

“Recycle” the Winter Blues Away with Chicago’s Original Earth Friendly Band!

(Saint Charles, IL) No chance to take a tropical vacation this winter? Take an “instant vacation” when OD TAPO IMI Steel Drums & Tropical Pop heats up the historic Arcada Theater in downtown Saint Charles for one show only on Sunday, February 10 at 2 p.m. This family show features “vacation” music ranging from Harry Belafonte to Jimmy Buffett along with tropical twists on favorites like “Soak Up the Sun” by Sheryl Crow and even an island “Twist and Shout” all played on original 55 gallon petroleum oil drums that have been recycled/pounded out into musical instruments. Add to that some organic four part harmonies and you have a band fitting for earth-conscious times!

Often described as “Blue Man Group meets Jimmy Buffett”, the show includes Blue Man Group and Stomp-style percussion numbers accentuated by choreography and special effects and the audience is encouraged to (and always does) attend in their best tropical attire.

The Steel Drum’s Earth Friendly Origins

The name of the band OD TAPO IMI, an acronym that stands for Oil Drums That Are Pounded Out Into Musical Instruments, describes how steel drums are made; what gives the band its tropical sound and it’s earth friendly footprint. Steel drums originated in the 1940s on the island of Trinidad, West Indies from 55 gallon oil drums left behind by the oil industry in Trinidad during World War II.

“These drums are way ahead of their time in that they’re made from original discarded materials, long before it was hip to be ‘green’” said Gerard Brill, the group’s leader and lead steel drum player. He says ‘discarded’ because they don’t have to even be recycled as they are used in their natural state. “What’s ironic is that the drums are putting to good use the very product (empty barrels of petroleum) that may be contributing to the earth’s problems,” said Brill.

In addition, OD TAPO IMI offers all five of their CDs on one tiny 2GB USB Flash Drive saving paper and plastic from the manufacturing and packaging of those five CDs (which are also available in the standard CD format).

While it is unclear exactly who invented the steel drum, folklore has it that Trinidadian Winston “Spree” Simon discovered that a melodic pitch could be derived from dents beaten into the bottom of oil drums. Later, Ellie Mannette, another Trinidadian, fashioned the steel drum into a musical instrument. The only acoustic instrument invented in the 20th century, steel drums operate entirely without electricity, although amplification helps balance the volume of the drums with other instruments.

About OD TAPO IMI

OD TAPO IMI was featured at the Disney Magnificent Mile Festival of Lights Parade, and has performed at Taste of Chicago, Milwaukee’s Summerfest, QVC Home Shopping Network, CBS This

Morning and opened for Jimmy Buffett's tours through the Midwest. Their original music has been played numerous times on MTV, VH1, The Travel Channel, A&E and in major motion pictures including the recent *Monkey Love*.

About OD TAPO IMI Band Members

Many of the band's musicians hail from other well-known bands. For example, trumpeter Roger Reupert, currently performing with "Wicked" at the Oriental Theater in Chicago, was a member of the Nicholas Tremulis band and has performed with the BoDeans, Billy Corgan of Smashing Pumpkins fame, Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick, and Bobby Vinton.

In the 80s, OD TAPO IMI drummer Bob Milan was part of the heavy metal band Surgical Steel that was in the 1985 movie *Thunder Alley* starring Leif Garrett. He also toured with Rob Halford of Judas Priest and Bob Welch of Fleetwood Mac.

"You can see my big hair and leather for about 10 seconds in one part of the movie," said Milan with a chuckle.

Newest member of the group, singer/guitarist Paul Willaert, has worked with producer/engineer Vaughan Halyard who produced Janet Jackson and the band Living Color and Sam Haloren who produced David Bowie's "Young Americans" album.

Brill has his roots as the drummer for pre-Garbage band, First Person, with Butch Vig, Duke Erickson and Steve Marker. Brill was also in the band Timbuk Three, which had the hit record "Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades" shortly after he left the band.

"I was always a day late and a dollar short of hittin' the big time," he laughed.

OD TAPO IMI's five CDs were all recorded and produced at Butch Vig's recording studio, Smart Studios, in Madison, Wisc. Brill first formed the band in 1990 in Madison, moving the band's headquarters to Chicago in 2000. Once in Chicago, he began running the band in the fashion of a Broadway production. While more than 22 musicians make up the band OD TAPO IMI, nine perform at any one time. Each player in the band has 1-2 back-up musicians.

"This allows us to be available for gigs anytime," said Brill.

In spite of the impressive background of many of the members, the band is rather humble.

"I didn't even realize the kind of history some of these folks had until we started asking them," said Brill. "When we get together we just have a great time, there are no egos. We're like a family."

About The Concert

Tickets for the Feb. 10 show start at \$15 and are available at TheArcada.com or by calling 630-587-8400. The kids won't want to miss the "Margaritaville" Fire Department truck that will drop by the Arcada for a visit at noon, two hours before show time.

For more information about OD TAPO IMI visit FunConcert.com.

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