



No relation to fellow musicians Bob James or Tommy James, famous band leader and trumpet player Harry James will bring his big band into Gatsby's tonight. His Swinging Band might be expected to blow the roof off with standard charts like "Ciribiribin", "You Made Me Love You", and "Two O'Clock Jump" beginning at 9:30. The doors open at 8.

the daily Collegian arts

Skynyrd music returns in 'First and Last'

By JOE CRILLEY
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

One year ago this month, Lynyrd Skynyrd was about to embark on yet another extensive tour. The group has just released their sixth album, "Street Survivors," and their popularity was never greater. But tragedy struck when their chartered DC-10 crashed in a wooded area of Louisiana. This sad event took the lives of singer Ronnie Van Zant, guitarist Steve Gaines and his sister Cassie Gaines. The surviving members of the band all suffered extensive injuries, and have been recovering from this tragic incident for the past year.

Instead of waiting for Skynyrd to regroup, MCA decided to release tracks the band recorded between 1970-72 in an album titled "Skynyrd's First and . . . Last." By today's standards, this is a fine rock album which stands tall against the competition, even though it was recorded eight years ago.

The band's lineup then consisted of Gary Rossington and Allen Collins on guitars, Ronnie Van Zant on vocals, Greg Walker on bass, and Rickey Medlocke on drums. Walker and Medlocke left the band shortly after this

first album and went on to form a band called Blackfoot, and have two albums to their credit.

Side one opens with a punchy song called "Down South Jukin." This tune lays bare Skynyrd's Southern roots. Van Zant, who had not yet developed his own vocal style, evokes a sort of Gregg Allman vocal slur. Wayne Perkins adds an outstanding guitar lead to an already fine cut. This is one of the strongest tracks on the album.

"Preacher's Daughter," the second track, was co-written by Medlocke and Van Zant. The song is based on a Beck-Page Yardbirds riff that Collins and Rossington could really work up into a sweat.

Earlier in their career, Lynyrd Skynyrd delved into politics and social problems this country was facing. "White Dove" deals with Vietnam and the decision men were forced to make on fighting in an unpopular war. Rickey Medlocke sings the lead vocal and his high voice fits rather nicely.

"Things Go On" takes a stab at corrupt politicians, and proves Van Zant's abilities as a songwriter. This tune was later re-recorded for the first album.

Other songs which stand out on this album are "Wino" and "Was I Right or Wrong." "Wino" is a song in the "Needle and the Spoon" tradition that gave Skynyrd their street-tough image. "Was I Right or Wrong" is Ronnie Van Zant's most chilling song, a statement of the band's purpose from the beginning. This is his answer to all the people who told the band they would never make it.

It would be unfair to compare this album with "Street Survivors." "First and . . . Last" was recorded way back in 1970. It is evident the band was new to the studio environment and this unfamiliarity gives the album a certain freshness and spontaneity. But this rawness is in stark contrast to the polished professionalism the band achieved with "Street Survivors."

Lynyrd Skynyrd has tried off and on to release this record over the eight years since it was made. It's terribly sad that the band's prime mover, Ronnie Van Zant, didn't live to see these songs that meant so much to him make their way to the people they were written for. But our lives are all a bit richer for his and his band's gift of music.

Experts to confer on epic battle

By KAREN GOTTENBERG
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

The "Song of Roland," one of the greatest epic poems in all of Western literature, will be the subject of a conference to be held Thursday, Oct. 5 through Saturday, Oct. 7 in the Keller Conference Center. Highlighting the conference, an exhibition of

Romanesque art is on display through Nov. 12 at the Museum of Art on campus. This year marks the 1200th anniversary of the Battle of Roncevaux, the defeat of the rear guard of Charlemagne's army, on which the "Song of Roland" is based. The actual epic, however, was written about 300 years after the battle, so the art exhibit

is based on this later period. The conference is the inspiration of Gerard J. Brault, professor of French, who with the sponsorship of the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies, coordinated the conference.

Olga Preisner, curator of the Museum of Art, has assembled what Brault calls "a small, but well chosen collection of artifacts." The collection is composed of 11 pieces borrowed from the Cloisters Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, plus private collections.

The Rare Books Room has contributed to the exhibit by providing books of the 18th and 19th centuries which contain illustrations of the costumes of the Middle Ages.

The art exhibit, called "Art of the Heroic Era," is on the second floor of the Museum of Art — open from noon to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

The conference on the "Song of Roland" called "Roncevaux 778-1978," is open to all Penn State University faculty and students free of charge. For more information call 865-1492 or 863-1743.



Lynyrd Skynyrd enjoyed increasing success as a prominent Southern rock band until several of the group's members died in an air crash last year. Their album, "Skynyrd's First . . . and Last" was released recently.

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