

STAND-UP COMEDY

Big man brings big laughs to orientation weekend

BY HEATHER MCGOVERN
news editor

Ronnie Jordan, a well-off comedian awarded "Rookie of the Year" in 2001 after only a year into comedy by Atlanta's Uptown Comedy Club, made a quick pit-stop at Penn State Behrend's campus last Friday night.

One of the sophomore students helping with Freshman Orientation happened to be previously acquainted with Ronnie Jordan and excitedly accounted her previous use of his popular saying, "I hate you a lot." Sonia Rosales shared, "My roommates and I used to quote him every day and whenever we were frustrated."

As a widely known comedian, Jordan proved to be a very humorous break in between the many informational sessions taking place during Freshman Orientation Weekend. Ronnie Jordan was an excellent choice due to his recent popular appeal. According to his website, Jordan was "the crowd favorite on the Miller Lite King and Queens of Comedy Search Tour," aided in introducing the Crown Royal Comedy Soul Fest, "and headlined the RJE Comedy Cabaret Tour 2003." His recent success can only be attributed to his comedic talent.

Jordan's performance initially focused on those identifiable "favorites" of high school nostalgia. Exuberantly describing his overall view of high school bathrooms, awkward classroom entrances, and numerous other embarrassing personal accounts. Jordan seemed to successfully warm up the majority of the crowd as spurts of laughter gradually started filling the room.

Jordan continued by comically identifying with his race, weight, and self-satisfying habits. The freshmen present in McGarvey only responded with



Ronnie Jordan not only joked about his size frequently, but issues dealing with race as well. All new students were welcomed to Behrend with comedic messages of diversity.

more outbursts of laughter as Jordan made a spectacle of himself on stage.

One of the highlight skits Jordan performed entails the many stages of an amusing encounter between himself and a cinnamon with musical accompaniment. Jordan continued heavily commenting on his weight and race, as well as, his current marital life.

Jeff McCarthy, a first semester freshman majoring in business, praised Ronnie Jordan's comedic skit after the show. "He had me laughing from start to finish."

Ronnie Jordan had equally positive remarks about his overall performance. "Tonight was cool," he said. "The freshman shows are kind of cool because everyone is still adjusting

into college." Catering specifically to any given crowd's preferred type of humor is often the most difficult task for comedians.

Jordan continually made outstanding accommodations during his performance by smoothly switching focus from ill-favored topics to more crowd-pleasing subjects or accounts.

Rebecca Edwards, freshman orientation leader, chose to book Ronnie Jordan for his ability to cater to the college-aged audience. Edwards attended a programming conference sponsored by the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) in Nashville, TN during the previous spring semester where she found Ronnie Jordan among

numerous other music, comedy, and miscellaneous acts. "I think he was geared more towards college students," remarked Edwards in reply to my questioning of her comedian selection. She added that "he treated his acts like he would want to listen to it."

Visit his website at:
www.ronniejordan.net

The Playlist

A look at the world of music, from the obscure to the obscure, the new and the old.

THE VON BONDIES

BY JUSTIN PEKULAR
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Way earlier this year, the Von Bondies performed a fantastic show. Having nothing to expect other than some rock-n-roll, one realizes that half of the band is women, and they are pretty. However, these skinny girls were not there for everyone to look at, they were there to melt face with hypnotizing bass lines and angry guitars.

Ok, so who cares about the concert? Who really are the Von Bondies? They rode the initial wave of garage rock revival in the early 2000s. Thanks to bands like the White Stripes and the Strokes, the Von Bondies are somewhat popular. They get a lot of heat over their new album "Love, Hate and Then There's You," released in February of this year, so it's necessary to avoid that and say it's more radio friendly and accessible.

On the other hand, their older tunes are extremely bluesy and moody and worth more discussion. The first album, "Lack of Communication," starts with a pulsing bass line and quickly gains momentum. However, at that point, the opening turns into the typical grunge laden style most are used to. It continues to drive through some moderately interesting hard blues rock covered in dark lyrical overtones.

By the third track, things slow down unexpectedly. "Cass and Henry" is almost spoken-word narrative of a nocturnal encounter with a tall stranger due to a past love. It's impossibly satisfying to listen to, consisting of a chilled-out blues layer, twanging with guitar riffs and short solos.

The rest of the album continues a dark garage-rock atmosphere and becomes mostly unmemorable - aside from the riffs. However, the last song, "Rock and Roll Nurse" brings back what should thoroughly be enjoyed about the Von Bondies: guitar riffs that are contagious as hell with that unrelenting blues tone to it. It comes to an intense climax, then the track goes silent for something like two minutes when there is a bonus cover of the soul song "Bring It On Home To Me" by Sam Cook. It's a surprising end to such an angry and frustrated album.

The Von Bondies second album, *Pawn Shoppe Heart*, comes with quality production and more accessible tunes with the same thing that brings me back to them. More staple garage rock riffs to consume. In this album, you will also find the ever-popular "C'mon C'mon," which - after being on the radio and various other places - solidly rests as downloadable content for *Rock Band 1* and 2.

The album brings two more of the longer, and much more angsty blues tunes continually pleasing anyone that is into blues rock. "Mairread" comes off as a wailing song about a cheating woman, blanketed with tons of satisfying guitar solos. And again the title track *Pawn Shoppe Heart* can only be describes as this, it rocks. It's extremely satisfying and is totally a garage rock classic. Ideally, they couldn't pass up a hidden cover so after a few minutes of silence afterwards begins a cover of another classic soul song "Try a Little Tenderness."

It's hard to draw a good conclusion on the Von Bondies, especially with their streak of hidden covers being oddly ironic compared to the rest of the material. The best advice is simply this: if you enjoy blues or garage rock, by any means skip The Von Bondies' most recent effort and try their older albums and don't be afraid to enjoy it.

THE BEHREND SHOWCASE

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This feature is available to all students.

Some say the world will end in fire
Some say in ice

From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire

But if I had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction is good

Is also great

And would suffice

