

despite his clothing appearing in fashion magazines all over the world and collaborations with A-list producers. One of the musical projects Hong Kong will get to experience at the show is the Terryaki Boyz, a four-man MC lineup with Nigo as DJ spinning beats down back.

Comprising a bite-sized list of Japanese hip hop personalities, the Boyz are MC Verbal of J-pop

Rip Slyme, credited with Japan's first million-selling hip hop album.

Terryaki Boyz made their recording debut in 2006 with the album *Beef or Chicken*, their mostly Japanese sing-song rhymes sitting pretty atop a production rap sheet including the impressive likes of the Neptunes, Ad Rock of the Beastie Boys, Daft Punk, Mark Ronson and DJ Shadow.

With producers like that, it's hard to miss, and though the Boyz

fun stuff. Think jumpy electro beats with Daft Punk spiky hip hop with the Neptunes and a whole lot of easy pop swagger, and you have a great little segue into the equally fun boys from N.E.R.D.

As the rock project of supernova hip hop producers the Neptunes, N.E.R.D are generally under a fair amount of scrutiny. The trio, made up of Pharrell Williams, Chad Hugo and Shay Haley, debuted in 2001 to

received reviews from glowing to scathing for its goofy, all-over-the-place energy. So, what's the word on their upcoming album *Seeing Sounds*, due in June?

Producing as the Neptunes, Williams and Hugo recently finished remixing Madonna, Britney and the Hives. And they've apparently been using some rather alternative percussion techniques – during a *Rolling Stone* interview this year, the

the new Madonna album too – it's predominantly five-gallon paint buckets, tin paint cans and a couple times there were Moet ice buckets."

The first single from the album, *Everyone Nose*, is online and if it's any indication, *Seeing Sounds* is going to be a far more club-ready sound, full of the fat, energetic jangles Williams and Hugo are arguably best at.

Rockabilly's revival of the fittest

Marco Di Maggio's passion for rock's forerunner began with his neighbour's Elvis collection. Alan Warboys hears how this latter-day king never looked back

Italian ace Marco Di Maggio has been dubbed "the coolest rockabilly on the planet", but probably the best indication of his ability comes from those who have been in the rock 'n' roll game for decades.

"I played with the greatest: Mark Knopfer, B.B. King, Eric Clapton. I can say that Marco Di Maggio is one of them," was the verdict of Dire Straits drummer Terry Williams.

Even those as long in the tooth as Bob McCarver, one-time manager of Jerry Lee Lewis, and Bob Kelly, a songwriter for Gene Vincent, have talked up the axeman from Florence.

Di Maggio is a performer who is not only cognisant of the roots of rock 'n' roll, but a man determined to advance the cause. In town this week with the Di Maggio Connection, he'll play alongside local rockers El Destroyo as part of a world tour presented by the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, which also takes them to the mainland, Finland and Norway.

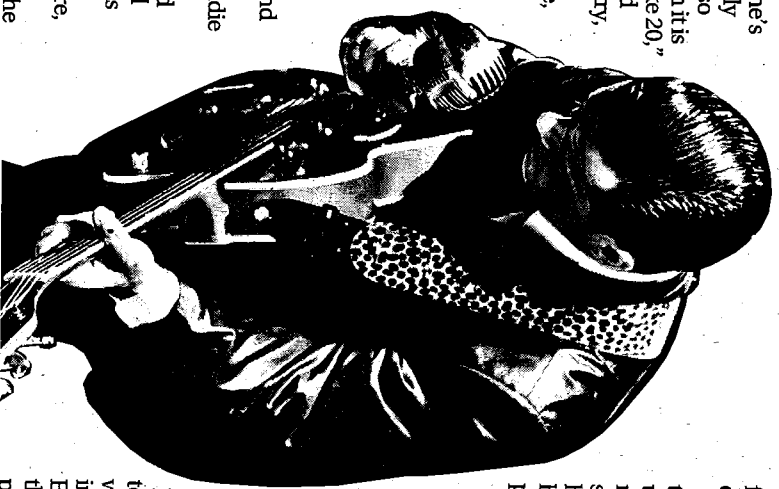
Di Maggio's guitar styles range from power surf to rock 'n' roll

swing, country and blues, but he's happy to be labelled a rockabilly star. "Playing rockabilly is not so easy. The biggest difficulty with it is to make three chords sound like 20," he says. "You need to listen and learn many styles: blues, country, western swing, hillbilly, swing, rhythm 'n' blues and, of course, rock 'n' roll."

Rockabilly emerged in the 1940s and 50s, the forerunner of rock 'n' roll that played a hand in spawning Elvis and reshaping the history of music. It fused hillbilly sounds with rock, but also drew on jazz,

blues and swing, developing in the vibrant music scene of the southern US, particularly around Memphis, Tennessee. Heroes of the era include Bill Haley, Eddie Cochran and Ray Gelato.

The movement was eclipsed by pop in the 60s and remained out of favour until the Stray Cats led a revival in the 80s. Since then it has remained a cult genre, with a significant number of "neo-rockabilles" continuing the



fashion of tight trousers, brothel-creep shoes and bolo neckties.

Di Maggio certainly has the look to match the sound. He first picked up a guitar at age six. "From that moment I've never stop playing and singing," he says. Within two years he was on stage, and at the age of 10 he made his television debut, performing a Rod Stewart song.

After a neighbour gave him a pile of Elvis records, Di Maggio was intrigued by the King's slower bluesy numbers, such as *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* and *It's Now or Never*. His brother, then 15, was doing Elvis covers, creating a hip-shaking stage persona.

The brothers formed their first band when Marco was 12, forging the Sharks with another pair of brothers and styling themselves as rockers with slicked-back hair and leather jackets. He was then drawn to jazz, blues and rockabilly. He went on to play in a series of bands in his native Florence, starting with Eddie & the Houserockers and the Di Maggio Bros, with whom he produced a demo that prompted

Bob Timmers, president of the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, to sign them up and produce an album, one of nine he's put out to date under various guises.

In 2004 he formed the Di Maggio Connection with himself on guitar and vocals, Matteo Giannetti on double bass and Marco Barsanti on drums. Their blend of music was described by one reviewer as "an exciting, explosive cocktail of all the coolest music styles".

The Hong Kong connection, meanwhile, is local-based rockabilly outfit El Destroyo – composed of frontman New Zealander Billy Dean-Cochran, bassist Maggie Chang and drummer Babatunji Heath. They promise to get the party started early at both shows this weekend.

The great 2008 Rockabilly Robbery Tour, tomorrow, 10pm, Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd, Central, HK\$120 (advance), HK\$150; Sat, 10pm, Pier Pressure, Central Ferry pier No 4, HK\$180 (with open bar). Inquiries: 3427 3820

Outral

Here comes the R Elton John may have been in Hong Kong for a month, but that hasn't stopped him from touring the world. He's got numbers from his first album, *Rocky Mountain*, to his latest, *Wonderful World*.

The Englishman to play Hong Kong is Elton John. He's got numbers from his first album, *Rocky Mountain*, to his latest, *Wonderful World*.

Although bass playing is second fiddle to guitar, four-stringed instruments managed to stay in vogue for two decades.

Stu Hamm is one of the most influential electric guitarists of the half-century and the image of the instrument revolutionized rock music. He introduced slapping chords and harmonics. Aspiring bassists learn some of his tricks from his virtuoso comes to the Megabass in Kowloon. Tickets cost HK\$70 a pop. Inquiries: 3427 3820