

WALKING THE 'LINE'

Veteran virtuoso Bob Mould hits the road after two-year hiatus

BY MICHAEL A. KNIPP



Photo at left by Peter Rose. Photo at right by Todd Frazee.

Like a phoenix that rises from its own fragile ashes, seminal artist Bob Mould has consistently resurrected himself over the past 20 years.

In the late 1980s, Mould emerged from the shadow of his hardcore band Hüsker Dü's drug-induced downfall to form Sugar, the acclaimed mid-'90s alternative outfit. Mould is the driving force behind the dense, hypnotic *Copper Blue*, which Spin magazine ranked in 1992 as its top 20 albums of the year. But after Sugar dissolved toward the middle of the decade, Mould began to branch out on his own, creating LoudBomb, a band formed from an anagram of his name; jump-starting a gay dance event called Blowoff; and serving, however briefly, as scriptwriter with World Championship Wrestling.

Despite two decades of well-publicized professional and personal turmoil, and myriad manifestations of his talent, though, Mould returns this year to his primary passion: pushing the boundaries of modern music.

As the launch of his first North American tour in two years looms, the heavyweight—whose latest album, *District Line*, is available now—reflects on his frequent collaborations with that other out acumen, Richard Morel; expanding his underground party presence; how he's spent his time since he last took to the road; and why he'll never reignite old flames.

Which, as Mould alludes, has something to do with getting burned.

A lot of people know you from your days with Hüsker Dü and Sugar, but what they might not know is that a few years ago you took a break from music and joined World Championship Wrestling as a scriptwriter. Why such a drastic departure?

I have been a long-time pro wrestling fan, starting in my childhood. I had friends who worked in the business, and for years they casually asked me for ideas. In 1999 I was offered the chance to join on as part of the creative team. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and the hardest work I have ever done in my life.



BOB MOULD AND RICHARD MOREL

After creative differences with the company, you returned to music. After so many years, and so many diverse projects, what keeps interested?

It's what I enjoy best. It is my life's work.

When I think of you, it's hard not to think of Richard Morel, a frequent collaborator of yours. What makes your relationship work?

Rich brings a wealth of experience from the electronic-music world, and I bring the rock.

You and Richard host something called Blowoff. For people far from the D.C. area, what's Blowoff all about?

It's a monthly dance party held at the 9:30 Club, which is a live concert venue. We play lo-fi, indie rock, house, progressive house, and electro. Our crowd is mainly 30- to 50-year-old gay men, some of whom identify as bears or muscle bears. But, all music fans are welcome!

You and Richard started hosting Blowoff in 2003,

and it recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. How has this gay dance party evolved, and are there plans for permanent residency in New York, where you're throwing the parties sporadically?

We have grown from spinning music for 30 friends in a basement to 1,000 people in a large concert hall. We will be at High-line Ballroom in NYC every two months in 2008, and we hope to expand to San Francisco in the fall of 2008.

If anything, you're an experimental artist—from genres to instruments to monikers, you're constantly reinventing yourself—but what do you consider your best work?

My proudest moments to date are *Zen Arcade* (Hüsker Dü); *Workbook* (solo); *Copper Blue* (Sugar); *Circle of Friends* (live DVD, 2005 band); and the new solo album, *District Line*.

Your new album, *District Line*, is being heralded as a return to form of sorts. How do you take that? Do you think you've ever strayed from your form?

► **PAGE 46**



No more lousy coverage.

A STORM'S BREWING

◀ **PAGE 32** trade to support you, you have to be able to support yourself during the week and by doing so we had an obvious advantage. Vegas is full of so many show people that are performing day in and day out and they love to watch other performers perform, so we get all the people in all the shows in Vegas and we obviously appeal to a local demographic. There is nothing like what we do in Vegas."

With the help of world class choreographer Tovariss Wilson, Kane decided it was time to take his unique vision one step further. "We ran the male show in the Hollywood club first," he says. "We initially conceptualized it and got it up on its feet and after it was such a huge success there we decided to take it to Vegas. We are very excited because I don't think the LGBT community has something like this here, let alone on the Strip."

Wilson, who has worked with the likes of Janet Jackson and Cher, was very excited to lend his talents to help make Stormy Monday a reality. "This is something that we had talked about doing for a while," he says. "So, I was really happy when the time came to actually do it because there are so few jobs out there for guys where they are able to perform in this way." Wilson, himself a gay man, is also very excited to be offering something so unique to the LGBT community here in Vegas, which often has

little to chose from in the way of quality nightlife and entertainment.

Due to its unique nature and high profile location, Ivan Kane's Forty Deuce is catering to a more refined crowd, and as such is not concerned so much about competing directly with other clubs that offer free drinks and other ploys to bring customers in the door. "We are lucky in that we are in our own niche," Kane explains. "So, because of that, we don't try and compete with the other nightclubs. If you want to find our particular brand of entertainment you have to come to Ivan Kane's Forty Deuce."

So what "particular brand of entertainment" can one expect from the new Stormy Monday male burlesque? "It all starts at ten o'clock," Kane begins, "It starts when you walk in the door. We have male dancers posing in the windows outside the club and then we've got go-go boys on top of tables. We've got huge production numbers on the stage, we've got duets, trios, and they are just huge production numbers. It all happens throughout the entire evening and it doesn't stop until the lights come up," he concludes. Let's just hope the lights don't come up for a long time.

Stormy Monday is set to debut on March 3 at Ivan Kane's Forty Deuce in Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. For reservations or VIP seating call (702) 632-9442 or visit www.fortydeuce.com. **Q**

WALKING THE 'LINE'

◀ **PAGE 45** I think it is a simplistic way for the record company to attract people's attention. I hope my "form" has expanded over the years. Guitar-based composition is the core component of my entire body of work, and the new album is heavy on the core work, so maybe that is what the company bio is trying to highlight.

You describe the album as emotional and mature, while Billboard magazine says it's filled with "pop songs." Is the mag accurate in its description?

I think so!

You begin touring in support of District Line this month, but it's been nearly two years since you last toured, when your live DVD, Circle of Friends, was released. For those who caught that tour, how will this show stand alone?

The upcoming band tour will be a continuation of what was documented on Circle of Friends. Guitar, bass, keyboards, drums.

No-frills presentation. Songs from all periods of my career.

Finally, reunions are inevitably—especially if you're still relevant and have a bankable following. And that's not to mention that everyone from Led Zep to the Spice Girls have reunited lately, and it's the thing to these days. So... are there plans to appease your die-hard Hüsker Dü or Sugar fans? Will they be treated to blast from the past in the near future?

I have no plans, nor any interest, in reforming old bands. Those were great times at the time, but as time goes on I like to look forward as much as possible. The songs I composed and performed with those bands are now part of my current band repertoire. That's the best I can offer, and I think most people understand. **Q**

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