

# JOHN CAFFERTY

**What you think when you hear the name "John Cafferty"** has a lot to do with where you're from. If you hail from Rhode Island or the nearby states on the Eastern Seaboard, you know Cafferty as the leader of the Beaver Brown Band, a hard-working combo who've been rocking venues both small and large since the mid-'70s with their tough but passionate blue-collar sound. If you're from anywhere else, you know Cafferty as the voice of Eddie Wilson, the doomed rock & roll star played by Michael Pare in the **hit movie Eddie and the Cruisers**.

Born and raised in North Providence, Cafferty got his start in music when he was in junior high, forming a teenaged garage band called the Nightcrawlers with some friends in 1965. The Nightcrawlers evolved into the East-West Blues Band, who played a steady stream of gigs at school dances and teen clubs around the state until high school graduation broke up the band. While attending Rhode Island College, Cafferty ran into an old friend, drummer Kenny Jo Silva, who was playing in a band called the Luvin' Kynd; Silva's group had just lost their lead singer, and he invited Cafferty to become their new vocalist. By 1972, the Luvin' Kynd had broken up, and Cafferty and Silva opted to form a new group. Influenced by the hard-edged, soulful sound of the J. Geils Band, the rhythms of classic R&B, and the swaggering style of vintage rock & roll, Cafferty and Silva assembled a band from some of the best players on the Rhode Island club scene, including Gary "Guitar" Gramolini, bassist Pat Lupo, Bobby Cotoia on keyboards, and sax player Paul Jackson. Taking their name from a can of paint, Beaver Brown holed up in a makeshift rehearsal space in Providence for close to a year, honing their sound before playing their first show in the spring of 1973. They were soon gigging full-time, earning a reputation as one of the tightest and most crowd-pleasing acts in Rhode Island, and in 1977, Paul Jackson left the group, while Michael "Tunes" Antunes, a veteran of New England rock and R&B bands since the early '60s, came aboard on sax.

With Beaver Brown's definitive lineup in place, the group's following began to spread across the East Coast and into the Midwest, and in 1980 the group recorded their first single, "Wild Summer Nights" b/w "Tender Years." The self-released 45 received steady airplay in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cleveland, and ended up selling over 10,000 copies. In 1982, producer Kenny Vance was hired to coordinate the music for a film adaptation of P.F. Kluge's rock & roll novel Eddie and the Cruisers, and he hired Beaver Brown to provide the sound of the fictive band. Cafferty and Beaver Brown re-recorded both sides of their single and a number of their best original tunes for the film, as well as a handful of rock & roll oldies, and Antunes was given a small role as the band's saxophone player. When Eddie and the Cruisers was released to theaters in 1983, it was a box-office dud, but the soundtrack album sold well with Beaver Brown's East Coast fans, and after the film began playing on HBO, it re-launched the album.

With the group credited as John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band, the Eddie and the Cruisers soundtrack went triple platinum on the strength of the hit singles "On the Dark Side"

and "Tender Years," and Scotti Brothers, the Sony-distributed label that released the soundtrack, quickly signed Cafferty and Beaver Brown to a record deal. The first proper album from John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band, *Tough All Over*, was released in 1985, and it spawned a pair of Top 40 singles, "C-I-T-Y" and "Tough All Over." In 1989, they once again impersonated Eddie and the Cruisers for the soundtrack of *Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives*. Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band would continue to contribute songs to hit films, including *Rocky IV*, *Cobra*, *Jersey Girl*, and *There's Something About Mary*. John still tours with the Beaver Brown Band and plays regularly with The Stormbringer band as a solo act.