

Formed out of those jam sessions. Cinderella Backstreet ignored the typical Top 40 cover band material and instead featured tracks by the likes of David Bowie, Eddie Cochran, Mott the Hoople, the Stooges, T. Rex, and the Velvet Underground in addition to Peter's own compositions. Somewhat uniquely, the group also featured a Mellotron player (Cynthia Black) as well as a lead guitarist (Rick Kalister) who played a homemade guitar. The band was rounded out by the accomplished rhythm section of Albert Dennis on bass and Scott Krauss on drums. Though Cinderella Backstreet only lasted about four months, the group played regular gigs at the fabled Viking Saloon as well as at The Change, one of Cleveland's earliest gay bars.

Following Cinderella Backstreet's split, Peter stayed busy doing the occasional solo show as well as some duo shows with his friend and vocalist Helen York, who performed under the name Ruby Port. Peter and Ruby also did a handful of gigs with pickup bands they formed such as Le Jazz Dogfood, Brain Damage, and Ruby and The Harptones (which also featured future MTV VJ Nina Blackwood on harp).



BLUE DRIVERS, FALL 1973

CINDERELLA
BACKSTREET
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A BLACK ORCHID PRODD



In August, Peter began writing reviews for the local independent newspaper *Star* and would continue to do so until the end of the year.

In the fall of 1973, Peter was accepted at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), where he planned to study English. It is unknown how long he stayed in school as he kept himself busy with his music, forming Blue Drivers, a hard-edged blues band in a similar vein as the Mr. Stress Blues Band and local heroes Jimmy Ley and the Coosa River Band. Joining Peter were Mike Sands, former Orville Normal bassist Andrew "Saint" Baird, Tiny Alice harmonica player David Krauss, and drummer Leo Ryan (older brother of Pat Ryan, soundman for Cinderella Backstreet and later Pere Ubu). Saint believes the group only did a handful of gigs, and Sands recalls the group imploding after a disastrous show in mid-October at Firelands College in Huron. That same month, Peter also played a few gigs as the guitarist for the Tiny Alice Jug Band, which was a revival, of sorts, of the original Tiny Alice, both of which included David Krauss.

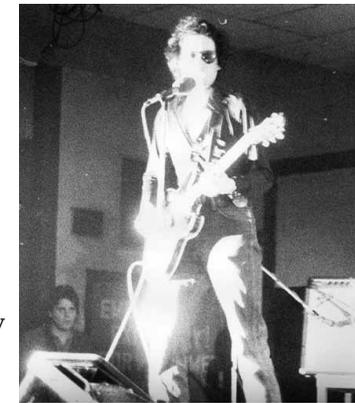
Peter seems to have spent the rest of 1973 concentrating on his writing

for *Star* as well as *Zeppelin*, another local paper, but could not stay out of a band for long. Shortly before he and Charlotte moved to Akron in early 1974, Peter approached former Poor Girls Susan Schmidt and Deborah Smith about forming a new version of Cinderella Backstreet with drummer Eric Ritz. The group – called alternately Cinderella's Revenge and Cinderella Backstreet's Revenge – played its first show at a Gay Activists Alliance benefit at CWRU on February 24, 1974. Opening the show was an Akron group named Tin Huey whose saxophonist – Lachlan McIntosh – would soon quit to join Cinderella's Revenge (and was replaced in Tin Huey by Ralph Carney). After three shows in Cleveland in early-to-mid May 1974, Cinderella's Revenge broke up, though it was not to be the end of Peter's working relationship with the members of the band.

On June 27, 1974, the local rag *Scene* announced that Peter would be recording six songs with numerous former bandmates along with Robert Bensick of Hy Maya (and former Orville Normal guitarist Alan Greenblatt (aka Alan Greene). While this session does not seem to have taken place, a one-shot collective – Fins – more than likely came out of this assemblage.

Consisting of Peter, Robert Bensick, Scott Krauss, Lachlan McIntosh, and Deborah Smith, Fins – previously incorrectly referred to as The Finns – are known to have given at least one live performance at a Coventry block party in Cleveland Heights on July 27, 1974. The group's 75 minute set included an eclectic mix of covers and improvisational jamming, much of which drew influence from all of the members' previous bands.

Peter and Charlotte returned to Cleveland in late August/early September and moved into a building named The Plaza, located on Prospect Avenue. He began contributing to *Exit* (and would do so until August 1975),



PL WITH RFTT, THE AGORA, CLEVELAND, MAY 5, 1975

a Cleveland bi-monthly independent newspaper, as he had ceased writing for *Zeppelin* in May.

It was also during this period that Peter joined Rocket From The Tombs (RFTT), whom he encountered by chance earlier in the summer at the Viking Saloon. RFTT's singer, former *Scene* writer David Thomas, then going by the *nom-de-plume* Crocus Behemoth, worked the door and artist David Bloomquist, who co-owned The Plaza with Allen Ravenstine, tended bar.

RFTT were quite a different band at this stage, having grown out of the musical comedy/parody act The

Great Bow-Wah Death Band which had featured Thomas among others. RFTT had been co-formed by Thomas with jokesters and Funn Bunns members Charlie Wiener (born Kim Zonneville) and Glen "Thunderhand" Hach. Drummer Tom "Foolery" Clements and teenage guitar wizard Chris Cuda completed the initial line-up.

The six-piece RFTT played exactly one show opening for British heavy metal act U.F.O. at Cleveland's famed venue the Agora on October 21, 1974. Wiener, Hach, Clements, and Cuda all departed the group following this gig and guitarist Gene "Cheetah Chrome" O'Connor, along with drummer Johnny "Madman" Madansky (later known as Johnny Blitz), joined around November. Bassist Craig Bell, then still a member of the Lakewood band Mirrors, completed the line-up soon afterwards.

The "new" RFTT made its debut at what was dubbed the "Special Extermination Music Night" at the Viking Saloon on December 22, 1974 where they were joined by Mirrors and the brutal and somewhat extreme combo electric eels. Owing to his obligation to Mirrors, Bell did not play with RFTT at this gig.

Bell also had to sit out RFTT's set at the second