

SUPERTEEN

TALKS TO



Michael Lee Smith is one of the most dynamic lead singers in rock today. Joe Dube (below) is the powerhouse on Starz' drums.



■ Starz is one of the hardest working and fastest rising rock groups in the country, so when they returned home to New York recently for a little R&R (that's rock talk for rest and relaxation) we took the opportunity to chat with them. Brendan and Peter had other appointments and Joe Dube was "who knows where" according to the others, so we spoke with lead singer Mike Smith and guitarist Richie Ranno.

SUPER TEEN: Where did you grow up?

MICHAEL: I was born in Birmingham, but then moved to Atlanta, Jacksonville, Florida, Chicago, South Carolina and back to Atlanta. I've lived in New York now for four years.

RICHIE: I was born in the Bronx, New York but grew up in New Jersey and that's where I live now when we're not on the road.

SUPER TEEN: When did you first get interested in music?

MICHAEL: They had the radio on in the delivery room when I was born and right after they spanked me, I said, "Well, hey, I like that!" Seriously, as long as I can remember I've always loved music. My parents gave me a radio when I was a little kid and ever since then I've had a radio by my bed and listened to it.



Guitarists Brendan Harkin and Richie Ranno do their stuff (above). Peter Seavel (below) plays bass.





Michael (below) and the other members of Starz (above) are real outgas, sometimes, but they're serious about their music!

fact, I have lots of stereo equipment but I still like listening to a little radio next to my bed!

SUPER TEEN: When did you first start playing?

MICHAEL: I started playing guitar when I was about 11 but I was singing even before that.

RICHIE: I started playing piano at 5, the clarinet at 9 and guitar at 14. I hated the piano and clarinet. I couldn't stand carrying this little clarinet around and looking like a jerk! (Laughter) The first time I saw someone play an electric guitar, I said,

"That's what I want to do!"

SUPER TEEN: What groups were your favorites when you were teenagers?

RICHIE: Gene Vincent, Chuck Berry.

MICHAEL: Ted Nugent and Kiss!

SUPER TEEN: Oh, come on, we weren't born yesterday!

MICHAEL: I still feel like a teenager, really, but I guess I'd have to say I liked every group that was loud and obnoxious when I was a teenager and I used to watch Paul Revere and The Raiders and all those people on *Where The Action Is*.

SUPER TEEN: Would you like



to reveal your ages?

MICHAEL: Somewhere between 17 and 30. How old did my brother Rex say he was?

RICHIE: We're in our mid twenties, really. I think life begins at 18. When you get out of high school you start to have more control over your life.

SUPER TEEN: Did your parents encourage you when you wanted to get into rock?

MICHAEL: My parents were always behind me because they were always into music themselves. Richie's parents are incredible. They're at almost every concert that's anywhere nearby.

SUPER TEEN: Are the guys in the band good friends offstage, too, or do you just

play together and go your separate ways?

MICHAEL: We're a pretty close knit band. You really have to be when you spend so much time on the road. Richie and I are probably closer to each other, but we also fight with each other more, too.

SUPER TEEN: Are you big sports fans?

MICHAEL & RICHIE: We're N.Y. Yankee fans! We play baseball and hockey and we're probably more sports oriented than any other band.

RICHIE: Michael's so sports oriented, he fell off the stage recently!

MICHAEL: The lights hadn't gone up yet and I just went right off the stage and broke three ribs. Everybody thought I was dead; it was such a shock, and nothing was moving when they went over to me. I've made a good recovery but I still can't find a comfortable way to sleep!

SUPER TEEN: Who would you say has influenced your music the most?

MICHAEL: One thing that influenced me was my father. He used to take me to church and

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he sang in the choir and I always liked the way he looked up there singing. It was kind of special seeing my father sing and I think maybe that's what made me want to be a singer. The first time I saw Elvis I had a big impact on me, too.

SUPER TEEN: What do you say to people who ask you how to get into the music business?

MICHAEL: If they have to ask me that, I tell them they shouldn't. If you're cut out for it, you don't have to ask, you just know that you can do it and you just get out there and work at it.

RICHIE: I never asked anybody how to do it, I just went out and did it. I never wrote letters to guitar players to ask them how they did it. There just isn't any set formula, it's something you have to do yourself.

SUPER TEEN: Can you remember the first song you ever wrote?

RICHIE: Oh yeah. Mine was "You're Really Not My Kind" ... I remember it well (Laughter)

MICHAEL: Mine was something like "Maybe You Don't Like The Way I Comb My Hair". In fact I think I recorded it with Rex on one of those little Juliette tape recorders when we were really young.

SUPERTEEN: Ultimately, what do you want out of life?

MICHAEL: I want to rule the world! (Laughter) What I really would like is a giant house on a hill where I can own all the land as far as I can see around it and I'll have about 20 kids running around and I'll own the town.

SUPER TEEN: What do you like to do when you're not on the road?

MICHAEL: I still work on my music a lot. I run with my Dalmation, Misty. I like flying model airplanes and I enjoy building things. I watch hockey games on TV.

RICHIE: I play baseball. ●

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