

# MUSIC

## Disney reveals "Rock Band" project

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Initially there was Guitar Hero. Then came Guitar Hero II. Guitar Hero Rocks the 80s, etc. In Dec. of 2007, Harmonix Music Systems, MTV Games and EA Distribution took video games to another level by giving gamers the option to create a video game band, where gamers could play guitar, bass, perform vocals and most importantly, bang on drums, to a wide array of classic songs recorded over the last several decades. Guitar Hero has already grossed over \$1 billion, while Rock Band could be on that same journey, so to say that these have done nothing to the music/gaming industry would be naive. But how far will they go?

Disney has recently revealed that they will be joining in on this new phenomenon that involves music based video games. The new game will be titled "Ultimate Band" and will be featured on the Nintendo Wii and DS, however each version will differ slightly from one another. The most significant feature of these games is that it won't require any "special" types of controllers in order to play the game (unlike Guitar Hero and Rock band, where in order to achieve the maximum level of gameplay, it is necessary to possess the guitars, drums, and microphones).

It is true, the game will not require or even give the option of using "fake instruments". On the Wii, everything will be done with the remote and nunchuck, while on the DS, all that is required is the stylus (all of these accessories are included upon the purchase of one of these gaming systems).

The differences between each game are major, however this does not constitute any type of bad thing by any means. The Wii version is more comparable to the previous games developed in this field since it focuses on the gamer customizing their own rockstar and touring around the world, whether it's a garage show, or a packed stadium. The DS version is more appealing to creative gamers- people that never had the skills to perform musically, but still possess the skills to hear the music in their head. Instead of touring around the world, the DS version actually allows you to record and mix original compositions in a simulated recording studio.

As far as the types of music that will be featured in the game, Disney has said "some of the biggest names in rock, alternative, popular, emo, and indie rock music" will be represented, all the way from the 60s to present day. In addition to this, they have also hinted that a large amount of the modern tracks will include the latest from the Disney Channel stars. It will be interesting to see if Disney succeeds with this latest project. There has already been a similar game for the DS entitled "Jam Sessions" which received mixed reviews. It will also be interesting to see if the emergence and success of this new breed of gaming will have any ultimate effect on the music industry.

"Ultimate Band" is being developed by Fall Line Studios and is expected in stores by Christmas.

## Third Eye Blind to perform at Junker

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Nineties culture is coming to Behrend and it's in the form of Third Eye Blind. Yes, Third Eye Blind, the 90s pop/rock band that many Behrend students grew up listening to, will be appearing at the Junker Center on April 4 this spring. So now the question on most people's minds is where have they been over the last few years?

The answer- touring and some more touring, amongst a few other projects (i.e. they built their own recording studio in between two of their albums). After the bands' latest album *Out of the Vein* (2003), it seemed that they were maturing and recognizing each individual as a crucial member playing a key role to the ultimate sound of the group; realizing how important the music meant to them as a band, to the listeners, and to everyone's lives individually.

But it's been four years and we've seen nothing. Brad Hargreaves, drummer for the band, says there would be more records if it wasn't for the love of touring. "We'd make more albums if we didn't like playing live so much. In a way, I envy hip-hop producers like Missy Elliott, who can stay home and make more records. But they miss out on the intensity of the exchange with a live audience, which I would never give up. But it's hectic and it's crazy, and after two albums back to back I had to stop for a year to rebuild." This was said in between albums *Blue* and *Out of the Vein*. Their fourth expected album, *The Hideous Strength*, was originally intended to release in 2007, but was delayed due to a few reasons. Between the tours, and struggling to find the right words to incorporate with the music, releasing albums to satisfy public demand is a hard task.

But this is not expected to affect the upcoming show by any means, as organizations in the area have already assured the Lion Entertainment Board that 3EB



ALL PHOTOS OF 3EB CONTRIBUTED

Third Eye Blind, pop/alt/rock band originating in the 90s, will appear on April 4 in the Junker Center

puts on a fine show, and why wouldn't they? For our generation it is the perfect blast from the past. This will also be the closest act within the past four years that plucks a string with virtually every music listener. Even if you don't modernly condone the music, most of us can still relate, as it was the music playing on the radio when we were growing up and figuring the world out.

The LEB did their annual survey and attempted to figure which band would best suit Behrend listeners. The list included Taylor Swift, Plain White Tees, Fabulous and a few others, however 3EB seemed like an obvious pick. They're the biggest band that has appeared at Behrend so far, and LEB chairperson Brad Kovalcik seems more than optimistic about this year's candidate. "It's cool to see Behrend have a national band that had a ton of radio singles come to campus. This hasn't happened here in the past."

Indeed, it will be quite a thrill to sing along with Stephan Jenkins (vocals/guitar) to songs such as "Jumper", "London" and the band's first single "Semi-charmed Life" in Behrend's own Junker center. The opening band is still undetermined and the LEB is still looking for a small group of students to

help run the event. Attending the concert will cost \$15 for Behrend students with their PSU ID and \$20 for the general public. Students can purchase tickets at the R.U.B. desk and are limited to two per ID.

So come out on April 4 and sing the songs you used to know.



## Album Reviews in Brief by Christopher LaFuria

### Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks- *Real Emotional Trash*

Stephen Malkmus took psychedelic rock from the early 70s. Weezer's *Pinkerton*, 16 packets of red Kool-Aid and the sincerity of Paul Reubens, put them into a "Fraggle Rock" lunchbox and put it in the microwave for his March 4 release of his first project since fronting the alt-indie pioneer band Pavement. Malkmus & the Jicks, his first project since the 1999 departure of Pavement, is set to release Malkmus' fourth solo album (the second credited to the Jicks).

The properly titled *Real Emotional Trash* is a heavier album, featuring drummer Janet Weiss, bassist Joanna Bolme and guitarist/keyboardist Mike Clark. With lyrics like "Of all my stoned digressions/Some have mutated into the truth," in the track "Dragonfly Pie," much of the album sounds like a baked jam session, while hot-boxing your parents garage during the 12th hour of a jam session.

If you're unfamiliar with Malkmus' work and have never heard Pavement's "Wooze Zowee," this album might not be for you. If you'd like to experience an acid trip without literally consuming the drug, pick up this album, set to be released on Matador Records.

Rating: B

### Howlin Rain- *Magnificent Fiend*

The first track, "Requiem," sounds like the elevator at a jazz lounge, but Howlin Rain's second album, *Magnificent Fiend*, has all the makings to rise above the mere lounge scene. As lead singer Ethan Miller puts it, "The difference between *Magnificent Fiend* and our first record is primarily architectural: How high the castle got built and the intricacies of the workmanship?"

The "workmanship" of the new album is rather evident as it echoes pre-"Smoke on the Water" Deep Purple and the early 70s core-rock revolution. Tracks such as "Dancers at the End of Time" use all four guitarists Mike Jackson, Eli Eckert, Joel Robinow, and Miller to convey messages with their axe licks. There are no lyrics until 1:30 into the song, yet the listener is left with many questions to ponder.

The album is going to be released on Birdman Records and successful producer Rick Rubin's American Records. The band will tour the United States until May, when they depart for Europe to play shows in Ireland and England.

Rating: C+

### Jackson Browne- *Solo Acoustic: Volume 2*

His first acoustic album was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2005, so Jackson Browne should not be reluctant to release his follow-up album, Volume 2. Recorded from live shows in the U.S., the U.K. and Australia, the album stretched all the way back to his live beginnings, back in 1972. The song "Something Fine," the seventh track on the upcoming album, was reviewed by Rolling Stone magazine, saying "Jackson Browne's sensibility is romantic in the best sense of the term: his songs are capable of generating a highly charged, compelling atmosphere throughout, and - just as important - of sustaining that pitch in the listener's mind long after they've ended."

Also, the album touches on his second studio release, *For Everyman*, Browne's hit "Redneck Friend." It also contains four songs, "Never Stop," "The Night Inside Me," "My Stunning Mystery Companion" and "Casino Nation," all of which appear on his most recent 2002 studio album *The Naked Ride Home*.

Browne will release this album in anticipation of his first studio album since *The Naked Ride Home*, expected to be released in fall of this year.

Rating: A-

### The Black Crowes- *Warpaint*

The Black Crowes are excited about their newest album *Warpaint* to the extent that they have a countdown on their website to March 4, the release date. The first album from the Robinson brothers and their posse in seven years, the lyrics are reminiscent of a "good-bye" letter, which may be derived from Chris Robinson's breakup with Kate Hudson. "It won't take long to sing you my song/Full of trouble and despair" ("Woah Mule"), and "Come make love in the sunshine/Come let's share our pain" ("Evergreen")

When it comes down to it, although the album will make a sound on New-Release Tuesday, The Black Crowes are still the pseudo-jam-band-2008-Southern-Rock version of The Kinks, who have their loyal fans, but do not create enough noise to establish themselves in mainstream music markets.

Rating: B+

Know of a good album preparing to release? Write about it and send to rpg5004@psu.edu. Do it.

## Weekly Musical Trivia for The Behrend Beacon

Which musician stated that while few people ever purchased The Velvet Underground's first album, every one of them was inspired to start a band?

- A. Joey Ramone
- B. Frank Black

- C. Kurt Cobain
- D. Brian Eno

Answer to last week's question: D. Richie Havens

## Quote of the week:

"Whether or not it's good, we certainly started to use more colors. It's impossible to please everybody, and it took us a while to learn that. It's just the freedom to say, 'Everyone might not like this. We're into it at the moment, so let's just get it done.'"

-Chris Martin, frontman of Coldplay, on the style of their latest album in the works