

Forward Hall to get hit with the funk

by Erika Jarvis
Staff Writer

After jet setting from the East Coast to the West Coast, recording artist Freekbass will stop in Erie, on Feb. 7 at 10 p.m. at Forward Hall.

Haven't heard of Freekbass? That's ok, you have probably heard of their predecessors, George Clinton and James Brown, and maybe even of their manager, mentor, and producer, Bootsy Collins. Freekbass' music is so eclectic that it cannot be held to one genre. "People confuse funk with disco but they're two totally different types of music. You can dance to both of them, but to me, that is where the comparison ends," said lead bassist Chris "Freekbass" Sherman.

After Collins realized that Chris was such a "freak" on the "bass" he then became known as Freekbass, as did the name of band.

Funk music deep roots in history, taking music styles from all across the board, such as blues, gospel, R&B, and even from the psychedelic era. Yet, with such a widespread background, funk has trickled its way into modern day-music with such artists as Stevie Wonder, Prince, Lenny Kravitz, and Outkast.

"We're in a different era [from George Clinton] and we have different things influencing us," said Sherman. "In terms of our live show it is definitely an energetic kind of thing based upon a groove and upon a song, as well."

Five members make up Freekbass, all with different backgrounds, experiences, and musical influences. Bass keyboards and sax are played by J, who remains in the band while working on a side project of "Four Track All-Stars," a blend of contemporary jazz and modern instrumental music.

With a broad background of jazz, soul, R&B, hip hop, and rock, drummer Mista Swift brings a backbeat of funk odyssey to the band's already eclectic sound.

Bringing in worldly influences on the keyboard is Aaron Mahoney straight from Japan. Mahoney has worked with such bands as the Verve Pipe, Tonic and even U2.

On his Gibson and Les Paul guitars is Sean McGary from Cincinnati, the band's "hometown." Sherman, a prodigy of funk forefather Bootsy Collins, rounds out the band with a bass guitar unlike any other.

"Some people are like 'Is that [bass] an Egyptian symbol?'" said Sherman "Nope, it's a 1-2-3."

Freekbass' live shows can be compared to those of Dave Matthews Band,

not in musical styling, but in how the band "is jamming and kind of just comes up with new stuff as [they] go along."

Their latest song "Up, Up, Up!" can be found towards the end of the show while the band is "high on energy and feeling like [we] are a couple of feet off of the ground just playing it."

Freekbass is definitely not your average band, so the group is excited to see that the music industry is turning away from the teenyboppers of the late 1990s and going more towards indie and emo styles of music.

The band is also excited to see where



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Freekbass' lead bassist Chris Sherman

all the CD burning and MP3 trading will lead the music industry.

"I think 10 or 20 years from now we're going to look back and see it was a revolution. We just can't see it right now because we're in the middle of it," said Sherman.

The band is confident that it will be able to break out into the music scene successfully.

"One of the biggest selling records out of the past year wasn't Britney Spears or 'N Sync, it was the 'O Brother Where Art Thou?' soundtrack," said Sherman. "Who would have thought it'd be a traditional bluegrass record to do that?"

You can expect a lot of touring from the band. It's not out to make a quick MTV hit, but to establish a large fan base from word of mouth, touring, and even from MP3 trading.

Freekbass will be playing at Forward Hall on Feb. 7. For ticket information call 814-434-0549, or visit Freekbass on the web at www.freekbass.com.

Playing 'mind' games



Drew Barrymore can't keep her hands off Sam Rockwell in "Confessions"

PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAP2IT.COM

by Daniel J. Stasiewski
A & E Editor

Before I heard about George Clooney's "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," I didn't know who Chuck Barris was. I'd heard of his creations like "The Dating Game" and "The Gong Show," but as for Barris, I'd never even seen his "E! True Hollywood Story."

My enthusiasm for this film isn't based on some history with Barris' shows. Instead, "Confessions" turns on even a non-fan with its hysterically off-beat comedy and quirky lead. Even though this so-called true story is about as far-fetched as the single-bullet theory, the wacky elements of Barris' Hollywood life make even the most grounded person say, "maybe."

Ever since his first experience at 11-years-old, Chuck Barris (Sam Rockwell) lived for sex. It was what made him get up in the morning and what eventually made him into a producer. Women will sleep with a guy who has drive and ambition. With that idea in mind, Barris decided to become a management trainee at NBC.

Eventually Barris' impulses led him to ABC where he worked on "America Bandstand," and met Debbie. Debbie was just a conquest, but her roommate, the uninhibited Penny (Drew Barrymore), caught and kept Chuck's interest. Penny and Barris became very close. She was even there when Barris' "The Dating Game" was picked-up by ABC, but one aspect of Barris' life had to stay hidden from Penny. Nothing big. It was just that he killed people for the CIA.

Barris' biggest problem was keeping his life as a producer and a CIA hit-man separate. On one of his missions, Barris met Patricia (Julia Roberts), a female spy whose intellect and sex drive both matched Barris'. If his dueling relationships weren't hard enough to handle, Barris was also tagged by his CIA boss Jim Byrd (George Clooney) as a mole. Now, Barris has to find the mole before he ends up in a body bag, and, worse, face the ABC executives as his ratings begin to slip.

"Confessions" is a film that thrives on its ambiguity. The story of a game show impresario turned hit man is downright absurd. While the film doesn't offer any an-

swers to whether or not the Chuck Barris memoir holds any validity, it does add a level of uncertainty, if not credibility, to the story.

The question is best posed by documentary interviews of Barris' colleagues such as "The Dating Game" host Jim Lange and Dick Clark. The interviews add insight into both the man and the myth without interrupting the narrative aspects of the film.

Of course, the film doesn't have much of a narrative. Barris and Byrd's hunt for the mole makes for a definite ending, but it comes on unnaturally, almost as if it were after thought. Barris' life regardless of plot is intriguing, to say the least.

Without Sam Rockwell, however, the film wouldn't have been nearly as entertaining. His Barris-like looks may lead you to believe he was type cast, but his hip, eccentric performance proves there was more to the actor than just messy hair.

Barris' character isn't the film's only fine attribute. First-time director George Clooney proves he has more vision behind the camera than in front. Notorious in Hollywood for his practical joking on set, it's no wonder the bizarre comedic tone is so perfect in Clooney's hands.

Along with stylish technicolor cinematography, Clooney takes this tale from hokey to harrowing in one swoop.

Clooney brought with him an A-list cast, including Roberts and Barrymore, with cameos from stars like Brad Pitt and Matt Damon. Oddly enough, they don't matter. This is probably the most fringe Hollywood film in years. It's a film that would have never been made without a superstar like Clooney behind it, a bittersweet statement to be sure. "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind" has a place in Hollywood history waiting for it, even if only underground.



out of
4 stars

'Confessions of a Dangerous Mind,' directed by George Clooney, starring Sam Rockwell, Julia Roberts, Drew Barrymore, and George Clooney is currently showing at Tinsletown.

LEB Movie of the Week: The Rules of Attraction



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAP2IT.COM
James Van Der Beek is caught breaking the rules.

From the corrupt minds who brought you "Pulp Fiction" and "American Psycho," "Pulp", co-screenwriter Roger Avary adapted and directed "Psycho" writer Bret Easton Ellis' 1987 novel about six collegians in search of a human encounter. R (nudity, sex, profanity, drugs, violence)--Carrie Rickey, Knight Ridder Newspapers

'Rules' will be shown in Reed 117 on Feb. 6 at 9:30 p.m. and Feb. 7-8 at 10 p.m.

Stellar Gospel Awards better late than never on Erie TV

by Olivia Page
Staff Writer

On Jan. 25, the foot-stomping, star-studded Stellar Gospel Music Awards aired on Erie television. Atlanta hosted the 18th annual event.

On the televised segment, Donnie McClurkin said the Stellar Awards were "here to celebrate gospel music and honor the artists who bring their love and faith to audiences around the world."

The hosts of the awards were Donnie McClurkin, Mary Mary, and Michelle Williams. On the un-televised ceremony the Rev. Clifton Davis opened the Awards with a prayer.

The televised segment debuted with Dorinda Clark-Cole's performance of "I'm Coming out with my hands up." She later received awards for Female Vocalist of the Year and Traditional Female Vocalist of the Year.

The Stellar Awards are issued for a wide variety of gospel genres. The nominations for the awards in each category are received and voted upon by the Stellar Awards Gospel Music Academy (SAGMA). SAGMA members are known world-wide for their encouragement and promotion of gospel music.

"I think that it is good that Gospel musicians are being recognized because they put a lot of work into what they do," said Nicole Greene, an eighth semester



PHOTO COURTESY OF GOSPELCITY.COM
Stellar Award hosts Michelle Williams, Donnie McClurkin, and Mary Mary.

Behrend student.

Before Mary Mary performed, host Michelle Williams said "The next group is living proof that if you believe, your dreams can come true. They're part of a new sound in gospel music, blending infectious urban rhythms with the lyrical message of hope and inspiration."

Mary Mary then performed "In the Morning." The audience stood up, dancing side to side, many were even singing the words to the song. Comedian Chris Tucker, added some hu-

mor to the show. Tucker presented the new Hall of Fame Award to Yolanda Adams.

"Yolanda Adams has accomplished what few singers before her have ever achieved, the ability to attract fans from all walks of life, without ever straying from her roots, gospel roots," said Tucker.

Adams was honored by a performance from Kelly Price, who sang her renditions of Adam's songs. Kirk Franklin then introduced Adams, who thought that Franklin should have received the award

for his accomplishments with gospel music.

Adams later received the awards for Contemporary Female Vocalist of the Year, and Urban/Inspirational CD of the Year. Franklin received the awards for Artist of the Year, CD of the Year, and Producer of the Year. His song "Hosanna" also scored awards Song of the Year and Music Video of the Year.

Comedians Chris Jeffries, Chocolate, Small Frie and Chucky Jenkins added laughter from the audience in an un-aired segment. Comedian Jonathon Slocombs referred to the stage janitor as "Snoop Daddy Dogg" and told Chris Tucker that they should do a movie together. He even asked all 100 Clark Sister to stand up.

The aired coverage also featured performances by Dorinda Clark-Cole, Smokie Norful, Michelle Williams, Bren Jones and TPT Mob, Mary Mary, Ted and Sheri, Israel and New Breed, Ramiyah, Kelly Price, and the Canton Spirituals.

The Stellar Awards were actually handed out during the weekend of Jan. 10. Erie County did not receive the coverage of the awards until Jan. 25 when they aired on WGN in a two hour segment. This coverage did air the previous winners listing that could not be aired.