

This CD cover image released by Oklahoma Records shows 'The Very Last Day,' by Parke. — AP

Parker Millsap sings Bible Belt blues

The first song is "Hades Pleads" and the last is "Tribulation Hymn," which means Parker Millsap takes his audience to hell and back. It makes for an entertaining trip. Millsap's songs are strong, and so is his tent-revival tenor, which straddles the divide between Saturday night and Sunday morning. The 23-year-old Oklahoman's breath control needs work, showing he's still a raw talent, but his scoops, slides and octave leaps suit the material.

While Millsap sings Bible Belt blues with melisma and charisma, he receives excellent support from his band mates and guests including Sara Watkins, Sarah Jarosz and Aoife O'Donovan. The Old Testament provides inspiration, and Millsap covers lots of ground, from temptation and seduction to devotion and tolerance. The opening cut rocks as hard as an unplugged band can, while "You Gotta Move" convincingly covers the Rev. Gary Davis. "Hands Up" offers a clever, sympathetic look at a holdup from the perp's perspective, but best of all is the title tune. It provides a swaggering soundtrack for the Apocalypse, which could come in handy sometime. — AP



Axl Rose and AC/DC

Axl Rose to front AC/DC

Axl Rose is already generating excitement over a Guns N' Roses reunion, but a report says he has another project that could thrill even more fans-fronting AC/DC. The Australian heavy metal veterans halted a tour this month and said they would likely hire a guest vocalist as 68-year-old frontman Brian Johnson was at risk of completely losing his hearing if he kept performing. A radio host in Atlanta, where AC/DC stopped its tour, said that he had spotted Rose in the city and that he was practicing with the band.

"It's all but a done deal that Axl will front AC/DC for the 10 remaining shows" in the United States, host Jason Bailey said on his show on rock station WNNX. Representatives for Rose and AC/DC did not immediately comment yesterday. Rose, with his high-pitched but wide-ranging voice and emotional passion, led Guns N' Roses as the heavy metal band became a

global but short-lived sensation after its 1987 debut album "Appetite for Destruction." The band will reunite for the first time since 1993 with its original lineup-including guitarist Slash, who frequently clashed with Rose-next month for the Coachella festival in California and several other shows.

Johnson, known for his punishingly harsh vocal style, has reportedly voiced dismay at his swift departure from AC/DC. US comedian and radio host Jim Breuer recently said he met with Johnson who felt "kicked to the curb" by his bandmates as he believed his hearing issues were not as serious as announced. Johnson joined AC/DC in 1980 after singer Bon Scott died following a night of heavy drinking. His first work with the band, "Back in Black," remains one of the top-selling albums of all time. — AFP

Rock star Dave Grohl backs teenage band in noise row

US rock star Dave Grohl weighed in to support an unsigned English teenage band on Wednesday after they were prevented from practicing in a family garage due to local noise restrictions. The Foo Fighters frontman and former Nirvana drummer penned a letter to the local council in Cornwall, southwest England, after the four members of rock metal band Black Leaves of Envy appealed for his support. "That's the story of Nirvana basically, young musicians starting off in a garage," 17-year-old Adam Jones, lead guitarist and singer with the group, told AFP.

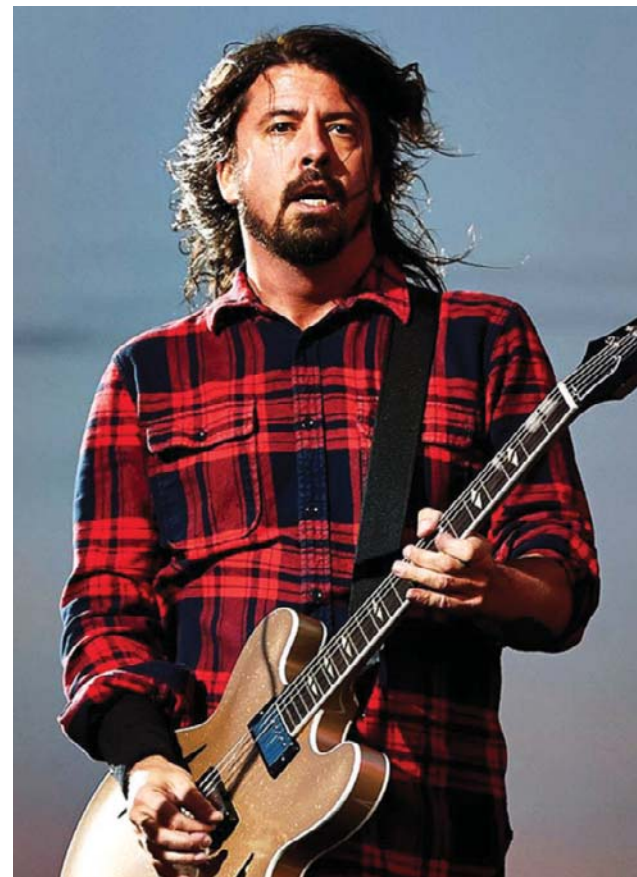
"It's pretty surreal, we sent the letter off to ask for his support... We were all shocked when we got the reply." Jones said the band members, all aged between 15 and 17, had been unable to practice for months as letters from the council threatened steep fines if they broke a noise limit of 30-40 decibels-about the level of a fridge humming. In his letter, which was published on Foo Fighter social media accounts and quickly shared by thousands, Grohl stressed the importance of allowing young musicians to practice and urged Cornwall Council to reconsider the rules.

"My name is Dave Grohl, and I'm writing on behalf of the local music group Black Leaves of Envy," he wrote. "It has been brought to my attention that the band is having difficulty functioning within the current noise restrictions placed upon them by the Cornwall Council." Grohl recalled the importance of music as a creative outlet that helped him through "difficult years" growing up in Springfield, Virginia. "For musicians that lack the resources to rehearse in professional facilities, a garage or basement is the only place they have to develop their talent and passion," he wrote.

"For the sake of your local band Black Leaves of Envy, and for the generations of young musicians that they may eventually inspire, I ask you reconsider the restrictions put upon the volume of their private rehearsal space." Cornwall Council did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesman previously told local press that "certain activities are not appropriate for the area in which they occur" but that it would work with all parties to resolve any issues.

Black Leaves of Envy released their first record, an EP of four songs, in late 2015 and have played some small shows around their town of Helston. "It's amazing to have someone of with

Grohl's weight back us," Jones said. "We wrote our first EP in that garage and without having that rehearsal time and space we'd be nowhere." — AFP



Dave Grohl

Ken Howard, president of prominent Hollywood union, dies

Ken Howard, president of the prominent Hollywood actors' union SAG-AFTRA, died Wednesday at age 71, the organization said. Howard died at his home near Los Angeles, the union said, without specifying the cause of death. An Emmy and Tony award-winning actor, Howard played an instrumental role in the merger that formed the union. As director of the Screen Actors Guild, a position which he held since 2009, he orchestrated the body's merger with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists in 2012 to form SAG-AFTRA, which now represents some 160,000 performers.

"Ken was an inspirational leader and it is an incredible loss for SAG-AFTRA, for his family and for everyone who knew him," said SAG-AFTRA acting president Gabrielle Carteris, who starred in the 1990s television series "Beverly Hills, 90210." "He led us through tumultuous times and set our union on a steady course of excellence," she said. Howard appeared in a similar '90s series "Melrose Place" and also played lawyer Garrett Boydston on "Dynasty" in the 1980s. In 1978, Howard took on the role of Coach Ken Reeves for the television series "The White Shadow," portraying the white coach of an inner-city basketball team. The show ran for three sea-



This file photo taken on January 29, 2016 shows SAG-AFTRA President Ken Howard during the 22nd Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. — AFP

sons. "Even decades after the show ended, Howard was frequently recognized on the street by fans who greeted him with a handshake and a 'Hey, Coach'," the union statement said.

More recently, he appeared in the hit TV show "30 Rock" alongside Tina Fey and Alec Baldwin. He also had roles in movies such as "Clear and Present Danger," "Rambo IV," "Michael Clayton," "J. Edgar," and "Joy." Howard is the winner of the 1970 Tony Award for his performance in Broadway's "Child's Play" and received an Emmy for his role in the mini-series "Grey Gardens." — AFP