

Hugo Largo perfects its version of low-key rock 'n' roll

By ELIZABETH ELLEN
Staff Writer

Start with a dynamic female vocalist, and add two bassists and a violinist. Hard to tell what kind of musical group results, but it certainly is not a rock band — or is it?

If that particular group happens to be Hugo Largo, then the answer is yes, Virginia, there is rock 'n' roll. "We're a quiet, intense rock 'n' roll band," said Hugo Largo bassist Adam Peacock. The New York-based quartet will make its third Chapel Hill appearance tonight at Cat's Cradle.

With the release of the album *Drum*, ironically titled considering that the band functions without percussion, Hugo Largo showed alternative music fans its vision of a new kind of rock. The idea is to grab an audience without the aid of outlandish decibel levels or the keyboards and screaming guitars many bands rely upon. The approach is entirely different.

Dynamic minimalism is a tool for the band, Peacock said during a telephone interview from Atlanta Saturday. "It (the quiet) is pretty

subversive, really," he said. "There's no reason to be subjected to crashing walls of sound all the time. We do play some loud songs, but we also play the softest songs you'll ever hear in a rock club."

Whether or not to go mainstream is a question members of Hugo Largo are currently pondering. Peacock said he feels more exposure, not fundamental musical change, is what the group needs to be more accepted. "We're not a hard listen," he said. "The listener doesn't have to have Hugo Largo explained to him. We're

staying true to the sound we hear in our heads, which may change."

Vocalist Mimi Goese is what Peacock calls the group's "secret weapon." A dancer with a background in performance art, Goese never sang in public before Hugo Largo's premiere performance. "She's utterly captivating," said Peacock of Goese. "While we're playing, we look out over the crowd and see all eyes in the house on the singer. She's pretty mesmerizing."

The other two band members are bassist Tim Sommer and violinist

Hahn Rowe. Not only is Hugo Largo's music a series of contrasts, as Peacock said, but the backgrounds of the members are incredibly diverse as well. Sommer used to play punk rock and work in MTV's news department. Rowe is an engineer with some classical violin training. The instrument he uses in Hugo Largo is not the common acoustic four-string violin, but a five-string electronic model.

With its emphasis on low volumes and unusual instrumentation, some people have tried to place Hugo

Largo in the somewhat elusive category of New Age music. This categorization was spurred on by the New York alternative venues the band played in its early days. "It was hard to play rock clubs at first," Peacock said. "We were too quiet and precious, too minimal." In the past year, however, Hugo Largo has played only rock 'n' roll clubs.

Peacock said he finds comparing Hugo Largo to other bands irrelevant. "Hugo Largo exists in its own little sphere," he said. "We are a balance between loud and soft, hard and quiet, fear and love."

Hugo Largo will perform tonight at Cat's Cradle. Call 967-9053 for more information.

Drivin' rolls over Cradle audience

Class: Rock 'n' Roll 101. Meeting place: Cat's Cradle. Time: Friday and Saturday at 11:45 p.m. Instructor: Kevin Kinney. Credit hours: 2. Class description: Loud and vicious attack of guitar-powered rock. Required materials: A bottle of aspirin and a supply of cotton balls.

When heavy metal came into town this weekend it introduced itself as drivin' n' cryin' — and this four-man band did a hell of a lot more driving than crying.

James Burrus

Concert

Playing for about an hour and 45 minutes Friday night, Atlanta's drivin' n' cryin' taught the crowd of 150 how to have a real rockin' time. The music was so loud it still had the crowd's ears ringing 24 hours later. Instead of begging for mercy, though, the crowd begged for more.

Although the band gets its name from one of its songs, drivin' n' cryin' is an accurate name for this band. During its set, the band interspersed slow country ballads for every four or five raucous screamers, much like it does on its new album, *Whisper Tames the Lion*.

Except for this aspect, the band's new album bears little resemblance to its live shows. While it is true the band offsets hard numbers with slow ones, drivin' n' cryin's thunderous songs, like "Powerhouse" and "Whisper Tames the Lion," are even more rowdy live.

Part of that may be due to the addition of a second guitarist to back up Kinney. The new guitarist fills out the band's sound, although Kinney himself is an excellent guitarist who can play fast or mean. Meanwhile, bassist Tim Nielsen, who wore a Connells T-shirt, boomed with the beat of drummer Jeff Sullivan.

Together they created one of the most ear-threatening sounds around. Just remember to check your ears at the door.

Democrats

from page 1

tor of the New York State Democratic Committee, said although people in his state would love to see Mario Cuomo in the White House, he thinks one of the top three candidates now in the race will emerge as a front-runner and claim the nomination.

Marino also said he saw no strategy to stop Jackson in his state.

"The only way Jackson can be stopped is in a one-on-one race," he said.

William Keech, a UNC political science professor, said Jackson's success in Michigan occurred partly because the state holds caucuses rather than a primary.

He said strong black support helped Jackson win 109,000 of the 200,000 votes cast in a state with a total population of nine million.

"As the candidates move away from caucuses to primaries, it will become harder for Jackson to use the enthusiastic turnout by blacks," Keech said.

Abraham Holtzman, a political science professor at N.C. State University, said the Democratic Party cannot win with Jackson on the ticket, but it cannot win without his help either.

"If Jesse Jackson doesn't get the nomination and he goes away angry, the party will lose black voters and the presidency," he said.

The party will have to accommodate Jackson's wishes in drafting a platform, and Jackson will have to go to the black community and say "stick with your party," Holtzman said.

"That's what the party leaders would like," he said.

Choice

from page 1

to him.

If Williamson is selected for the post at the University of the South, he will be the third high-level administrator to leave UNC this year. In addition to Fordham, Farris Womack, vice chancellor for business and finance, will leave to accept a position at the University of Michigan July 1.

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