

I'm with the band

Editor's Note: This is the final part of a series exploring the behind-the-scenes structure of today's club bands.

by Coleman Brumley
The Collegian

Well, our band Betty Rubble is now ready to hit the big time. Well, sort of the big time. We now have our band members, our equipment; what's missing? Of course the most important factor of a band--the music.

There are hundreds of styles of music to choose from. Our band will stick to good old dancing style rock-n-roll. The first few practices of any new band should revolve around picking a style of music that is best suited for it.

There are many factors involved in selecting a style of music. Of course, the crowds you will be playing for must like the style of music that you'll be performing. And this must be fun, or it isn't worth the trouble.

The first few times your band puts in a live presentation, pay attention to the way the crowd reacts to the music that you play. Did they dance? Did they seem interested? These are just a couple of questions that you should ask yourself.

Part three- Developing a style

Remember that you cannot please all of the people all of the time. The best bet would be to accept the majority. If the majority seems to enjoy the music, fine. If not, then it's back to the drawing board as far as the music goes.

Once again, you must also enjoy the music that you perform. If you don't like rock-n-roll, don't play it. The music should also be moderately easy to learn at first. Don't go right out and pick the hardest music you can find and try to perform it. Chances are that you'll kill yourself trying.

Another factor that should be considered is how much music should be played. A good rule of thumb is to play at least five songs within a half-hour time period. If about forty songs are learned and rehearsed for your first performance, you'll be in good shape. This varies with the experience levels of the members of your band.

Another thing to remember is to mix the styles up during your performance. See how the crowd reacts to each individual style that is performed. Also remember that this is not a concert, so don't lean too heavily on covering one band's material. This would probably get you laughed off stage, since nobody can perform a song like the original performer.

Entertainment

Poison's latest just isn't worth it

by Jon Flick
The Collegian

Poison sells. Many (including myself) criticize Poison for being a "Glamor-Rock" band, since it is precisely this formula which has brought them to their third album, *Flesh & Blood*.

Like their previous albums, *Look What the Cat Dragged In* and *Open Up and Say... Ahh!*, *Flesh & Blood* sticks to the most basic, predictable rock formula with little variation. The production is very clean; a prime example of how modern technology can do a lot for a band's sound.

I just wish the members would play more as a band instead of playing as soloists whose parts happen to coincide. As in many of their previous works, C.C. DeVille, the lead guitarist, plays solos that would be more suited to speed metal, no matter what the tempo of the actual song is.

I got bored with *Flesh & Blood* quite quickly. As I listened to the album a second time, I was able to remove my headset, grab a cup of coffee, brush my teeth, and slip my headphones back on without feeling like I missed anything.

Two releases, "Unskinny Bop," and "Something to Believe In," have done quite well on the charts. "Unskinny Bop" is typical of the songs on the album - if you've heard one, you've heard them all. It is sad that I'm not kidding about that!

It's not that the music is bad - it just isn't anything more than a dressed-up version of the band's other work, and that's what depressed me about the album in general.

"Something to Believe In" is the only exception to the rule. Here is a song that is actually somewhat inspiring. The lyrics address the important issues of today, and do it in a thought provoking way.

Bret Michaels could have put



Greg Geibel/*The Collegian*

Flesh and blood: Poison vocalist Bret Michaels rips into the opening song of his band's performance last Friday at the Erie Civic Center.

a little less riff in his voice (too many yea-yea's does not a song make), but otherwise he performed well on this track. Once again, the production practically made the song.

Only two other songs on the album attempt to escape the realm of glam-rock. "Valley of Lost Souls," the first track, employs the L.A. metal sound, and sounds almost like something from L.A. Guns. Although this is a good track, it really isn't anything spectacular.

"Poor Boy Blues" is a trip back in time to when the blues rock sound was hot. I thought this track came off quite well, as

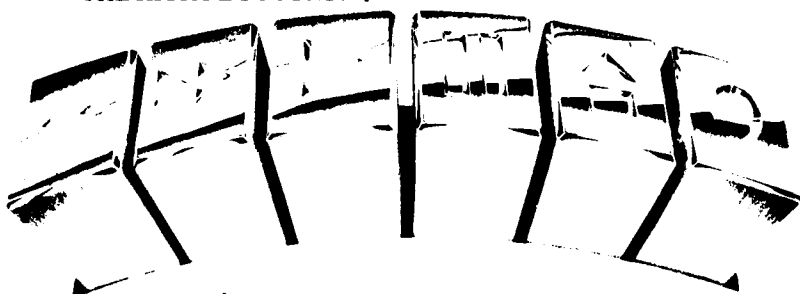
Bret Michaels' voice seemed to match the feel of this song, with a sort of drawl.

Other than those picks, that's it. I could see myself borrowing a copy of *Flesh & Blood* to use as background music for studying. I definitely wouldn't buy the album for that purpose, let alone for an addition to my collection.

If, on some nice warm sunny day (which Erie rarely sees), I hear that there is a fresh, new, inspiring album from Poison, I might pick up a copy. Until then, I'll stick to the few solid artists that are still out there.

THIS SERVES NO PURPOSE OTHER THAN FILLING SPACE, SO DON'T READ IT!!!!

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