

Entertainment

Trixter guitarist speaks out

Phone interview reveals past influences, future plans



Not quite New Kids: Trixter members Mark Scott, Peter Loran, Steve Brown and P.J. Farley bring their blend of New Jersey rock to the Erie Civic Center Friday, Feb. 15.

by Robb Frederick
The Collegian

Steve Brown is obviously enjoying himself.

The 20-year-old Trixter guitarist laughs again, breaking up our phone interview and unintentionally serving up a flawless imitation of a metal-head from *Saturday Night Live's* "Wayne's World."

But Brown, who brings his blend of New Jersey rock to the Erie Civic Center for a show with Poison and Slaughter Friday, Feb. 15, has every reason to be happy. His band's self-titled debut is just about to turn gold, and he has just embarked on his first major world tour.

"Everything I've dreamed came true," he explains.

Those dreams began when Brown was seven. "I was mesmerized by Kiss' *Rock and Roll Over*. I went out and bought an acoustic guitar that was twice my size, and I never stopped playin'."

By the age of twelve, Brown had discovered Eddie Van Halen, and he decided to start a band. So he enlisted friends Peter Loran (vocals), Mark Scott (drums), and

P.J. Farley (bass) and formed Trixter.

The band gained popularity on the Jersey club circuit, consistently playing to crowds of about 100.

And how has the band adapted to larger venues?

"Trixter was made for arenas," Brown proudly states. "It's still just about strappin' on guitars and singin' and havin' fun."

Several critics, however, have

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panned the band's debut, suggesting that Trixter is all work and no play. But Brown confidently disregards these attacks.

"Some reviews overlook our material and focus on our age (only one band member is old enough to legally drink)," he explains. "But we can play, and we do it."

"There's a lot of different styles on our album. 'Give it to

Me Good" is full of southern rock, and "Line of Fire" is just straight-ahead rock."

Most of this diverse material stems from Brown, the band's principal songwriter.

"I'm the basic sculptor," he explains. "I usually come up with the idea, and the other guys smooth out the edges."

According to Brown, several bands have joined the ranks of Kiss and Van Halen to provide inspiration for Trixter's material.

"I listen to a lot of other styles, especially when I'm on the tour bus. I'm into Metallica, but I also listen to the Beatles and U2."

The effect of these expanded influences will no doubt be heard on the band's next release, for which Brown has already written ten songs.

"There's gonna' be a lot of different styles on the next record," he predicts. "It's really gonna' show the growth of the band."

But until the next release, Brown vows to keep Trixter moving ahead.

"There's gonna' be constant touring. We'll rock until we drop."

Trixter debut has potential

by Jon Flick
The Collegian

Those in fear that rock and roll is becoming extinct should pay attention to Trixter's debut album. This self-titled MCA Records release is the product of a hard-working band who keeps the tradition alive by mixing basic, solid rhythms and strong vocals with some hot guitar licks.

Produced by Bill Wray, the album is pieced together very well. Wray participated in a lot of the writing, as did guitarist Steve Brown (see related story at left), and the result is quite creative.

The music, for the most part, is quite predictable; the band definitely did not enter uncharted waters with that aspect. The music draws too heavily on influences to render it artistically original, but the inherent power of the music balances it out and results in an album that is worth listening to.

Trixter traveled a bumpy road to attain the level they have reached as a band. Their lyrics make this apparent, as they tell the story of a hard-working band with the simple goal of playing rock and roll.

"Line of Fire," the first track, rips into the listener with the fact that experience is the best teacher. Brown's solo made me perk up my ears; I didn't expect it at all! "Only Young Once" and the beautiful slow tune "On and On" tell the story of the band without relying on lyrical cliches.

The subject of love is dealt with extensively, and it seems like Trixter is trying to give their listeners some healthy advice from the heart.

In particular, "Heart of Steel" and "One In a Million" do this with that basic rock rhythm and some potent guitar and vocal harmonies, supplied by lead vocalist Peter Loran and Brown on guitar and backing vocals.

"One In a Million" also addresses the subject of influences; one cannot ignore the Def Leppard flavor of this track.

Another notable in the love category, "Always a Victim" is one of the most creatively written songs on the album, dealing with love's sometimes agonizing pain. Once again, the vocals are strong and seem to match the meaning of the song. It is hard to say that about some debut bands, who mostly rely on an image in lieu of soul.

Four tracks on this album stick out in my mind as having a good combination of lyrical mastery and musical originality, and can even stir emotions. Trixter's current single, "Give It to Me Good," is one of them, and it kicks, not only because it is the absolute truth (from a rebellious rocker's point of view), but it also represents the current trend in rock music—clean guitar and oodles of vocal harmony. (Many hard rock bands are due for albums this year, so don't be surprised if they also decide to follow this trend).

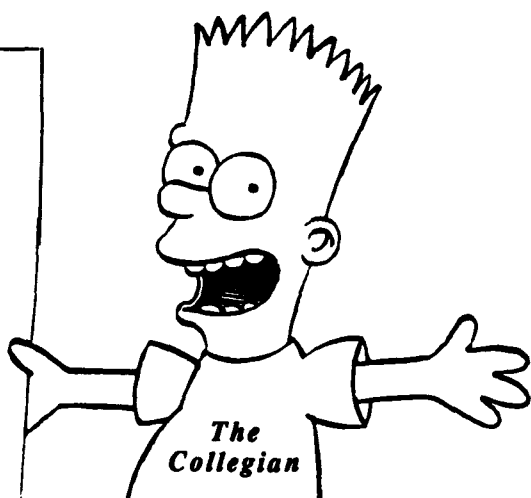
"Surrender" is a beautiful slow song that will surely create many fond memories. I lost myself in it and almost didn't make it back out! I felt that the production in this song was outstanding.

"Play Rough" really captured my interest, as it is the heaviest song here. I liked the driving rhythm, and it contained enough originality to keep me glued to my headphones.

Finally, "On and On," written by Brown, portrays the life of the band in a nutshell. In fact, it is almost a diary of Trixter's road to fame, with the upsets and the glories that go with it. Those songs are the most noteworthy on the album, and I can see Trixter developing a style that is a tangent of these songs.

Trixter is a testimonial to the fact that a band can make it by working hard and playing their hearts out, instead of relying on glamor and gimmicks. They want you to listen to their story, not just their music. As the band tours, I would expect them to develop their own style and rely less on influences, so that their already creative lyrics can be augmented by fresh melodies.

Coming next week: *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening talks about his hit TV show, the joys of parenthood, and life after Bart in an exclusive interview with *The Collegian*.



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