

# Billboard



*alent*

MARCH 16, 1985

**THE RAYBEATS  
THE MOSQUITOS**  
*Irving Plaza, New York*  
*Tickets \$10*

THE RAYBEATS HAVE BEEN a New York club favorite for about five years now, but it was obvious from the ovation for the openers that many were here on Feb. 1 to catch the Mosquitos. There has been quite a—excuse the pun—buzz around town for this Long Island quintet, and their set at Irving Plaza suggested that they may be the most exciting new pop band in town.

The Mosquitos take their main cue from the '60s Merseybeat sound. Lead vocalist/songwriter Vance Brescia is often reminiscent of the Hollies' Alan Clarke: He's a natural master of melody, has a

sharp lyrical sense, and knows how to pace a set. The band, meanwhile, supports him with impeccably arranged harmonies that draw from the likes of the Byrds and the Zombies.

But the Mosquitos aren't just another neo-'60s band. Original tunes like "I Know A Secret," "I Apologize" and "Darn Well" (which leads off the new ROIR cassette album "Garage Sale!") easily outshone the band's covers of '60s classics like "Kicks" and "Hang On Sloopy." With an indie EP due imminently, one suspects that the Mosquitos' bite will be far-reaching.



Garage bands like the Mosquitos revive musical sounds of the '60s

# Mosquitos buzz into town

By Claudia Perry  
Times-Dispatch staff writer

With beach music, psychedelia and other musical styles that were prevalent in the '60s making a comeback, it was probably inevitable that garage bands would have their turn in the spotlight.

When American kids heard the likes of the Searchers, the Beatles and Gerry and the Pacemakers, they took to their garages and tried to approximate the nasal singing style and the jangly guitars prevalent in England at the time.

The Mosquitos are aware of garage history, but the Long Island quintet is a modern pop band that turned up on a cassette compilation of garage bands—"Garage Sale" (ROIR A-135).

The Mosquitos are playing at Rockitz tonight with The Guilty. Doors open around 8:30 p.m.

Vince Brescia, who writes most of the band's songs, says he wasn't consciously trying for that raw, garage sound on the compilation track, "Darn Well."

"I had these songs and just wanted to do them," Brescia said. "I didn't intend for them to sound like a garage band. If you listen to the record, it sounds more modern.

"I'm not ashamed to be labeled 'a garage band.' That's to our advan-

tage, because it's very popular right now. You can tell we listen to that stuff, but we're not a period piece. We have more of a pop approach."

Since the cassette was released, the Mosquitos have put out an EP, "That Was Then, This Is Now" (Valhalla VXS-6004). The band usually plays in and around Manhattan and, occasionally, upstate New York.

"We're trying to hook up a tour and go out of town more," Brescia said. "We want to play around, then go back in the studio, record some more and then make the approach [to larger record labels]."

Some people might think it's pretty nervy for a band with six recorded songs to be headlining shows. Brescia said there's more to the band than what's on vinyl.

"It costs money for recording time," he said. "We really just wanted to give a sample of what we were. It's not even the most of what we are. Nobody really knows who we are, so we don't want to give them a double album like some people."

Brescia wrote all the songs on the EP, two of them were written with Ed Davis. He said his function in the band is songwriter.

"As of now, we're not doing anyone else's songs, but it doesn't mean we

won't be. It's just the momentum of things lately. The co-writer [Davis] is not in the band. I do most of my co-writing with him. If you saw him, you wouldn't believe he wrote those songs. He's an incredible tattooed biker guy."

The band took its name from band that appeared on "Gilligan Island."

"When I first started this band, wasn't a serious thing. I wanted to play my songs. If it didn't work out would sell my equipment and go college. I just picked it out of nowhere. We couldn't have a name like Destiny or Renaissance with what we do."

## Jaycees slate run in Brandermill

The Brandermill Jaycees will hold a five-kilometer run for the benefit of the Muscular Dystrophy Association at 9 a.m. Aug. 24 beginning and ending at Market Square in Brandermill.

Advance registration is \$5 and registration the day of the race is \$6. Further information is available from 358-7131.

## THE VOICE OF RECORD COLLECTING

OCT./NOV. '85  
NO. 11

\$1.75 (U.S.)  
\$2.50 (CAN.)

# R.P.M.

*Record Profile Magazine!*

### GETTING STUNG BY THE MOSQUITOS By Suzy Creamcheese

To celebrate the release of their debut effort, *That Was Then, This Is Now*, (Valhalla Records) the Long Island-based Mosquitos hosted a record release carnival. Manhattan's infamous dancehall, Irving Plaza, provided the setting while the Mosquitos created the scene. And what a scene it was! The usually staid club was vividly transformed upon entering; Mosquitos balloons-of-your-choice filled the lobby and a maypole attached with a gigantic sign beckoned, "welcome!"

Following up the stairs—the walls of which were inundated with Mosquitos posters chronicling the "then and now" of the band's four year history—only hinted at the enchantment within. The cavernous ballroom had become a magical festival, the likes of which you fondly remember from yesteryear.

There were games and cotton candy, hot dogs and more balloons. Multi-colored streamers lined the skyhigh ceiling, while carnival music blared through the speakers. A "Rembrandt" painted faces, while a clown rode on a unicycle and a snake charmer charmed the socks off the daring with a (don't worry, folks!) fake boa constrictor. A pie eating contest (ugh!) ensued and — quick, one, two, three — the streamers were cut from their second floor heights, encircling the audience below (like New Year's!) and the Mosquitos were on!

The uninitiated should know that the Mosquitos were recently included on the Goldmine/ROIR compilation, *Garage Sale!* Taking their cue from the '60s Mersey beat sound, the Mosquitos blend harmonious pop sensibilities with a decidedly '80s edge.



**The Mosquitos**

With the release of *That Was Then, This Is Now*, the quintet has captured the melodies that have delighted the evergrowing Mosquitos population — audience-wise, that is! Original compositions, *Put Your Foot Down*, and *I Know A Secret*, as well as the new EP's title tune, will ensure the bands success.

Soon to embark on a major tour, the Mos-

quitos (featuring Vance Brescia, Tony Millions, Iain Morrison, Steven Prisco and Mitch Towse) hope to come to your town. While it won't be possible to bring the carnival on the road, you can bet each performance will be an event not to be missed. Catch 'em when they breeze (I mean buzz!) into town.

# Goldmine

RECORD  
COLLECTOR'S  
marketplace

December 6, 1985

**The MOSQUITOS**  
**That Was Then, This Is**  
**Now!**  
**Valhalla (VXS-6004)**

If you're attuned to the latest trends in rock, you know that there's a sort of garage band revival going on. Actually, there have always been garage bands belting out sometimes clever and sometimes crude rock 'n' roll, no matter what the era. What is hot these days is the garage band sound ala 1966, i.e., cheesy organ riffs, guitar fuzz, and upbeat, three chord rhythms fortified with lyrics about adolescence and the things that go with it.

The Mosquitos have been labeled a garage band and linked to this revival. Not true. The Mosquitos are a wonderful pop-rock outfit out of Long Island that seems to have left the garage and basement band mentality years ago. Possessing a sound that is richly melodic and tightly woven, the Mosquitos are purveyors of a '60s pop sound that is much more accessible than 90 percent of the current garage band, revival stuff around.

The songs that comprise this most impressive five-track EP are carefully crafted and remarkably solid on all counts, and never fail to reveal a '60s umbilical chord. The ringing guitars and clean harmonies are giveaways every time. "I Know A Secret" sounds very much like Marshall Crenshaw had a hand in writing it (he didn't). "If I'm Lucky" does justice to every mid-'60s pop nuance in memory.

All this is not to say the Mosquitos are a '60s revivalist band, either. Their sound may indeed be strongly influenced by '60s sounds, but this is a now band, playing now music.

(299 Madison Ave., Ste. 404, New York, NY 10017)

Robert Santelli



The Mosquitos