

# Red Rider doesn't have a rock formula

By JIM ZEBORA

"We believe that we have a sound, a style," says Tom Cochrane of Canadian rock band Red Rider, "but we don't think we have a formula."

And with their just-released fourth album, the low-key Red Rider, who will appear Sunday at the West Hartford Agora, has gone far in proving just that.

**Breaking Curfew**, a far cry from the harder, more quirk-filled rock that marked their earlier records, is an LP with a distinct rhythm and blues feel, and, according to Cochrane, it's a logical step in the evolution of an increasingly mature band.

"A lot of things we don't think about," says Cochrane, "we just do."

Red Rider has been a moderately successful recording act since 1980, right after Cochrane departed his solo career as a singer/songwriter and occasional movie soundtrack composer (for a Xaviera Hollander film), to join up with a likable little band he heard one night at Toronto's famous El Mocambo nightclub.

Speaking in a phone interview from Rochester, N.Y., where the band had played Wednesday night, Red Rider guitarist/lead vocalist/songwriter Cochrane said he considers **Breaking Curfew** a reaction to both commercialism in rock and the trend to electronics, though personally he appreciates both.

"What I wanted was to purge ourselves of that, make it more from the gut ... without making a heavy metal album, either."

"I think it's just a natural process," said Cochrane of Red Rider's musical evolution. "You have to tap into your instincts."

But Cochrane feels that, more important than creating a flashy sound on vinyl, is composing a song that goes over well in concert.

"Is this song going to translate well live? That was our only criterion" in assessing the productions on **Breaking Curfew**, according to Cochrane.

For him, and for Red Rider, playing live is the key to gaining fans and to being satisfied as a musician.

"The one-on-one with the audience" is the most important aspect, said Cochrane. "... That's the way music was at the beginning, and the way it is today."

Though many of their songs are in an accustomed pop/rock style, Cochrane said he frequently faces an odd fan reaction to his songs as they appear on record.

"People say to me, 'Your lyrics are awfully heavy, awfully depressing,'" noted Cochrane.

"But live," he added, "there's a resolution to that."

## CLUB SCENE—JIM ZEBORA



*Red Rider*

Cochrane cited what he termed "elements of humanity" that he says are more apparent in concert than on Red Rider's records. The band, said Cochrane, can experiment with and interpret songs, but it's up to the audience, finally, to find their meaning.

And like most rock musicians, Cochrane would like to see that happen in a big way. Thus far, Red Rider has sold perhaps 200,000 of each of their albums in the U.S., but the way Cochrane talks, he wouldn't mind going for the gold.

"It's just a matter of us breaking with an AM (radio) single one of these days," said Cochrane, at the same time admitting that Red Rider just might not be seen by fans as a singles band.

But, if you're interested, that's a stylistic judgment you can make for yourself. Red Rider will be appearing Sunday at the Agora, opening for the Romantics, Detroit's latest "big thing" who had a major hit recently with

"Talking in Your Sleep."

Red Rider's desire live, said Cochrane is "to capture a mood in a moment." You can see if they do that, too.

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It's a rocking week, for once, with some tough choices and a lot of stamina necessary if you want to see everything. But it'll sure be fun to try.

The biggest show of the week is tonight at the New Haven Coliseum, where the Go-Gos will take the stage after an absence from local venues of nearly two years.

In the interim, both artistic differences and the illness of several mem-