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FIREWORKS

THE MELODIC ROCK MAGAZINE

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FIREWORKS

THE MELODIC ROCK MAGAZINE

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FEEL THE HEAT!

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LUCKY
Legendary
with the 'Se



SENSORY OVERDRIVE
Michael Monroe explains what it's
like to make the album of the year



JEFF SCOTT SOTO ♦ TYKETTO ♦ JOE LYNN TURNER



NOLOVELOST

board. 'Desire'e' is excellent, totally melodic with a lush chorus and strong guitar work. Scott Boards vocals are slow and raspy. 'Skin And Bone' rocks it up, like Burning Rain crossed with Dokken, very melodic. 'Grounded' is melodic/AOR whilst 'Little Things' is one of the catchiest ditties on this varied and well performed CD. I caught up with drummer Brian Azbell to find more out about this excellent band.

When Brian was growing up in North Carolina his older brother started learning guitar and was friends with some guys from school who had a band. Brian used to go watch them play at a local teen clubs and hang out. His brother was listening to a wide range of artist back then so Brian was exposed to several types of music, everything from Earth Wind and Fire to Led Zeppelin. "One night MTV aired the 'Journey - Live in Houston' concert. Their album 'Escape' had just gone to number one. After hearing Steve Smith perform live solo as well as the band I was hooked," explains Brian. Growing up in a small home Brian had nowhere to practice so he started playing with friends from school, mainly to be able to practice at their homes. "I remember the first song I played with a band was 'Paranoid'. At the high school talent show we made the audition and played 'Live Wire' and 'Metal Health'. I was hooked bad by this time and realised it was what I wanted to do. I went to every live show I could so that I could study live bands and tried to make friends with as many of them as possible until finally working my way up the circuit auditioning and playing with some of the best musicians in the South East, both recording and playing live. Many live shows and many recording sessions later, here I am."

The band are all friends and have known one another for years. "Most of us had played together in other projects growing up until finally forming this one in 2006. These guys are all top-notch accomplished players and are exactly the calibre of players that I always dreamt of playing with. Each one of them has played in successful South Eastern bands on the circuit and Scott (vocals) had some international success with the band Cerebus in the late eighties. Between all of us there are multiple influences that come out in the music. The new album was recorded at Shady Character studios in Winston Salem, North Carolina which was basically a warehouse with a makeshift studio that Russell (bass) and I designed. The album was mixed and produced by myself and mastered by Jamie King at the basement recording."

The track 'Sign Of The Times' is Brian's personal favourite song. "Due to the current social-economic climate and all of the new challenges that we are facing today, this song touches on those areas," he explains.

For playing live the band are not finding it very healthy at the moment. "Unfortunately there has not been much of a scene for melodic hard rock except in certain parts of the US, although it does seem to be making a comeback with the rising success of That Metal Show on VH-1 Classic, and some of the new bands coming out are going back to the older production sounds and stages. It's still hard for live shows around here though," he says.

Next up, the band will be concentrating on getting their music out to as many people all across the world as possible and promoting it in every way they can as well as continuing to write music from the heart and soul. If you are fan of this magazine, then you will like NOLOVELOST. Give them a go and check them out at: www.nolovelost.com and www.myspace.com/nolovelostmusic/

Austria's finest female-fronted hard-working pop/rock/melodic band CORNERSTONE return to the scene with their second CD 'Somewhere In America'. Gone is original singer Anja Schirmer to be replaced by the beautiful Patricia Hillinger. She joins chirpy chappy Michael Wachelhofer (bass/keys/vocals), his brother Steve (guitar/vocals) and



CORNERSTONE

Mike Pawlowsch (drums, percussion). The band have shared the stages with the likes of John Waite, Ted Poley and played various UK biker festivals, and amazingly the hard greasy beer swilling, whiskey drenched biker dudes are loving Cornerstone and they are getting invited back each year. In fact the band work hard on their live shows and seem to come back to the UK a couple of times a year, and it's starting to pay off for them. Where a lot of bands complain that there is no point in touring if only a few dozen people turn up at your shows, Cornerstone have a different work ethic and just get out there and play, and now they seem to be getting some decent attention due to their hard work, of which other bands could take note of and stop whinging.

Their music means something to the band, and they want to take you along with them for the ride, both in the live environment and on disc. You've seen the splash page on melodicrock.com, you've seen the CD showcases around the net and the reviews in the magazines, now you can give the band a listen on our very own Fireworks CD.

The new CD, which is out now via Atom Records, is a vast improvement on the debut. The band seem tighter, the songs stronger and more mature and showcasing a diverse range of soft rock and AOR and pop-rock with an indie slant. But it's Patricia who shines this time around; wait until you hear her soaring on the super seductive ballad 'Right Or Wrong', coupled with Steve's gorgeous melodic playing and Michael's passionate keyboard playing. This is one track that I adore and is infused with passion - it could be Heart, it could be Leanne Rimes, it could be Martina McBride ... it could even be Alias but with female vocals. A grand song. 'Stay' shows the band at their catchy best and 'Strut' has become a firm favorite with yours truly. Overall the new CD is excellent. There are one or two tracks that don't quite cut the mustard but isn't that the case even with higher profile acts today?

Look out for spring and Summer UK shows later this year, more info at: www.cornerstone.co.at

'Turn The Page' is the new solo CD from former Firefly front man JOHN PRATT. The album contains thirteen songs



JOHN PRATT

that are all diverse in range following the AOR/Melodic rock route of his former band, but with a more solid groove, an ace production sound and melodies dripping in melodic heaven. From the luxurious Journey-ish title track to the excellent smooth textured AOR of 'Naivetes Ball', from the high-powered melodic bliss of 'One Silent Voice' - huge towering melodies on this track - through to one of my favourite tracks, 'Yin Yang', a cool song that grows with each listen, and could have sat easily on Kip Winger's debut solo CD 'This Conversation Seems Like A Dream' for example, that kinda vibe. The musicians on the album are all seasoned guys and have played with bands such as Vixen, Greg Rollie, The Storm, Foreigner, Cher, Toto etc. So quite a high profile release, musically and sonically as 'TTP' has a great smooth production sound.

Check John's track out on the Fireworks CD and visit his site at: www.johnprattturnthepage.com and tell him Fireworks sent ya. I know you guys will enjoy this album very much.



POWERTRAIN

Over in Washington, US, we find another killer new melodic hard rock band. 'Tracks' is the new CD from POWERTRAIN which features members of FIFTH ANGEL and HEIR APPARENT. If you like Scorpions and Dio [Oh yeah! - Ed] then you will enjoy this band as their new eleven tracks CD is a damn fine release. I chatted with bass player Bobby Ferkovich.

Bobby started playing guitar at fifteen, and switched quickly to bass because he knew so many guitar players better than himself. "That was the same year Iron Maiden's 'Killers' album came out, as soon as I heard the bass riff at

the beginning of that song it was all I wanted to do from that point on," he says.

Powertrain consists of Bobby on bass, guitarist/vocalist Kendall Bechtel, and keyboardist Op Sakiya. Kendall has released albums with Fifth Angel and James Byrd, among many others. Op is a band mate of Bobby's from his Heir Apparent days. "He was also on the Thai pop charts for months with the band Vacation. Jeffrey McCormack, another Heir Apparent member, comes in and adds drums to the recordings as needed. We'd like him to be full time, but he's a busy guy. We started out to just record some demos but we found the energy was very positive and the atmosphere very creative, so we decided to form a band and release the songs."

Op has a studio in his house and this is where the band writes and records. "He calls it SonicOP Studios. He's very good at engineering, and does some good drum programming if Jeffrey isn't available. Kendall and I will record the rhythm tracks during these writing sessions; Op usually adds keys on his own later after he has some time to work them out. We are all involved with the production and the mixing. Kendall, who has extensive studio experience, has especially good ideas and knows the sounds he's going for. Op will also master once the mixing is done."

Bobby's personal favourite track off the album is 'Cain'. "It was the first song we did where we took a piece of music I had written and meshed it with a piece of music Kendall had written. It worked out really well and set the tone for the entire album, both in terms of how it was written and the playful nature of the song."

Powertrain has not actually played live yet. "We're looking to change that after the next album we are currently working on is finished. Kendall, Jeffrey, and I did a couple of gigs last year with Kendall's solo project called Ultrastone; we got some nice reception from that. There are a lot of bands that are playing a lot; it feels to me like the rock scene in Seattle is coming back a bit. I'm anxious to get back on the stage side of it."

"Our next album, which is in the works, will be called 'Off The Rails'. It's almost done and we're looking at an April release right now. Once that's done, we'll be focusing on the live shows - we're determined to get Powertrain out of the studio and onto the stage! We're working on our website too, www.powertrainband.com. That will be up in the next couple of weeks. We've got enough interest that we're going to start a newsletter also, so we can give our fans a little inside info."

Make sure you check the band out, Powertrain rock, the album is excellent, superb production and songs such as 'Eating You', 'Hard Core', the excellent 'Her Majesty', 'One Night', 'Say You Will' and the aforementioned 'Cain' all showcase a variety of styles: melodic rock, classic vintage rock, progressive melodic rock ... a rich entertaining



SONS OF EDISON

diversity that holds interest all the way through. Can't wait until April for bands next album.

Out of California come melodic rockers SONS OF EDISON. The band has a new CD, their second, out called 'Strikes Again' and it's superb. The band is basically a duo consisting of the talented Michael Casinelli and Richard "Blitz" Livoni who handle all instruments and song-writing.

The band perform a diverse range of music, for example the awesome 'He's No Good For You' could be pure Toto, whilst 'Circlin' (One Last Chance) and 'In Heaven Already' could be Henry Lee Summer, Bob Seger or Benny Mardones, catchy pop-rock ditties with strong vocals and musicianship, not to mention quality production. 'My Darling Forever' is a moody balladic track that if covered by John Waite or Richard Marx would have AOR fans in heaven. 'This Can't Go On' is another excellent song with a great sing-along chorus, again pure Toto.

Michael Casinelli wanted to play the trumpet at age seven and ended up playing in the elementary school orchestra. "I loved hearing the R&B and Doo-Wop groups. But when it really clicked for me was in high school when the British Rock Invasion hit the United States and I heard The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, etc. It was electric guitars and writing rock 'n' roll songs after that. I was also a big fan of Motown.

The band is two guys who have been writing and recording rock 'n' roll songs together for more than 20 years. Everything on our CD is performed by me and Richard. The only exceptions are the two tracks that have a female vocalist, and on one of those two tracks we used a session drummer and friend. We are not the first to write and record without a full-time band surrounding us. In this respect, we are similar to song-writing duos such as Steely Dan, except,