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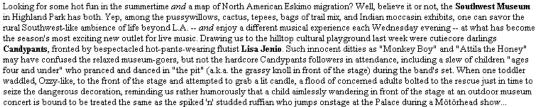
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ABOUT

Freek Show

Step right up to Jim Freek's Los Angeles BY JIM FREEK

A decade after breaking up the best-dressed slumber party of the 1980s, the Bangles announced early last week at a press conference that they, too, have gotten back together, which officially leaves Mr. Mister as the only L.A. band that hasn't reformed yet. The Tuesday morning affair at the House of Blues found the members of the superstar ensemble -- vocalist/guitarist Susanna Hoffs, drummer Debbi Peterson, guitarist Vicki Peterson (whose New Orleans-inspired, tousled Medusa-locks fit in perfectly with the club's voodoo motif), and bassist Michael Steele -- lounging on a sofa in the club's posh Foundation Room in front of photographers and television cameras while answering sharp-witted media questions. Some of these questions were more annoying than others, including one by a stupefied cameraman who tried to play "rock journalist" by asking this dud: "So, you haven't played together since 1984?" Amid stifled chuckles by the roomful of journalists, the girls quickly corrected the dull-witted tech and revealed that 1984 was in fact the year their debut album, All Over the Place, was released. With that out of the way, we learned that the band plans to return to their roots, defined by Hoffs as "'garage pop with harmonies on top," and that they're in the studio working on new material with famed Black Crowes producer George Drakoulias (who worked with the band back on 1987's remake of Simon and Garfunkel's "Hazy Shade of Winter"). Additionally, they announced that they're writing a bunch of new songs with -- what a surprise -- outside songwriters, and that they'll be performing a series of shows at the House of Blues. The scheduled live dates are September 21-23, and surely everyone who's anyone in L.A. will be at one of the gigs (plus those who just think they're someone, like that moron at Jones restaurant the other night who thought he could get whisked to the front of the line by announcing to the doorman that he was on The X Show earlier in the week). The Bangles' decision to reform comes at a time when reunion fever is running completely out of control, and what reunion would be complete without a VH1 Behind the Music special to go along with it? Certainly not this one, so sure enough, the Bangles' story will finally be told on July 30. Missing from today's press party (but hopefully not from the VH1 special) was KROQ DJ and massive Bangles supporter from day one, Rodney Bingenheimer, whose reason for skipping the event was that he feared the daytime parking trauma of the Strip..



The kickoff for the third annual International Pop Overthrow festival took place at Fais Do-Do on Friday night, and while there were impressive sets from the likes of well-dressed Merseypunk lads the Larks; Ugly Trings publisher Mike Stax's Electric Prunes soundalikes the Loons, and Magnificent Zombies/Creation idolizers the Jupiter Affect, some of the other acts on the bill were less satisfying, since most of them appeared to know only one song. In one of his more brilliant moves, I.P.O. organizer David Bash booked tonight's show in conjunction with monthly mod haven Club Solid (which moves from its longtime location at Fais Do-Do to the basement of Miceli's starting August 5), which meant plenty of great viewing material in the form of Club Solid's checkered-skirted and wide-hairband-wearing birds fluttering through the room and attempting to avoid fashionless pop geeks at all costs. In what will no doubt go down as the most outrageous event of this year's festival, Jupiter Affect leader Michael Quercio's former bandmates from stuffed-animal-detonatingnoisemongers the Imperial Butt Wizards all showed up dressed in devil costumes and threatened to blow up Nipper Seaturtle's amphibianshaped purse. More fashion outrage followed courtesy of Robbie Rist of the Masticators and the Andersons, who looked like a cross between Drew Carey and a member of Sigue Sigue Sputnik, with his brand-spankin'-new blue/green mullet-mohawk combo. To prevent us from further revisiting this subject again (Rist's was the second such sighting in as many weeks in this column), Freek Show urges readers who are curious about mulletmania to delve into the world of this ultimate fashion fuck-up for themselves by visiting www.mulletsgalore.com.



And finally, Freek Show penetrated the suburbs of Koreatown on Saturday night by paying a visit to Forbidden Zone at the tiki-themed club The Vandals VoeDoo. It was truly like a scene out of one those high-grade U.S.A. Up All Night movies, when an "I'm not wearing any underwear" matchbook cover was slipped to us under the table of the swarming Hollywood Monsters booth, and then a car full of bubbly blondes -obviously on a desperate-but-not-serious quest for Dublin's Irish Whiskey Pub -- pulled up in front of the club and started quizzing the security guards on the clientele, the cover charge, and style of music that was being played inside. Despite the nonsensical glamour of both of these escapades, neither could

compete with the club's enchanting Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom-meets-Jacks Sugar Shack milieu: A giant waterfall, spooky, gleaming, psychedelic tiki gods, and red-leather-enclothed DJ Taime Downe cranking out glam trash and industrial grooves inside the jaws of a gigantic stucco monster. It's not easy bein' cheesy, but at least some folks know how to do it in style.

Next week: Shorts-and-baseball-cap-wearing Disney C.E.O. Michael Eisner (who was thus attired last Thursday at Tsar's Vynyl gig) is spotted at...uh oh, wait a second...never mind, our attorney suggests we stay away from this one

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The Bangles at the House of

this week in Music

Border Girl

Forget what you've heard -proud cachanilla Julieta Venegas sounds like no one but herself

Freek Show

Jumpin' Jack Cash

World's Greatest (Corporate) Rock 'n' Roll Band Revs Up the Money Machine

Revolver

Moby

18 (V2 Records)

La Vela Puerca

De Bichos y Flores (Surco/Universal)

Weezer

Maladroit (Interscope)

Nightstick

Cee-Lo

May 19 at the House of Blues

El-P, Aesop Rock

May 22 at the El Rey