

# Entertainment

## Firehouse debut isn't too hot *Poor lyrics, weak solos ruin disc*

by Jon Flick  
*The Collegian*

I had a feeling as I purchased the self-titled debut from Firehouse, a new hard rock band. It's difficult to describe. I mean, after seeing their first release, "Don't Treat Me Bad," hit number one on the Erie charts, I had to hear what was up.

What I got was a basically solid album, but one where there is room for improvement. It is almost like listening to another Slaughter album, because Firehouse's style is very similar to theirs.

What Firehouse needs is another lead guitarist. Bill Leverty, the band's present six-stringer, is quite capable of producing good rhythms, but his solos just don't cut it on this album.

Don't expect too much substance in the lyrics. Firehouse addresses such issues as blowing speakers, sex, and lost love. Leverty and C.J. Snare, the lead vocalist, don't explore any new territory with their writing.

The album begins with "Rock On The Radio," a song where loudness is the key issue. "Like thunder/ like dynamite/ Ya know I'm gonna blow my speakers up tonight." I have to laugh. Here one can hear the band's excellent sense of rhythm.

"All She Wrote" is a tale of

a woman who left her man. Once again, nothing new. This track contains one of Leverty's better solos. Next is "Shake & Tumble," a driving tune which embodies the spirit of youthful rockers everywhere, with sex and body slamming and everything.

The best track on this album is the fourth, "Don't Treat Me Bad." Snare exerts his best vocal talent here. It is simply a very nice tune which was very well produced. The only sore spot was

**Loudness is the key issue. I have to laugh.**

Leverty's solo, with its gaudy fastness that didn't really belong in this song. This is, incidentally, the one that is currently riding high in Erie, so for those who know this song, this is Firehouse at their best, so far.

"Home Is Where The Heart Is" is right up there, though. It begins with a smooth synthesizer stretch that sounds like the opener to a movie. The guitars gradually seep in, with heavy electric following a very easy acoustic section. Vocals were very strong on this track.

A blues-style tune called

"Don't Walk Away" follows. It is appropriately very heavy and slow. Firehouse hit the nail on the head with this track. The lyrics are a little cliché, but when you're blasting this song at high velocity out of your thousand watt stereo, you won't know the difference.

After the pretty instrumental "Seasons Of Change," came the surprise of the album, "Overnight Sensation." Here is a song about the sometimes quick trip to the top and the temptation to throw all you have away in order to follow that dream. Yes, this song has substance to it!

It's too bad Leverty attempts to become Steve Vai in his guitar solo, because it doesn't work very well. Maybe they could re-record the song with the real Steve Vai plugging in for a guest solo. Unlikely, at best.

The last noteworthy song on the album is "Love of a Lifetime", which is a very pretty slow song, almost of the same caliber as a lullaby. The title says it all.

I will have fun blowing speakers with this album. That is its primary purpose - to be played at high volume. It is fun to listen to, but not earth-shakingly new. Perhaps Firehouse can receive some guitar help, and throw in a few neat new rhythms in their next work.

## Hope for the 90's? *John Wesley Harding upstages this year's tedious records*

By Brad Kane  
*The Collegian*

In this reviewer's own humble little opinion, the past two calendar years of 1989 and 1990 have featured some highly superior musical releases. To list all of the acts responsible for this burst of feeling here would be tedious, so just take the above statement at face value...trust me.

But 1991 has looked a bit bleak through the one-third marker of the year. Aside from a few notable exceptions (Pop Will Eat Itself and to a slightly lesser degree, Daniel Ash and The JudyBats), 1991 just hasn't been proverbially cutting the mustard musically. But then along came John Wesley Harding.

On his new album *The Name Above The Title*, the English-born Harding proves that the critical euphoria induced by his debut release, last year's *Here Comes The Groom*, was not merely

on many other tracks on the album as well. Titles such as "Save a Little Room for Me" and "Driving in the Rain" are performed at a more somber clip, utilizing a horn section to insert elements of bluesy jazz into the works, making for a complete downcast atmosphere on both songs.

At times the pace speeds up, as on the record's first single "The Person You Are." "Person," fueled by rhythm guitar melodies, showcases Harding's excellent lyrical abilities. Here, Harding takes on the persona of three different people, one for each verse, who are all down on his/her luck by way of the practice of, shall we say, socially unacceptable patterns of behavior. "Person" is almost as effective in delivering its message as is "Drug."

Other tracks, such as "The World (And All Its Problems)," "I Can Tell (When You're Telling Lies)," and "Bridegroom Blues," follow in

**Harding may well be the next candidate to attain a long-standing level of musical greatness.**

mindless fanatical drivel. To be blunt, Harding's new batch of songs are some good stuff, folks, maybe the best material of the year to date.

Inspired by the folk-based music of the 1960's and 70's (Harding thanks "Prine, Fogerty and Sebastian" on the album as well as Bob Dylan), Harding takes the harmonies and melodies experimented with by such artists as listed above and spices them up with horns and strings to compose a truly enjoyable listening experience.

The folk influence can be seen on the driving "The People's Drug," a tune that takes the stance of a man who is seemingly falling out of touch with the rest of humanity and longs to get back in step with the human race. Obviously a song that could be played in a downbeat, somber method, Harding dresses the track in a jangling acoustic guitar-driven melody that draws the listener in without sacrificing his point.

The folk influence pops up

the mode established by "Drug" and "Person" as tunes that hide serious lyrics behind catchy pop-sounds. The former of the three deals with a self-explanatory topic as the latter two are concerned with love gone wrong. What draws this trio together, however, is the more rock-influenced approach to each track. This hardened style shown here proves that Harding can rock with the best of them too, so to speak.

It's refreshing to see in this day and age of techno-dance post-modern machine-made music how a simple return to one's roots can create music superior to said "slop." Admittedly, not all of this dance music is bad, but unlike "machine music" the melodies of real instruments and the words of actual musicians can live on forever, serving each age and time as well as the previous era. The music of John Wesley Harding may well be the next candidate to attain this long-standing level of musical greatness, and it rightfully should.

## A hot summer at the movies

by Floyd J. Csir  
*The Collegian*

Worried about exams? Relax! Pass it off as spring fever. Besides, some really outstanding blockbuster movies are waiting in the wings. Pop open a cold one and enjoy the show.

### Terminator 2

Remember the 1984 original? Arnold Schwarzenegger vaulted into movie stardom with that famous line "I'll be back." He's back all right. This science fiction / action / adventure classic redefined the genre for many filmgoers. James Cameron, who directed the first one, is also back, which should insure plot and character consistency.

Arnold, who portrayed the cyborg that wouldn't die, is rumored to receive \$15 million

dollars for this role. That's peanuts compared to the Hollywood estimate of \$100 million spent on creating the sequel. This movie may open the door to a new level of science fiction / futuristic movies, to epic proportions similar to the Star Wars trilogy.

### Backdraft

The latest release from Ron Howard's direction consists of some truly talented actors. Robert De Niro, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Kurt Russell, Rebecca DeMornay, Donald Sutherland and Scott Glenn. Not only star-studded, but the film's script was written by a former Los Angeles fireman.

Even the cast trained at the Chicago Fire Academy. They worked closely with flames, heat and smoke, adding to the realism of the scenes as well as developing the characters.

Scheduled release date is May 24.

### Hudson Hawk

Bruce Willis stars as an ex-con who wants to steal da Vinci blueprints of flying machines and other strange inventions. Also has Andie MacDowell who starred in "sex, lies and videotape." To be released on May 10.

### Poison

Director Todd Haynes produced the underground cult classic "Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story," with Barbie dolls. Now he wants to tackle sado-masochism, child abduction and other graphic issues intended to shock the audience. This probably wouldn't appeal to mainstream America, but then again, David Lynch started out on the fringe, so who knows?



**Barbato's**  
Italian Restaurant  
3512 Buffalo Rd.  
Wesleyville  
899-3423

**\*\*WE DELIVER OUR ENTIRE MENU\*\***  
Large Cheese and Pepperoni Pizza for  
Only \$6.99 plus tax

Expires 4/10/91