

Lion's Eye On Music

The Good Rats — The Original Rats!

The birth of **The Good Rats** was back in 1964 when Peppi Marchello (lead vocalist) hijacked his brother Mickey to play guitar, and a few other buddies as well, to join his band as the opening act for **Jay And The Americans**. The band recorded their first album in 1969, simply titled **The Good Rats**, yet internal problems within the group caused its break-up. In 1971, Peppi Sank "every penny I had in the world" into a demo tape to transport from record company to record company. Both Peppi and Mickey, while working at odd jobs, continued to write songs. They put together a new band which included John Gatto on guitar and vocals, Lenny Kotke on bass and vocals, and Joe Franco on drums - all of which make up the band you see today. Since those early days, the band has released four albums: 1974 - **Tasty**; 1976 - **Ratcity in Blue**; 1977 - **From Rats to Riches**; and 1979 - **Birth Comes To Us All** (available on **Passport Records and Tapes**). The following are excerpts of the interview with Peppi.

Stern - With the British Rock Invasion (Zep, Beatles, Who,

Stones), did you feel that your career could be slightly hindered by being an American band?

Marchello - No. Most American bands, at least today's American bands, got as much from the British Rock and Roll as the early British Rock and Roll got from the American artists. It (music) sort of worked its way across the Atlantic. There's no real distinction now it just seems like there is only one type of rock music it's just universal.

Stern - How was the name **The Good Rats**, derived at?

Marchello - I was just given to us by the producers of our first album. It was in the year that everyone was an "Animal" (i.e. **The Animals**, **The Beatles**, **The Byrds**). Being from New York, we took the New York animal - the rat!

Stein - Does anyone ever confuse you with the **Boomtown Rats**?

Marchello - They stole our name! The guy who manages the **Boomtown Rats** at one point worked for us. In 1976. People just assume that we stole the name. We formed in '64! That was before those guys ever knew what a guitar was! We are the

original rats!

Stein - On the new album, how did it feel to work with Max Middleton (**Jeff Beck Group** and **Manfred Man** fame).

Marchello - Max is a gentleman! good musician, and just one hell of a nice guy. He is very easy to work with.

Stern - To quote **Fether Tulls'** Ian Anderson, do you feel that you will ever be "too old to rock and roll"?

Marchello - Every job has the threat of loosing touch. But music is always there to perk people up. During the depression everyone was real down but music helped people liven up. Ya need people to play music - I'm never gonna be too old to rock & roll!

The **Good Rats** proved to be everything I'd imagined. The hard driving rock mixes with soft balads to form an album not to be passed up. Peppi's oldest son, Gene, 10, makes a cameo appearance on the album in a song entitled **Geno**. Meeting Gene was an experience as well. The love for his father and music just shines in his eyes. Could he be another rocker in the starting stages?

The **Good Rats** are better than good - they're fantastic! Next time they are in the area, go check them out. You won't be dissappointed. And try & catch a rat - they spend \$12,000 a year on em and boy, what a souvenior!

Special thanks go out to Ellen Smith and Ida langson at the **Howard Bloom Org.** in New York. Also to Rich ("Face") who help us out backstage, and of course to the band.

They are very "down to earth" and proud musicians. They are in the profession to make kids happy, and that's exactly what they do. And **Angel** communicate with their audience something many bands shun away from.

Angel delivers hard rock and roll as well as slow, beautiful ballads on all five albums - **Angel**, **Helluva Band**, **On Earth As It Is In Heaven**, **White Hot**, and their latest effort, **Sinful**, all available on Casablanca records and tapes.

And speaking of **Sinful**, what an album! Hard driving riffs provide the ingredients to form one of the bands best discs. But recording records is only one of the ventures that **Angel** is on. They are actors as well and will be proved, in the forthcoming Casablanca Filmworks feature film entitled "The Foxes".

One may think back to October when **Kiss** showed their acting talents in a flick entitled **Kiss Meets The Phantom**. In **No Way Shape or form** are **Angel** to be compared to **Kiss**. As Frank DiMino puts it, "Sometimes people think that we are the oppisite of **Kiss**. We are not like them at all. The music is so totally different, Well, it speaks for itself! I'll just be happy if the comparison is never made again!"

So folks, there you have it. A band, so bold and so good, that it is a little hard to believe that

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Rock & Roll Interviews



(Photo Courtesy of Arista Records)

THE ORIGINAL RATS

Sitting - Joe Franco, Standing L. to R. - Mickey Marchello, Peppi Marchello, John Gatto, and backround Lenny Kotke.

New Album and Music News

Watch out for the new one by Jimmi Mack (widley known for his songwriting talents with the **Earl Slick Band**), entitled **On The Corner**, available on Big Tree Records and tapes, BT-76014. Jimmi is an uprising star and just appeared at sigma sound studios to record for WMMR radio. Some of the best cuts on the album are "Ain't gonna make It"; "Give It Away"; "I'd Rather Be The One"; "Subway"; and the title cut, "On The Corner". It's a dinamite disc-pick it up. 'cause you won't be sorry.

Also on the way is the new **Cheap Trick** effort entitled **Dream Police** as soon as **Live At Budikahn** dies down, the album will be shipped probably platinum!

OK all you Zeppelin freaks! The new album by this infamous band is **Completed!** It should be

released either next month or in the fall. A tour is also in the works and will probably touch down in Phila. during the summer. The band is now stronger than ever - "Rock & Roll!"

The Who will be on tour this summer with Ken Jones on drums to replace the Kete, grect, Keith Moon. In the talking stage are the additions of a keyboardist and another guitarist to help out on the floor. Rodger Daltry will have a solo album out soon - don miss it!

Have a good summer, folks and don't forget to check out J.F.K. stadium this summer for some of the best outdoor concerts presented. See you all next year "Rock and Roll all nite, and party every day!"

Stephanie Stern

Angel — Wizzards of Rock

Angel. The name alone conjures up images of heavenly bodies. And believe me, 5 young men are bringing forth a brand of "heavenly rock" to our souls and our minds. The band, made up of Frank DiMino on lead vocals, Pinky Meadows on lead guitar, Felix Robinson on bass, Greg Giuffrice on keyboards, and Barry Brant on drums, set forth to show earth that rock and roll is here to stay.

Throughout each show, many spectacular visuals enlighten the concert goers. When **Angel** appears on stage, they litterally appear . . . they don't walk on, they materialize out of giant 4 part boxes stacked on top of one

another, as a god-like voice is heard introducing **Angel** to earth. In the middle of the set, a giant holographic face appears, engulfed within the **Angel** logo, and begins to speak. This is done in the same matter that the face of the "Mighty Oz" is seen in the classic motion picture, **The Wizzard of Oz**. Many more magical events take place, but I'd rather not spoil it for you (Aren't I kind?)

At a recent interview with the band, I found out what these super stars are really like. One may imagine rockets to be stuck up snobs and that they throw off the "I don't give a damn" attitude. Not true with **Angel**.



(Photo Courtesy of Casablanca Records)

THE HEAVENLY BODIES OF ANGEL - LOOKING SINFUL?

L. to R. - Felix Robinson, Barry Brandt, Frank DiMino, Punky Meadows, and Greg Giuffria



(Photo by Donna Curran)

Yes! YES is scheduled to appear at the Spectrum in Philadelphia June 20th and 21st.