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## Ska Fest brings funky beat to Dixie Theatre with MU330, Middlefinger and Johnny Socko!

By CHRIS MARTIN  
Staff writer

MU330, Johnny Socko! and Middlefinger will come together tonight at 8 at the Dixie Theatre in downtown Bryan for the Marooned Fall Ska Fest 1997.

"People are going ska

crazy," Chris Penn of Marooned Records said. Breakout acts like Goldfinger, Reel Big Fish and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones have brought middle-of-the-road ska to mainstream audiences.

The Marooned Ska Fest tonight will bring underground ska to



MU330

St. Louis' MU330 is "the Midwest's hardest working bunch of chumps next to truckers," according to their press release. The band was formed in 1988 by grade school friends Dan Potthast (lead guitar and vocals) and Ted Moll (drums). The ranks were later filled out by Chris Diebold on bass, and Rob Bell and Gerry Lundquist on brass. Lundquist was a former member of ska band Skankin' Pickle.

MU330 characterized its sound as ska tainted with rock, punk, noise, sing along lyrics, pop hooks and hard pounding double-bass drum rhythms.

The band members said they tour nearly 7/8 of the year, and they are currently supporting their third album *Crab Rangoon*.

"[The tour van] is what I consider to be my home instead of St. Louis," Moll said in an interview with music paper Mean Street.

Johnny Socko! was formed Halloween night, 1990. The Indianapolis-based band is currently winding down their 1997 tour schedule of nearly 250 live shows.

The band's latest album, *Full Trucker Effect*, is a full-blown concept album soundtrack to a forgotten '80s trucker movie. The album spoofs Pulp Fiction's "Royale with Cheese" monologue with its own "Chewing Tobacco in Paris" routine.

Mike Dawson of U. Magazine said Johnny Socko! is a mix of Parliament, the Madness and the Clash.

"Backed by a trumpet, saxophone and a trombone, Socko! races through funk, ska and hard-core punk riffs in wire-mesh fashion," Dawson said.

Middlefinger is a long-time contribution to the scene. The Houston band was formed two years ago by Matt Kelly (vocals) and formerly of Sprawl. Kelly joined by Jason Davis and David Cummings on guitar, Jay Brooks on bass and Brian Davis on drums.

The band's sound is influenced by ska, punk, metal and jazz funk. Although the band describes its music using "strange and exotic glyphs," they suggest only way to fully understand their sound is to see them live.



Johnny Socko!

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## Electronica music finds a good beat with new album by Roni Size and Reprazent

**Music Review**

Roni Size/Reprazent  
*New Forms*  
Talkin' Loud/ Mercury Records  
★★★★ (out of five stars)

comes a steep price, the possibility of the techno equivalent of Bush.

Luckily Roni Size/Reprazent are no Bush of the break beats. All Size and his Reprazent crew want to do is boogie.

English born Roni Size and his Reprazent collective, made up of DJs Die, Krust and Suv, and vocalists Onallee and MC Dynamite, have produced one of the most accessible and ambitious albums to come out of the electronica era.

*New Forms* is not of the same synthetic-sounding cloth as Prodigy and Chemical Brothers.

Size and Co. ply their trade in the genre known as drum n' bass, sometimes called jungle. The best way to describe drum n' bass is techno with lots of drums, lots of bass and the personalized signature of the mixing artist.

The genre was brought to the forefront of the dance scene by artists like Goldie, Spring Heel Jack and LTJ Bukem.

Size belongs on the dance floor with those drum n' bass innovators.

*New Forms* serves up an electronic porridge sound just right for all the bears and Goldilocks out there.

*New Forms* also has quite a mix of trip-hop, acid jazz, scat and rap.

The first CD in the set offers smooth mixes of rap and dance music guaranteed to please fans of either genre.

Philadelphia based rapper Bahamadia lends her vocal support to the "New Forms" track with a sultry, scat-cat grace.

Regular group vocalist Onallee contributes on several tracks. Her voice is smoky, yet eloquent.

Think Eartha Kitt on ecstasy. Her pipes always seem right on track with hyper-fast break beats and snare drums.

The other half of the album offers an instrumental drum n' bass mixture that gives Spring Heel Jack a run for its money.

"Brown Paper Bag," "Hi-potential" and "Trust Me" sound like epic little movies.

With over two hours of music, *New Forms* stays surprisingly fresh. There are few tunes worth ignoring.

Size cooks sound effects, samples and vocals with the deftness of Julia Childs. Only true audiophiles will be able to identify any of the album's basic material. Just when something seems familiar, it is twisted into something different.

Electronic music suffers from one big problem. Without the huge sound systems and throngs of sweaty dancers, much of its effect is lost. It is music that grooves and moves a single listener within the confines of a well-equipped living room or club.

Ronnie Size/Reprazent have hit an elusive, electronic epiphany with *New Forms*. The music will work whether it be in a warehouse or in their head.

— By Travis

THE PRINCETON REVIEW

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THE PRINCETON REVIEW

## Barbie to get 'plastic surgery' with realistic figure

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A less busty Barbie is on the drawing boards at Mattel Inc. in a makeover designed to give a more realistic profile to the curvaceous, best-selling doll that has rankled feminists while becoming an icon for generations of young girls.

Barbie's new look also will include a thicker waist and slimmer hips. Changes above the neck will include a new nose and softer, straighter hair, Mattel said Monday.

Some features of the new Barbie already are on store shelves. The "Rapunzel Barbie," a long-haired variation based on the classic fairy tale, has a more refined nose and closed mouth — part of the new design, said Lisa McKendall, Mattel's director of marketing communications.

Other features will be introduced during 1998. By the end of next year, six of 24 versions of the 11 1/2-inch doll will have the new look. The rest will have the old face and body.

The plastic surgery is part of a continuing evolution for Barbie, which got a face lift in 1967 and another in 1977, said Ms. McKendall. More than a billion dolls have been sold worldwide since Barbie was introduced in 1959.

"Barbie's kind of like Betty Crocker. She gets updated to make her look more appropriate to the times. She is a fashion doll first and foremost," said Chris Byrne, an analyst with Playthings MarketWatch, a monthly toy industry magazine.

"She hasn't been updated for a while and I know the Barbie franchise is critical to Mattel, so keeping it vital is important," he said.

In 1996, Barbie generated \$1.7 billion in sales, about 44 percent of Mattel's total revenue. Sales rose 24 percent during the first three quarters of 1997 and were expected to finish at least 25 percent higher than the 1996 figures, putting sales of Barbie dolls worldwide near the \$2 billion mark.

Those figures suggest that demand remains

strong for Barbie in her present dimensions. By updating Barbie's looks, Mattel is trying to anticipate a change in preference, analysts said.

"I think the company is trying to figure out how it's going to keep the brand going," said Brian Eisenbarth, an analyst with Collins & Co. in San Francisco.

But part of Barbie's success, he said, has been the desire of mothers who want to give their children a toy that's just like the dolls they played with. The changes could dampen some of that enthusiasm, he said.

"They've got to keep the Barbie line growing. That's one of the things about success. It's hard to duplicate," he said.

Over the years, Barbie has come under sharp criticism from feminists and child advocates, who contend that her shape is unrealistic and creates the wrong ideal for young girls who may aspire to a body type they can never achieve.

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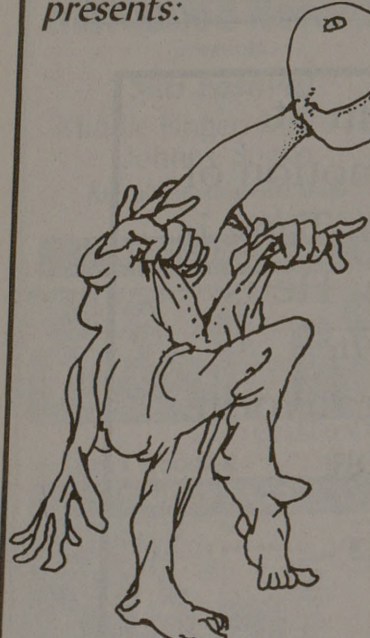
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