



December 17, 2009

## Hüsker Dü's long gone, but Grant Hart still waxes hot

*By Peter Bothum*  
*The News Journal*

It's almost essential for a boxer to have a good left hook.

A left-handed pitcher probably should have a decent curveball or other companion pitch, or else he'll get knocked around if he can't locate his fastball (See: Hamels, Cole). And it seems the pass-happy Eagles finally have figured out you have to run every once in a while if you want to win in the NFL.

The rule of the second option also applies in music. The Beatles wouldn't have been The Beatles without George Harrison's tunes. The Clash needed Mick Jones' sugarcoated approach to sweeten Joe Strummer's gruff punk. Fans of the niche genre alt-country know that without Jeff Tweedy's early contributions -- which complemented Jay Farrar's songs -- Uncle Tupelo never would have created a buzz, which meant Wilco never would have existed.

But the presence of more than one singer-songwriter also can cause some serious friction, as it did in those three bands and Hüsker Dü, which featured primary force Bob Mould and **Grant Hart**, who also wrote, sang and played drums.

A lot of people don't know or care about Hüsker Dü, but it's a stone-cold fact that the Minneapolis band changed music in the 1980s and was a huge influence on The Replacements, R.E.M., The Pixies, Green Day and Nirvana -- members of each group have said so on the record.

And if that's true, then Hart is important because Hüsker Dü would have not been Hüsker Dü without his contributions. His songs "The Girl Who Lives On Heaven Hill" and "Terms of Psychic Warfare" represent two huge concrete beams in the foundation of the classic album "New Day Rising." The building up and breaking down in "Every Everything" sets the tone of extreme tension on 1985's "Flip Your Wig." And "Pink Turns to Blue," found deep in 1984's "Zen Arcade," not only stands as the best song on what most fans consider the band's best album, but it also sounds like at least four Pixies songs which came after it.

But Hart's songs mostly had a more minor-chord, classic rock feel to them, and the resulting creative tension and rivalry between him and fellow artistic force Mould led to Hüsker Dü's demise in late 1987 (as did Hart's drug addiction and the loss of the band's manager to suicide).

After Hüsker Dü, Hart sandwiched solo albums around a five-year run with a new band, Nova Mob.

These days Hart still is cranking music, including the new "Hot Wax," a collection of thrashing songs that show Hart hasn't lost anything since the Hüsker Dü days. His current tour, which swings into Philadelphia's World Cafe Live next week, also has seen him get his due from some pretty big names, including Dave Grohl and his Foo Fighters, who pulled Hart up on stage during a recent show in St. Paul, Minn.

Hart plays at the World Cafe Live, 3025 Walnut St., Philadelphia, at 9 p.m. Thursday. The show is part of the venue's Section Upstairs Live! series.

Tickets are \$10 at [www.worldcafelive.com](http://www.worldcafelive.com). To make sure you are seated, instead of standing, place a reservation by calling (215) 222-1400.

## Of note

Wilmington's **Bullbuckers** take to the big stage Sunday when they play the Theater of the Living Arts, 334 South St., Philadelphia, as the opener for **The Slackers**. The show starts at 8 p.m. (\$15 in advance, \$18 day of show; [www.livenation.com](http://www.livenation.com)) ... Hardcore metal legends **Cannibal Corpse** open for **Hatebreed** Sunday at The Electric Factory, Seventh and Callowhill streets, Philadelphia. The show starts at 7 p.m. (\$22; [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)) ... **Slo-Mo** and **Portrait of an Artist** are at The Kennett Flash, 102 Sycamore Alley, Kennett Square, Pa., at 8 p.m. Saturday (\$15 in advance, \$18 day of show; [www.kennettflash.org](http://www.kennettflash.org)).

---