

BAND OF THE WEEK

MIDNIGHT SHIFT



Photo by Rick Moclock

You might not have much energy if you work the midnight shift, but you will if Midnight Shift is working for you. Main vocalist and harp player Mike Mettalia shifts into gear with an uptempo sound and a tightly knit band that mixes blues, rockabilly, rock 'n' roll, and other types of hard-driving, danceable music.

Mettalia was centered in the Chicago blues during the 13 years he played with local group Crosscut Saw. He was inspired by Muddy Waters and Carey Bell, and once even got a backstage harp lesson from blues legend Junior Wells.

In the Shift, however, he began to expand the music. He gained confidence as a frontman, and added elements of swing and his own originals. And new musicians have come on board during the Shift's four-year existence, bringing their own influences.

The biggest change came with

guitarist Mike McMillan. McMillan seems to know every rockabilly riff and song ever written, as well as adding a few of his own. Drummer Chad Edstrom and standup and electric bassist Paul Pluta bring elements of soul, New Orleans, roots music, R&B, and a bit of country.

Mettalia notes that playing live music is more difficult in today's environment with club closings, high gas prices and the sagging economy. However, Midnight Shift still plays six to eight times a month, traveling from central Pennsylvania to Maryland.

The band released "Bullet Proof" in 1995, and plans to have its second CD ready by the end of this year. The tentative title is how the group describes itself on its Web page: "Rhythm Rockin' Boogie." A better one might be Mettalia's description: "We're throwbacks to the '50s."

Dave Howell

Music: Blues and rockabilly
Band members: (from left) Mike McMillan, guitar and vocals; Chad Edstrom, drums; Mike Mettalia, harmonica and vocals; Paul Pluta, bass and vocals
Performing: 9:30 p.m.-1 a.m. Friday, Braveheart Highland Pub, 430 Main St., Hellertown, no cover, 610-838-6555; 7-11 p.m. July 17, The Big Easy Saloon, 128 Paoli Pike, Paoli, no cover, 610-296-9166; 9 p.m.-midnight, July 18, Center Valley Tavern, 6034 Main St., Center Valley, no cover, 610-282-9340
On the Net: www.midnightshift.com

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

SHEEK LOUCH

The impact of high gas prices can be witnessed even at a hip-hop concert. Yonker's rapper Sheek Louch must have felt the pinch Saturday at Allentown's Crocodile Rock when he looked out from stage and saw only 150 people.

Maybe low attendance could be attributed to Sheek Louch being the least famous member of the celebrated rap trio D Block that includes distinctively voiced Jadakiss and the prolific Styles P. For more than 10 years, D Block (formally known as the LOX) have recorded with rap legends such as Notorious B.I.G., P Diddy and Jay Z. In December 2006, Sheek accompanied Jadakiss in front of a packed house at Crocodile Rock. But on this night Sheek was forced to declare, "Y'all paid your money. I don't care how many of you there are."

Such indifference plagued the energy of his half-hour set. Never formally introducing himself or his songs, Sheek showed glimpses of why he is considered among the dying

breed of gangsta lyricists in a world of vapid rap thugs. Plowing through verses and snippets of songs, Sheek never rapped a song for more than a minute or two before telling his DJ to cut off the music. Sheek rattled off verses from past collaborations such as "Ryde or Die" and "All About the Benjamins" to more recent D Block songs such as "Mighty D Block" and "Gangsta, Gangsta." The highlight of the set was hearing Sheek sing along to Betty Wright's "Tonight's the Night" before launching into "Good Love," his rap version of Wright's 1974 R&B hit.

Opening act Manio from Brooklyn performed a three-song set that included his current radio favorite "Hi Hater," a harmless disc record to Manio's doubters. While Manio showed a certain swagger and confidence, his career is likely to have a three-month shelf life.

It was the yeoman effort of the DJ that was most impressive. Bethlehem-born DJ Grooves kept the audience engaged for nearly two hours by scratching together a long set of rap

music that spanned today's Top 40 to 1990s hip-hop classics.

Andrew McIntosh

VALLEY VIVALDI

A talking double-bass player! That's the whimsical novelty offered on last Sunday's Valley Vivaldi concert. The program, which included a selection of the usual Baroque fare — Handel, Vivaldi and Bach, as well as lesser-known Bach contemporary Johann Fasch — also featured regular double-bassist Nancy Merriam in a piece written by one of her teachers, Jon Deak.

Titled "B.B. [for Big Bad] Wolf, an Apologia," the piece requires the musician to play complicated riffs on the instrument and tap and drum on it, all the while narrating the first-person story of a much maligned and misunderstood wolf. Deak's composition requires virtuoso playing as well as virtuoso narration.

Merriam's sprightly

style, both on the bass and in vocalization, kept the audience laughing at the playing and the wit.

This was part of Valley Vivaldi's effort to supplement its traditional programming with more modern fare. The effort was quite a success. The program opened with one of Handel's more popular orchestral pieces, the "Entrance of the Queen of Sheba" from the opera "Solomon." This work, along with Fasch's Sonata for Oboe, Flute, Violin and Continuo and Vivaldi's Bassoon Concerto in B-flat, maintained the sprightly nature of the program, while Bach's Concerto in A for Oboe d'amore struck a more reserved, if no less appealing, chord. In every case the solo playing was exemplary, whether the oboe and oboe d'amore of Cheryl Bishkoff, the flute of Robin Kani, the bassoon of Susan Shaw, or the violin of Rebecca Brown.

But it's hard to forget that talking double-bassist.

Philip A. Metzger



Laughter at the State

Comedian Craig Ferguson, who hosts CBS' 'The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson,' played to a sold-out crowd June 28 in Easton.

Diane Richter
Special to
The Morning Call

NOW PLAYING

HIGH FIVES

The week's Top 5 in film, music, concert tours and YouTube videos. (AP)

FILM

1. "Wall-E," Disney
2. "Wanted," Universal
3. "Get Smart," Warner Bros.
4. "Kung Fu Panda," Paramount
5. "The Incredible Hulk," Universal

Media By Numbers LLC

HOT FIVE

1. "I Kissed a Girl," Katy Perry
2. "Lollipop," Lil Wayne, featuring Static Major
3. "Bleeding Love," Leona Lewis
4. "Take a Bow," Rihanna
5. "Pocketful of Sunshine," Natasha Bedingfield

Billboard magazine

ALBUMS

1. "Viva La Vida or Death and All His Friends," Coldplay

YouTube

CONCERT TOURS

1. Bon Jovi
2. Kenny Chesney
3. Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band
4. Jay-Z/Mary J. Blige
5. Van Halen

Pollstar

YOUTUBE MOST VIEWS

1. The Onion: Sources Warn Miley Cyrus Will Be Depleted by 2013
2. Rescatada Ingrid Betancourt
3. Bearly Legal
4. FUSE - Get Your Music On.
5. Ne-Yo Ft. Bangladesh "A Milli" Remix (official music video)

BOYD
BETHLEHEM 610-866-1521
SAT. 1:00 (\$4), 3:00 (\$4), 5:00 (\$4)...7:00, 9:00
WALL-E
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1:00, 2:00, 3:30, 4:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:00, 10:00
WALL-E (G) (10:00 @ \$4), 12:30, 3:00, 5:30,
8:00, 10:30
WANTED (R) (11:00 @ \$4), 1:50, 5:00, 7:40,
10:20
GET SMART (PG-13) (10:45 @ \$4), 1:40,
4:40, 7:15, 9:50
THE LOVE GURU (PG-13) 12:20, 4:50, 9:40
THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13)
(10:00 @ \$4), 2:20, 6:50
KUNG FU PANDA (PG) (11:40 @ \$4), 2:10,
4:20, 7:00, 9:30
INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (PG-13)
(10:20 @ \$4), 1:20, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10
*SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT No passes or discount coupons

REGAL CINEMAS
REGAL NORTHAMPTON 14
3730 Easton / Hazeworth Hwy 610-959-7900
Adv. Tix on Sale THE DARK KNIGHT (PG-13) *
Adv. Tix on Sale X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE (PG-13) *
HANCOCK (PG-13) (1100 1215 115 230) 330 500 545 720 935
KIT KITTREDGE: AMERICAN GIRL (G) (1145 215) 440 720 935
HANCOCK (PG-13) (1000 1045 1130 1215 100 145 230) 320 415 500 550 645 730 815 915 1000 1045
WANTED (R) - ID REQ'D (1100 1205 130 250) 400 525 700 800 950 1030
WALL-E (G) (1030 1115 115 200) 345 430 630 710 900 940
GET SMART (PG-13) (1135 220) 520 805 1035
LOVE GURU (PG-13) (1105 110) 330 545 810 1020
OC & DA: THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13) (225) PM
THE HAPPENING (R) - ID REQ'D (1040) 435 1015
THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13) (1140) 455 705 1040
YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN (PG-13) (1110) AM
KUNG FU PANDA (PG) (1005 1220 245) 505 740 955
SEX AND THE CITY (R) - ID REQ'D (120) 705
INDIANA JONES: THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (PG-13) (1150 450) 735 1025

SAUCON VALLEY STADIUM 10
3096 Route 37E 900-FANDANGO 467E
Adv. Tix on Sale THE DARK KNIGHT (PG-13) *
Adv. Tix on Sale X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE (PG-13) *
HANCOCK (PG-13) (1100 1130 1215 145 230) 400 500 700 930 1000
KIT KITTREDGE: AMERICAN GIRL (G) (1100 1140 210) 435 650 920
WANTED (R) - ID REQ'D (Stadium) (820 950 1220 250) 520 750 1020
GET SMART (PG-13) (1010 1250) 350 800 1035
THE HAPPENING (R) - ID REQ'D (1110 1150) 410 810 1030
THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13) (940) 340 655 1005
OC & DA: THE INCREDIBLE HULK (PG-13) (1230) PM
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7:10 7:30 8:30 10:00 10:10
WALL-E G DLP 1:00 1:30 3:20 4:15
5:40 7:00 8:00 9:30
WANTED R DLP 1:15 1:45 3:45 4:20
6:15 7:00 7:30 8:45 9:30
GET SMART PG13-DLP
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:45
LOVE GURU PG13-DLP
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
INCREDIBLE HULK PG13-DLP
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
THE HAPPENING R DLP
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:45
KUNG FU PANDA PG-DLP
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
ZOHAN PG13-DLP 1:45 4:30 7:30 10:05
SEX & THE CITY R DLP
1:00 7:00
INDIANA JONES PG13-DLP
1:20 4:10 7:00 9:45
IRON MAN PG13-DLP
4:00 9:50
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5:30 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM, 7:30 PM, 8:00 PM,
8:30 PM, 9:30 PM, 10:00 PM, 10:30 PM, 11:30 PM
Kit Kittredge** G
11:00 AM, 1:40 PM, 4:50 PM, 7:20 PM, 9:50 PM
WALL-E** G
10:05 AM, 11:05 AM, 11:55 AM, 12:55 PM, 1:45 PM,
2:35 PM, 3:45 PM, 4:35 PM, 5:25 PM, 7:05 PM, 7:45 PM,
8:25 PM, 9:45 PM, 10:25 PM, 10:55 PM
Wanted** R
10:20 AM, 11:10 AM, 1:20 PM, 2:10 PM, 4:20 PM, 5:10 PM,
7:10 PM, 7:50 PM, 9:55 PM, 10:45 PM
The Incredible Hulk** PG13
10:40 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:40 PM, 7:35 PM, 10:40 PM
The Love Guru** PG13
10:10 AM, 1:30 PM, 4:10 PM
The Happening** R
7:35 PM
Kung Fu Panda PG
10:25 AM, 2:05 PM, 5:15 PM, 7:40 PM, 10:10 PM
Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull PG13
10:15 AM, 1:15 PM, 4:25 PM, 7:25 PM, 10:35 PM
Sex and the City R
11:20 AM, 3:40 PM, 10:05 PM
You Don't Mess With the Zohan PG13
2:20 PM
Iron Man PG-13
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11:00 PG 13 **YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN** 11:00 PG13 **GET SMART**
STARTS JULY 18 THE DARK KNIGHT

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