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**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...

Looking for some hot fun in the summertime *and* a map of North American Eskimo migration? Well, believe it or not, the **Southwest Museum** in Highland Park has both. Yep, among the pussywillows, cactus, tepees, bags of trail mix, and Indian moccasin exhibits, one can savor the rural Southwest-like ambience of life beyond L.A. -- *and* enjoy a different musical experience each Wednesday evening -- at what has become the season's most exciting new outlet for live music. Drawing us to the hilltop cultural playground last week were cutiecore darlings **Candypants**, fronted by bespectacled hot-pants-wearing flutist **Lisa Jenio**. Such innocent ditties as "Monkey Boy" and "Attila the Honey" may have confused the relaxed museum-goers, but not the hardcore Candypants followers in attendance, including a slew of children "ages four and under" who pranced and danced in "the pit" (a.k.a. the grassy knoll in front of the stage) during the band's set. When one toddler waddled, Ozzy-like, to the front of the stage and attempted to grab a lit candle, a flood of concerned adults bolted to the rescue just in time to seize the dangerous decoration, reminding us rather humorously that a child simlessly wandering in front of the stage at an outdoor museum concert is bound to be treated the same as the spiked 'n' studded ruffian who jumps onstage at the Palace during a Mötörhead show...

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 Things* 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 **Micelli'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-detonating-noisemongers **the Imperial Butt Wizards** all showed up dressed in devil costumes and threatened to blow up **Nipper Seaturtle**'s amphibian-shaped 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 **Signe Signe 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](http://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 **VooDoo**. 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-enclotted 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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Gary Leonard

The Bangles at the House of Blues

**this week in Music**

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

**The Vandals**

May 17 at the Long Beach Arena