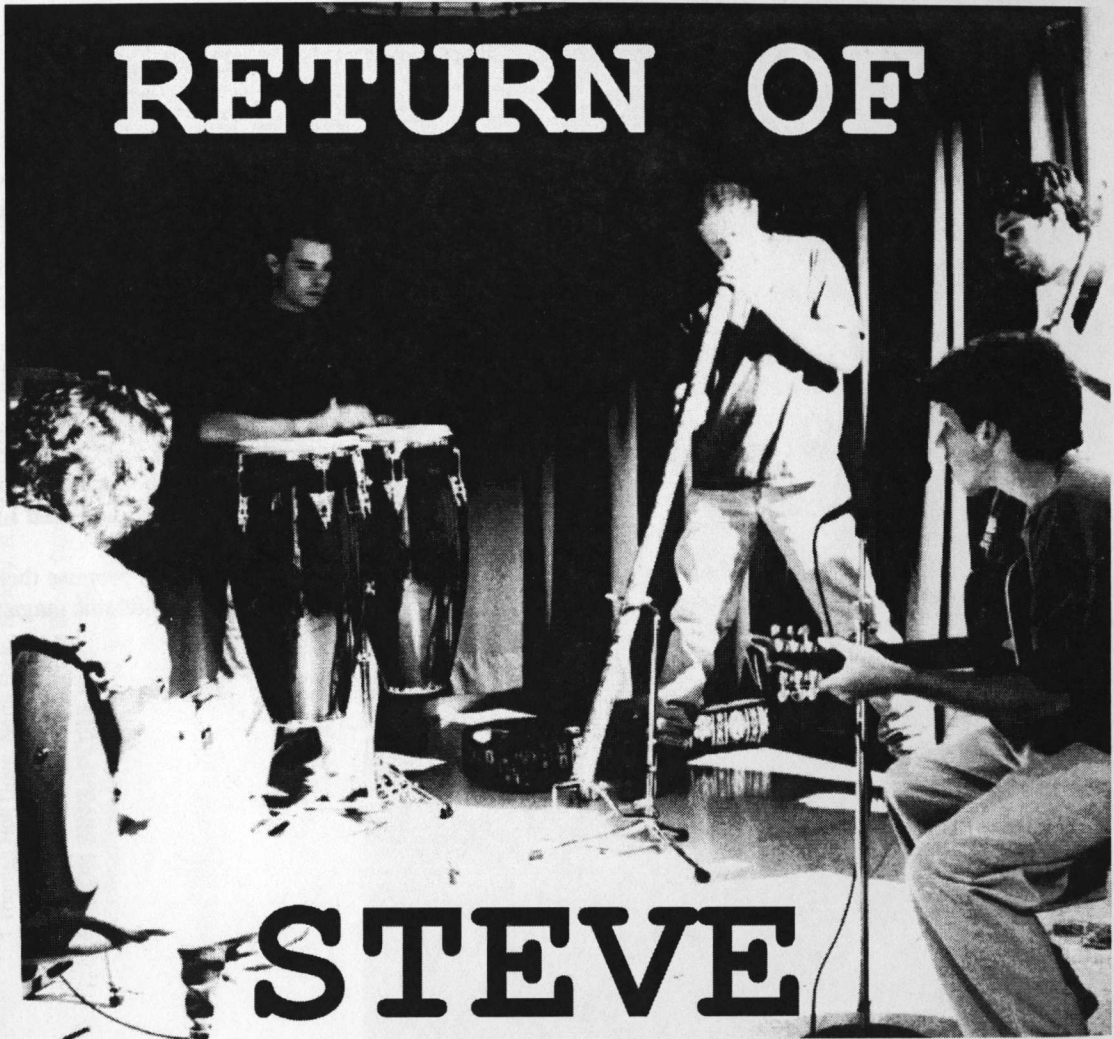
HYP magazine

Spotlight On Local Music

Issue No. 1

December 2000

FREE



Fat Bob
Doug Brown

Social Zero
Crackersmack

Paradigm the Yoyo Crusade
Brian Ullman

COVER STORY

RETURN OF STEVE

*Friends Return Home to Revive
Acoustic Rock Band...Perhaps For the Last Time*

STEVE

are

Matt Jackson – Rhythm Guitar, Harmonica, Vocals, Didge

Sean Kammer – Rhythm Guitar, Vocals

Logan Ramsier – Percussion Instruments, Vocals

Nick Robinson – Bass Guitar, Backing Vocals

David Ullman – Rhythm & Lead Guitar, Lead & Backing Vocals

Steve are everywhere. Steve are in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming. Steve are all over the United States...individually. For about eight months of the year, Steve are nowhere.

Members of the band Steve, based in Rittman, Ohio, are spread out through college and work and relationships; they have individual lives that are slowly growing in their own directions. But for a very short time at Christmas and in the summer, Steve return.

"If you think about it," says David Ullman, "when most people get together to see each other once or twice a year, the last thing they ever think of is to go and make something." And that's part of the magic of Steve: these five friends, now all in their early twenties, have a very limited time together. When, for those four months of the year, they are all home, it is a mad scramble to do one thing: make music.

It all started in December of 1999. "We all – minus Nick, who was added to the band during the summer of 2000 – got together at Dave's just to hang out, play some music together, and possibly record something," says Sean Kammer. "A week later, we met in the WCTV studio to re-record some songs with better sound equipment and to put some stuff down on video...this turned into [the documentary] *Steve: Going Nowhere Fast*. At that point, we in no way considered ourselves a band, but we knew that we were rapidly becoming one...When we started making plans for the upcoming summer, we really started to think of ourselves as a band."

The music of Steve, described as "eclectic folk rock" (Ullman), "melodic acoustic pop" (Matt Jackson), and "acoustic rock with a tribal sound" (Logan Ramsier), began with a group cover of "Knockin' on Heaven's Door" late one night in Ullman's bedroom. Today they have released a debut disc, entitled *In the Event of Rhythm*.

From their start in the winter of 1999, the members of Steve promised to write original songs and practice for the following summer so that they could play live and record. Again, they went back to their own lives – Kammer to school in Wyoming, Jackson to school in Pittsburgh, Ramsier to college life here in Ohio – as the holiday season ended.

At the beginning of the summer of 2000, Ramsier, Kammer, and Ullman got together to work out what they had come up with since Christmas. They began to play together and, just as their music began to gel, Jackson returned home. He immediately had some trouble fitting his own original music in with that of the rest of the band. The others would soon be referring to this time period as "Jackson's Difficult Summer".

Steve took advantage of every moment they could grab at the Wadsworth Community Television studio, and soon began to lay down tracks for their CD. As each member played guitar and sang individually, there was a bit of a problem from the start. Since Ramsier was originally a drummer, he was moved to percussion instruments, including congas and bongos, thus creating the unique "tribal" sound of Steve. Lead guitar parts were worked out to go along with rhythm, shakers were handed to whoever was the odd man out on each song, and then there was the Didge (which, to the dismay of owner Jackson and the rest of the band, only worked out for one song on the disc: the epic "Weakman's Delusion"). Nick Robinson was recruited as bass player, making Steve a complete, always-shifting unit.

This "revolving door" of Steve became another magical and unique trademark of the band. Along with recording in the studio, Steve ventured into the world of live performance. They played shows at a going-away party for a friend as well as coffee shops, cafes, and the Rittman Sleepwalker Festival, sharing their brand-new original tunes and some favorite covers, all done Steve-style: Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower," Pearl Jam's "Last Kiss," Dave Matthews Band's "Don't Drink the Water," and Dylan's "Knockin' on Heaven's Door".

By summer's end, work in the studio had been finished, the band had played out successfully (they were enthusiastically asked back for a show the day after appearing – for the last time – at Café 4111 in Norton, but couldn't do it), and it was time to retreat back into the shadows...until now.

Armed with special advance copies of their debut CD, Steve will once again return home this holiday season to share their magical music and their incredible story. There is talk that this may be the final meeting of these friends as the band Steve; as time goes on and individual lives grow apart, the already thin bond holding the band together is stretched even further.

But how they've made the most of their short time as Steve.



Ⓛ spinTHIS Ⓛ

Steve

In the Event of Rhythm

Original. Inimitable. Rhythmic. (Even the title is rhythmic!) Steve release their first – and quite possibly their last – CD this holiday season, making rhythm an event to truly behold.

***In the Event of Rhythm* Track-by-Track**

“Pilgrimate”: Penned by Jackson, also on vocals – which escape like some dark, delicious secret – and rhythm guitar, the disc wastes no time taking us on a journey with this initial track. We are elevated to a panoramic view of a pending thunderstorm: Jackson’s moody guitar and vocals rumbling and crashing on top, Ullman’s soaring backing vocals pushing the dark clouds along.

“Darkest of Days”: Ullman moves to lead vocals and guitar and Ramsier pounds percussion that can only be experienced. Begins with soft vocals but quickly grows darker and angrier, losing its temper in front of us. Even as the song quiets, it threatens to boil over at any moment. Written by Ullman.

“Weird Kid in the Corner”: Kammer’s incomparable masterpiece tugs playfully at our hearts and senses of humor. Rich guitar textures and bouncing bass line make for a tremendous sound. “He hears music of a different kind” and such excellent lyrics tell hilarious tale of a perpetually out-of-place student.

“Chapter Four (Sad Song)”: “Weird Kid” has led us away from the darkness of Tracks 1 and 2 to this poignant and heartbreaking ballad about the struggles in Ramsier’s life. Unflinchingly personal lyrics long for times past and lost memories. In the final verse, Ramsier (this time on rhythm guitar) raises quiet, subtle vocals, encouraging us to sing “My sad song”.

“World Unseen”: Tender tale of seclusion penned and sung by Kammer. Sobering lyrics such as “I wash my face but it doesn’t come clean,” “The sun came out but it was still too dark,” and “I have a woman that doesn’t know my name” speak of, according to Kammer, “being afraid of the inevitable changes that occur in our lives”.

“Weakman’s Delusion”: Ambitious, grand – simply epic. At eight-and-a-half minutes long, Jackson takes us on the true journey he only hinted at in “Pilgrimate”. “Come with me and I’ll show you what it’s like to live” snarls Jackson. As opposed to Kammer’s victims of the cruel, dark world, Jackson *is* all that is cruel and dark. Sparse guitar and percussion, as well as the Didge, paint the cold, bleak landscape of his delusion.

“Start Anew”: Sounds of ocean waves are subtly replaced by beautiful acoustic picking in this ballad written by Ullman for his girlfriend. Percussion completely absent except for the quiet waves of sound that reinforce the smooth lyrical splendor. As we’ve just come from the dark, gritty “Delusion,” we are left with no questions as to Steve’s incredible diversity.

"The Longest Day": "Sometimes it seems that each day gets longer than the one preceding it, whether it's from being alone, missing someone special, or just being bored at work," says Kammer of his expression of despair and hope. Interwoven acoustic textures accompany, again from Kammer, incredible lyrics.

"Whammo": A slow, muted acoustic riff is soon accompanied by tapping percussion and shakers, the overall sound gaining speed as each new sound is introduced. Drums enter, sending all into a fireworks show of rhythm before – silence – then a triangle, and finally, the only lyric (spoken by all): "Whammo". And we begin again, this time going faster and faster; guitars hammered and drums pounded lightning-quick before the cut to "Whammo". And we begin again, this time faster still. As a song, this is a train wreck with each broken car magnificently laid out for onlookers to admire. By the fourth "Whammo," we have reached a brilliant blur of deftly arranged rhythm and sound before exploding into silence and, finally, laughter.

TO BUY THE CD

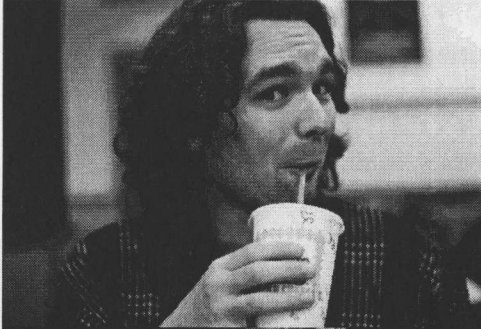
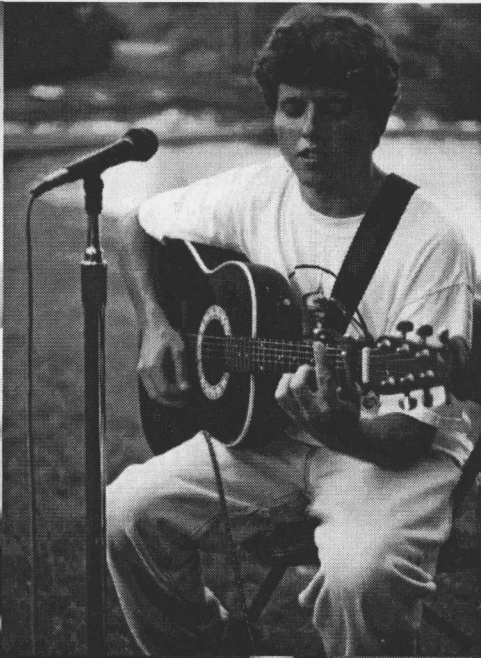
Special advance copies of *In the Event of Rhythm* will be on sale exclusively at Steve's live engagements this holiday season.

TO CONTACT STEVE FOR GIGS, UPCOMING SHOWS, AND INFO

Telephone: (330) 925-7151
Email: Salamunka1@aol.com



In the Event of



STEVE



HYP

PROFILE :

Brian Ullman

Brian Ullman, of Rittman, has been one busy musician. He has recently been working on four different music projects, including:

Killa B's *Da Projekt*: An album composed entirely of acoustic songs, mainly rap. That's right – *acoustic rap*. The sound is, as you would expect, very unique, as well as dead-on. Hooking up with homeboy Brody Adams (forming the Killa B's) and Circle of Willis bandmate-drummer Zack Kelly, as well as assorted family and friends, Ullman has turned out an incredibly fun disc. Also includes a pair of short skits and covers of Dave Matthews Band, Creed, and Duncan Sheik songs.

Steve *In the Event of Rhythm*: Brian, younger brother of Steve band member David Ullman, began work with the band in the summer of 2000. Beginning as cameraman for a documentary on Steve, as well as helping out with sound equipment at live engagements, Brian emerged as producer of *In the Event of Rhythm*, Steve's debut disc. "Since I was around them a lot, I knew what sounds they were trying to achieve and understood the band," explains Ullman.

Paradigm the Yoyo Crusade & *Paradigm the Yoyo Crusade: The Original Soundtrack*: An incredible and accomplished guitarist, Ullman accompanies James Nicholas, Mike Wood, Zack Kelly (soon to be assuming the bassist role), and Matt Wood as Paradigm the Yoyo Crusade, retro-alternative band with a *tour de force* debut disc called *The Original Soundtrack*, produced by Justin Bendo of Filter.

Circle of Willis: It's vocals and rhythm guitar this time as Ullman leads his own modern rock band, Circle of Willis. Offering a demo CD, the band are looking forward to a more substantial recording, as well as an appearance at The Odeon's High School Rock Off (check www.circleofwillis.bizland.com for pending show date/time). Circle of Willis are: Brian Ullman, vocals and rhythm guitar; Cody Kelly, guitar; Seth Rock, bass; and Zack Kelly, drums. For more info on Circle of Willis, visit their web site at www.circleofwillis.bizland.com.