

South Florida's Original Local & National New Music Magazine!

# Alternative Rhythms

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FREE



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**EXCLUSIVE!!**  
Michael Stipe  
of **R.E.M.**  
**INTERVIEW**



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# CHARLIE PICKETT

*by kathy rohrbach*



PHOTO: RICK LENNICK

Charlie Pickett - the man, the legend! He's been immortalized in the pages of *NOE*, *MELODY MAKER*, *SOUNDS*, *RECORD*, *OP*, *VILLAGE VOICE*, *TROUSER PRESS*, *THE NEW YORK POST*, *THE MIAMI HERALD*, *THE FORT LAUDERDALE NEWS*, *THE SUN TATTLER*, and *CREEM* (in an article by my favourite person to mention in AR: Bill Ashton!).

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Charlie Pickett and the Eggs have been floating around South Florida in different stages since Late 1979. The current, new-and-improved line-up includes Johnny Galway (still playing drums), Dave Froshnider (who has switched from bass to guitar) and the latest addition is *EX-PSYQID DAISIE* Mike Petit (on bass).

Since the band's beginning, they have recorded Two Singles ("Feelin'" & "If This Is Love..."), One Full Length Album (Live At The Button); and their latest work, the interestingly entitled Cowboy Junkie Au-Go-Go. Also available for the devoted Eggs fan is the German import (wowie!) Tuned Up and Howling; C.P. also has a song on OPEN's compilation LP: The Land That Time Forgot.

Charlie Pickett and the Eggs are on the verge of big-time, National Recognition! Their infectious, goodtime, rural-flavored rock-n-roll easily appeals to a wide spectrum of listeners. A Charlie Pickett show will bring all types out of the woodwork; but they all have one thing in common: they all appreciate good music and a great show. It's strange to see a "local band" (and I hesitate to use that phrase with Charle & co) with an honest-to-goodness following. Their fans know the songs, and many of them undoubtedly play their Eggs records as much as high school girls play their DURAN DURAN records (maybe that is pushing it a little bit).

Charlie's (and Jim Johnson's) pleasant front porch was the setting for an enlightening little interview, a mere 3 or 4 days before the eggs departed on their Nation Wide Tour (more on that, later).

ME: HOW DID YOU START PLAYING IN A BAND?

CP: I love playing guitar. When I started out, it was just that! I loved playing guitar. We started recording, just for fun, amongst ourselves. Me, Bob Mascaro and Debbie Cichlid. Barry Siever (now with Debbie in NOUVEAU REACH) was at the studio, and he said "Why don't we start a band?" Siever was a great guitar player. So we got together. It was just an awful lot of fun. This New Music Scene was starting back then, & we were on the ground floor of it.

I love playing in a band now, because I feel I can express myself well. The band is a good vehicle for self-expression. When I write prose, I don't have the ability to make it flow freely. But a song is like a three minute exposition of your feelings. All you have to do is throw together 16 lines, or so, to make it work. That - combined with my natural love of music -- It's just one of those things. I never intended to do anything with it, just PLAY!

ME: HOW HAS THE SCENE CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED, AND IS IT FOR BETTER OR WORSE?

CP: Well, better & worse. It's bigger now, and it's more solid now, and it's much more reliable now in terms of turnout. Everyone can harp back to the so-called "glory days" of the PREMIRE. But everyone forgets, you got \$50 to play then, and the sound system was ultra high in treble. And there was, on a great night, 65-70 people; on an average night, 55 might stroll in, and there were plenty of 40's.

I liked the early days of the scene better because I knew everyone, there was a real camaraderie. Everyone knew everyone else's name, and who they were. Now the scene is bigger. As one of the early scene members, Blond Deneise was her name, says: "the scene is filled with people who aren't cool enough to be posers." Lots of times, you'll see people and you'll just say 'God, how can these people even be here? They're so uncool! They're so Stupid.' They're the sort of people who watch MTV and then say 'Wow, I've got to get into the new music!' But I'm glad they're there. They pay their money, they support the scene to a large extent. They allow bands to constantly make money. We can make \$400 now, on a weekend, playing at FLYNNS. Which is nice. It's Really nice. It's a lot better than making \$50 at the PREMIRE.

I wish the scene was more friendly than it is now. But at the same time, I'm one of the most unfriendly people in it. I complain about people who aren't cool enough to be posers, and maybe they are cool. I just don't know

MORE!!



L to R: David F, Mike P, Charlie P, + John G. PIC: M. LESLIE WIMMER

## Charlie Pickett - the man, the legend!

it, because I don't take the time to talk and find out.

The scene is something that's really important to me, because I've been involved with it for 4½ years. Miami has made us what we are; which is a band that can quit their jobs, and go out on the road touring, making money, and becoming popular. Miami made us, because I wonder if another town's people would have put up with us. All the nights we were out of tune. And all the nights we played the same sets for months on end, and never changed a thing; and yet people still kept coming to see us. And on and on and on...

ME: HOW DID YOU END UP PLAYING WITH R.E.M.?

CP: There wasn't an awful lot to it. I met them the first time they played THE AGORA, late 82 or early 83. I said "Hello, how are you, nice to meet you." They were a band from Athens, and we were a band from Fort Lauderdale; and they had our records, and of course we had theirs. So it was just sort of a regional affection for each other. We met them

again in Hoboken. Somebody told Peter Buck that we were there, and he was really friendly. And he said: "I'd like to get together and talk with them, just meet them." When you are fans of musicians, you very seldom get to meet them, because you are always playing on the same night. So we met and sort of said "I like your band." They were playing the next night at THE BEACON, and they said "why don't you come down and see us." So I went over, and they were very very nice, with backstage passes and stuff like that. We talked, and drank their beer, and generally had a nice chat.

So when they came down here, I was doing some recording, and I went to see them. We had quit our jobs, so I had to make sure we got free admission. So I went backstage, to bum some admissions off them, and they said "Oh well, come in and let's jam." So we played Lou Reed's "There She Goes Again." They are the friendliest people!

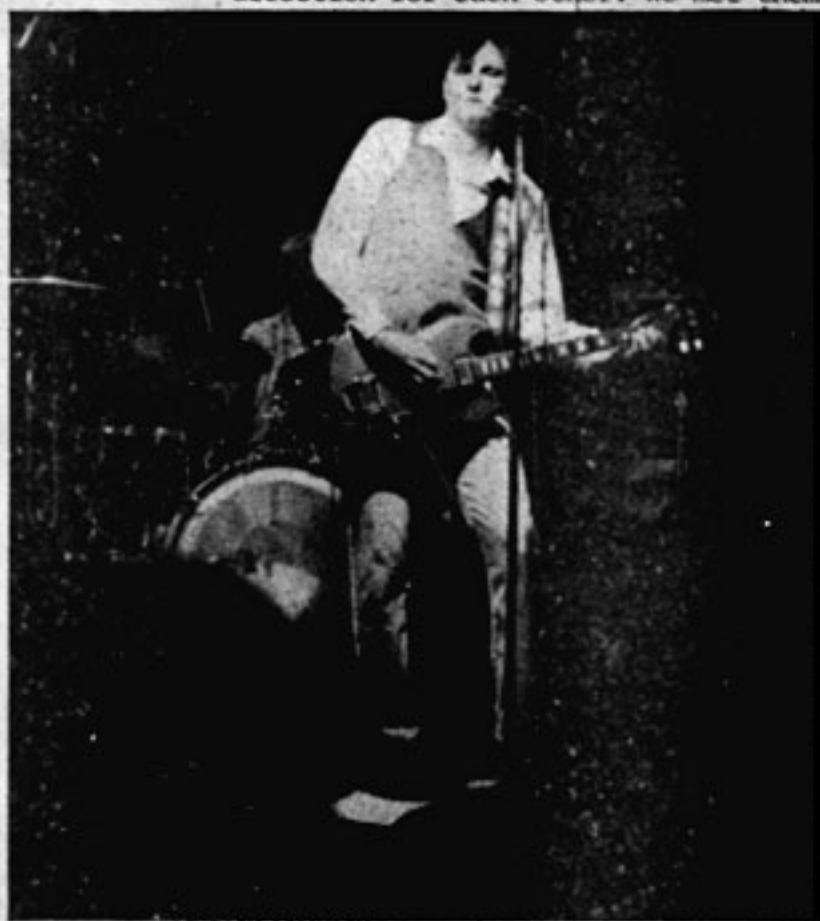
ME: DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE PUTTING OUT ON VINYL NEXT?

CP: Yes! We have a tentative title: Route 33, which is half of Route 66. It's the main road that goes through the rural country where I was born in Ohio, Southeastern Ohio. It's going to be a little more rural in flavor, than before. I'm really having a backlash to this ultra-urban sound, from THE EURYTHMICS to DURAN DURAN to those quasi-rock bands. It's all so urban; I mean all of these kids could not have been raised on the streets.

As the same time, it's not gonna be any of that fake "hick" shit: The Hank Williams Jr. type, like "I was born in the country, and it's so much better than the city." Nothing like that, it's just going to be a little more humanistic in approach. But it's not going to be so honey-laden as a country record. You just have to see it to believe it, I guess.

ME: WHERE ARE YOU GOING THIS TOUR?

CP: It starts with Gainesville, Tallahassee, Tampa, Orlando, Knoxville, Richmond, Philadelphia, NYC, Savannah, Atlanta, Chicago, Omaha, Minneapolis,



PIC: RICK LENNICK

and then out to California. We're going North and we're going West.

ME: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?

CP: I'd like to thank all the people at FLYNN'S for the B.P. Awards; for supporting us all these years. I'd like to thank them in print. And to thank all the people who don't go to clubs much, but buy the records. They have supported us all the years. And also the people who are supporting us now.

It's a great thing to be able to do, to scratch through all the things that have been held against South Florida musicians all these years. I'm really grateful for that.

It all still seems so unbelievable -- that we've toured twice, as far and as long as we have. And now we're going again, farther and longer. You hardly believe it until you get in the van and the wheels start going, and you say "Oh my God, this is true!"

And you can bet your sweet Petunias that wherever Charlie is Right Now (!), He's just rolling along, singing his songs. And that's the way he likes it!

## Get some Culture!



WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH OF HAPPINESS? YOU GO ZHIVAGO! At least, that's what Edward Bobb, co-founder of the HAPPINESS BOYS, has decided to do. Saturday Evening, December 8th, Dance Umbrella and the Lowe Art Museum will present the premiere of a collaborative performance by Bobb, Post-Modern choreographer Leslie Neal, and media artist Victor Velt (whose minimalist music appears on the first PROJEKT ELECTRONIC SOUTH FLORIDA). The event will take place at the Lowe Art Museum, and will mark the premiere of Bobb's new electronic vehicle and alter ego: JOHNNY ZHIVAGO. The new "work-in-progress" incorporates strong, gestural movements by Neal; which, in turn, are duplicated in the computerised, projected images created by Victor Velt. The musical score combines a slow, funeral like dirge with a convulsive waltz section.

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