

Magic Bag concert will help out Grande-era musicians

By LIZ HILL
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

The power outages may have postponed the Iggy and the Stooges reunion, but some of Mr. Pop's Detroit contemporaries are ready to rock — for a cause.

Jeffrey Vail, drummer for the late Fred Smith's post-MC5 group Sonic's Rendezvous Band, dreamt up Thursday's Dream Tunes 2003, a concert that will benefit rock 'n' rollers who may not have Iggy's bankroll — or even health insurance.

The show is being put together by the Knights of the Grande Benevolent, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Detroit rock sound of the '60s and '70s and to helping musicians of that era,

“but I can help out some of the musicians and some of the widows.”

The Knights of the Grande Benevolent Corp. took its name from the Grande (pronounced Grand-ee) Ballroom, Detroit's premier venue for rock acts in the late '60s and '70s. Local heroes like the MC5 and the Stooges often shared the stage with superstars like Cream and the Who.

Stoney Mazur of the band Jagged Edge says the Grande was second only to Bill Graham's Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco as far as providing the counterculture with a far-out psychedelic venue.

“The Grande was not only a nightclub,” Mazur, 54, says. “It

or their widows and children, who are need financial assistance. The concert, which will be held at the Magic Bag in Ferndale, is the group's first event.

“We hope to preserve the music and also do some benevolent work for down-and-out musicians,” says Mike Galle, whose publicity company, Special D events, is consulting for the event.

Vail, 54 and living in Royal Oak, says he realized that not everyone from his era was living it up — in fact, some were destitute. So he decided to resurrect some old bands and help out some old friends while he was at it.

“I can't help all the kids in Africa or make a dent on AIDS,” Vail says,

was a happening.”

Mazur (spelled Mazar for performances) will perform with a re-formed Jagged Edge at Dream Tunes. Also performing are Dick Wagner and Frost, SRC with Gary Quackenbush, Savage Grace, 3rd Power and the Gang — all bands that played the Grande in its heyday.

The Magic Bag may not be the Grande Ballroom, but it's a start. And helping fallen comrades is a truly grand cause.

Plus, if you think the old guys can't kick out the jams, think again.

“They are all better than they used to be,” Vail says. “I dare anyone to stand up and say, ‘This ain't happening.’ It's going to be one hell of a show — it'll blow your mind.”