Local band makes good

CD, that is — check this one out if you're ready to jam

By Andy Tennille
Contributing Reviewer

Last One Standing *Poor Man's Parnassis*

I didn't know quite what to expect as I walked into Ziggy's on Sept. 12 to see Last One Standing, a Winston-Salem-based band.

While some of the people I talked to were enthusiastic, others seemed to have tired of the band.

However, after seeing their show that night, and subsequently listening to their new release, *Poor Man's Parnassus*, I've come to realize that the folks who weren't at Ziggy's missed a great show and the release of a strong album by an up-and-coming band.

Last One Standing is not new to the Winston-Salem music scene. While they just started playing together only a few years ago, the band has grown up with a solid fan base of students and the local crowds at Ziggy's, as well as those of other bars in the area.

Although its first album sold around 2,000 copies, the band felt that its first effort did not reach its fullest potential, and therefore ended its production, opting instead to record a new album with 11 totally new songs.

While Last One Standing has a sound unique to itself, the comparisons are inevitable.

Vocally, the band sounds very much like some early Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, or Jackopierce, with the mixing of lead singer Peter McDowell's voice with that of bassist Blanton Vogler.

There also seems to be an Acoustic Junction influence on their music, which stems from McDowell's striking acoustic work on many of the album's tracks.

Lastly, the sound of the band in concert, as they improvise and interact with each other, lends itself to comparison with other jam-oriented bands, such as the Allman Brothers Band and the Grateful Dead.

The new release mixes these attributes well into a solid album which flows from one track to the next.

The first track, titled "Last One Standing," is a great example of the band's vocal abilities and displays the acoustic-folk tradition where the band's roots lie. "Treehouse," the disc's fourth track, exhibits the band's pleasantly surprising songwriting abilities, as well as some great guitar work by lead guitarist Joe Parrish.

The eighth song, "What You Make It," and the last track, "Last Nail," are probably the best mixtures of the band's talents, combining great lyrics and complex vocal harmonies with smoking guitar solos by Parrish.

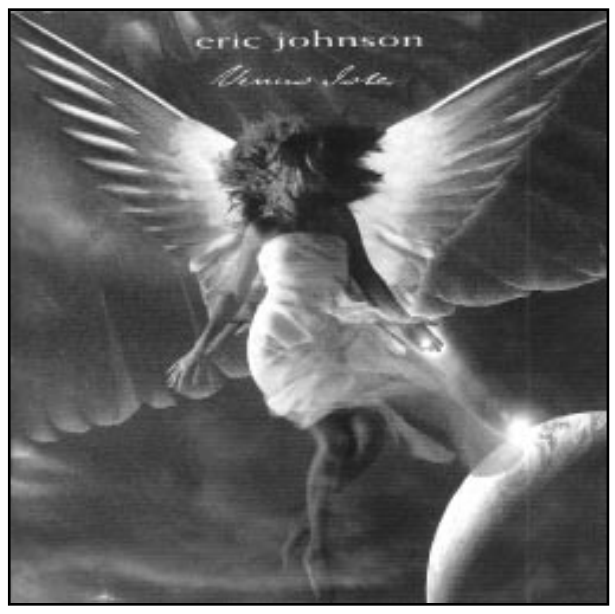
While the album reflects much of the band's abilities, you might expect more guitar work from Parrish and more piano and organ work from Michael McWhorter to be on this new release, considering the live performances.

The band fed off the audience the entire night at Ziggy's, and this led to an amazing show for all who attended.

And if you missed the show, give the CD a listen — you may find yourself wanting to attend the next one.

Venutian album less than stellar

By Dan Bee
Contributing Reviewer



Eric Johnson *Venus Isle*

After six years of relative seclusion and obscurity, Texas guitarist Eric Johnson released his third album, *Venus Isle*, on Sept. 3. It is Johnson's first album since 1990, when he released the critically acclaimed classic *Ah Via Musicom.*

Musicom was rated by a popular music magazine as one of the top 50 guitar albums of all time, featuring the Grammy-nominated guitar instrumental "Cliffs of Dover." Since the news broke late last year of the impending new album, Johnson fans eager for new material have been teased by changes in release dates and three different album titles. However, serious Eric Johnson fans will find that this album is not worth all the hype and excitement that accompanied it, nor the six year wait that preceded it.

This assessment is rather harsh, considering that *Ah Via Musicom* was a tough act to follow. On that album laden with impressive riffs, runs and arpeggios backed by catchy melodies and rhythms, Johnson established himself as one of the best modern guitarists.

Though *Venus Isle* does not measure up to the standards of *Musicom*, it does have its moments.

Four of what I feel are the five best tracks on the album are instrumentals featuring Johnson's trademark guitar sound and distinctive style.

The song "SRV," a tribute to the late Stevie Ray Vaughan, is a fine guitar instrumental with elements of jazz, blues and rock. Other quality songs include "Manhattan," a tribute to jazz musician Wes Montgomery, "Pavilion" and "Camel's Night Out," which was the first single released from the album for play on the radio.

Other than these four songs and another nice piece called "Lonely in the Night," the rest of the album is uninspiring and disappointing. Johnson's approach to writing this album featured an emphasis on improving his songwriting and overall musicianship.

This approach falls short in a number of ways, though, mainly by trying to broaden the scope of his music and break away from the style of his earlier work, he gets away from what he does best: Plug his guitar in, turn it up and jam.

He meddles too much with the piano, synthesizer and unnecessary orchestral colors, all of which take away from his guitar work.

Johnson is planning a solo tour that should begin late this year, as well as a separate tour with Joe Satriani and Steve Vai. Here's hoping he will let loose on stage a bit more than he does on *Venus Isle*, and remind both himself and his fans that his guitar, not musical innovation or intricate songwriting, earned him his previous success.

Calendar

■ **To have your event listed, send mail to P.O. Box 7569, e-mail arts@ogb.wfu.edu or fax us at 759-4561.** ■

On Campus

Exhibits

William Hogarth Prints and Color Function Painting. Two concurrent exhibits. Hogarth was an 18th-century painter who satirized England. "Color Function Painting" displays artwork of three pioneers of optical art.
When: Now through Oct. 25
Where: Gallery, Scales Fine Arts Center
Cost and info: Free. Ext. 5585

Movies

Mission Impossible. 1996. Tom Cruise stars in this high-tech remake of the popular television show.
When: 7 p.m., 10 p.m. Fri. and Sat; 7 p.m. Sun.
Where: Pugh Auditorium
Cost: $2

Metropolitan. A glimpse into the lives of a group of New York debutantes in the 1980s.
When: 8 p.m. Fri.
Where: Tribble A3
Cost: Free

Barcelona. A man from Illinois and his brother get into comedic and dramatic situations while working in Barcelona.
When: 10 p.m. Fri.
Where: Tribble A3
Cost: Free

Music

Year of the Arts Celebration. The Winston-Salem Piedmont Triad Symphony will perform composer-in-residence Dan Locklair's piece "At Dawn: A Tone Poem for Narrator, Chorus and Orchestra."
When: 7 p.m. Sat.
Where: Wait Chapel
Cost and Info: Free. 759-0063

Theatre

Oleanna. A highly dramatic play that involves the conflict between a college professor and a female student.
When: 8 p.m. today and Fri
Where: Ring Theatre.
Cost and info: $3 for students.

Elsewhere

Clubs

This Week's Spotlight: Vertical Horizon. The up and coming rock band appears in Carrboro tonight.
When: Today
Where: Cat's Cradle.
Info: (919) 967-9053.

Cat's Cradle. Today: Vertical Horizon. $6. **Fri.:** Flat Duo Jets with Frydaddies. $5. **Sat.:** Edwin McCain. $8. **Sun.:** Scrawl with Trailer Bride. $5. **Wed.**: "Experience Hendrix" Guitar Competition.
Where: 300 E. Main St., Carrboro.
Info: (919) 967-9053.

Lizard and Snake Cafe. Fri: Starry Wisdom Badn with Gilchard's Jaunt. **Sat.:** Hammerhead with Cobra Khan. **Tues:** Emma Peel, Rubbermaid, and Chixdiggit.
Where: 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill.
Info: (919) 929-2828.

Ziggy's. Today: Gibb Droll with Blue Dogs. **Sat.:** Everything with Once Hush.
Where: 433 Baity Street
Info: 748-1064

Exhibits

Accounts Southeast: Radcliffe Bradley. An exhibition of mixed-media works by the young Atlanta artist.
When: Through Oct. 2.
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Drive.
Info: 725-1904.

Georgia Blizzard and St. EOM. Blizzard creates dark, expressive clay vessels, plaques and paintings The exhibit of Eddie Owens Martin (a.k.a. St. EOM) illustrates the concrete and wood land of Pasaquan the late artist created in rural Georgia.
When: Through Wed.
Where: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 750 Marguerite Drive
Info: 725-1904

Music

World of Slide Guitar Tour. The tour will present the many different styles of slide guitar from Delta blues to Hawaiian melodies.
When: 8 p.m. Tues.
Where: Vintage Theatre, 7 Vintage Avenue
Cost and info: $15. 274-2395

Theatre

Cyrano de Bergerac. A heroic comedy based loosely on the life of a historical figure of 17th century France. Part of the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival.
When: 8 p.m. Thurs., Sun., and Tues.
Where: High Point Theatre, 220 E. Commerce Ave., High Point
Cost and info: $13 for students. 887-3001

Twelth Night. A Shakespeare comedy of love, plotting and mistaken identities. Part of the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival.
When: 2 p.m. Sat.
Where: High Point Theatre, 220 E. Commerce Ave., High Point
Cost and info: $13 for students. 887-3001

Lost in Yonkers. Neil Simon's Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winning play about family and growing up returns to Winston-Salem.
When: 8 p.m. Thurs. and Fri.; 2 p.m. Sat.
Where: The Little Theatre, 610 Coliseum Drive
Cost and info: $9 for students. 725-4001

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Non Sequitur *by Wiley*