



Courtesy of The Precautionz

Reunited, The Precautionz return to Lincoln scene more confident

By Sean Green
Staff Reporter

After a break-up and some time on their own, The Precautionz are back together and ready with a tight, hard-driving sound.

According to band member Jim Skrivan, the band has been rehearsing all summer in preparation for its return to the Lincoln performance scene and is more confident about what it's doing.

"We're more experienced and mature, and we know how to avoid a lot of the problems new bands face," Skrivan said. "In a way, it's like a corporate ladder because you have to pay your dues before you get the payoff."

Skrivan said the group is at the point where it can have fun performing and working together, having passed the stage of all work and no reward.

The Precautionz rehearsed and had a sound check Wednesday night at Oscars, where the band will play this weekend.

The band is made up of Skrivan,

guitarist Lance Lehman, bassist Scott Patterson, drummer Dave Pendley and vocalist Evan Rail.

SOUNDS

Although technically a cover band, members of The Precautionz bristle at labels like "cover band" and "original band." They say such labels oversimplify the music scene.

"From a practical point of view, you have to establish a base," Skrivan said. "Once people start to accept us as a band and get to know us a little, we think they'll start to listen to and accept our original music with more open minds."

However, Skrivan pointed out that a live band playing cover tunes can be an entirely different experience than a machine pumping out the same songs.

"I'm not slamming cover bands, but if a band gets up and plays a cover tune verbatim, why not just listen to the radio?"

He said The Precautionz enjoy playing songs that have been popular or have had an influence on the members, but they took a chance and experimented with the songs, changing them in ways crowds didn't expect.

But he said listeners have responded positively to the idea of altering and improvising inside the structure of standard, popular songs.

"People have come up to us after performances and told us they like the way we changed a certain song or added a certain idea," he said. "We try to get people into the music, and play off of their energy, and that works equally well with cover tunes and originals."

Lehman, who has traveled with bands such as Beau Brummel, False Witness and Vicious Trait, said listeners have expectations about guitar solos, but added he tried to experiment whenever possible.

"In False Witness, I learned that in the standards, like the Cars tune 'Bye Bye Love,' I had to stick to the material, because people are used to hear-

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Reviews



Past problems haven't damaged Williams' modern, bluesy sound



Courtesy of Polygram Records

"The Comfort Zone"
Vanessa Williams
Polygram Records

Anyone who has followed the escapades of Vanessa Williams knows her career has nine lives.

After her reign as Miss America ended in scandal, she began a new career as a vocalist. Her 1988 album, "The Right Stuff," proved Williams was more than a beauty queen, earning her several Grammy nominations and the New York Rising Star Award.

However, Williams seemingly terminated her career when she chose to be a full-time wife and mother.

Now she has resurrected her career once again. On her new album, "Comfort Zone," she performs lead vocals and has arranged several of the pieces herself. The album combines jazz, blues and pop to produce a funky, modern sound.

Williams' rich voice has good pitch, tone and control. However, she is short on range and volume. Seemingly realizing this limitation, she often lets the orchestration provide some of the musical interest and intensity of her arrangements.

The title cut is a sensual piece in which Williams makes good use of her sultry voice. Color rhythms and a bluesy flute solo contribute to the

song's cool mood. The next track, "Running Back to You," speeds up the pace of the album. It sounds like pop music, so it will be the first single from the album. Although the lyrics are repetitive ("... I won't come running back, no/I won't come running back, no...") innovative use of modulation, reverb and rap hold the listener's attention.

A remake entitled "Work to Do" returns to the funky sound of the first track. Excellent jazz flute, piano and backup vocals recapture the quintessential 1970s sound of the Isley's original.

"You Gotta Go" is the longest and most emotional cut on the album, clocking in at 6 minutes 22 seconds. The song is a duet featuring Williams and Brian McKnight. He sings, "(I need) some time on my own." She echoes, "Right now when I need you so?" Both performers sing in the same octave, making the song seem almost conversational.

"Save the Best for Last" is another song arranged by Williams. It contains some almost poetic lyrics like, "Sometimes the snow comes down in June/Sometimes the sun goes 'round the moon/Just when I thought our time had passed/You go and save the best for last."

The next track, "What Will I Tell My Heart?" is by far the best song on the album. It's a slow blues piece set in a seedy jazz club and Williams sings with only a bass, a piano and a saxophone. Sounding more like Ella Fitzgerald than a 1990s pop star, Williams croons "I'll try to explain to my friends, dear/The reasons we two are apart/I know what to tell our friends, dear/But what will I tell my heart?"

With "Freedom Dance (Get Free)," the album changes pace once again. While the lyrics and melody are repetitive, the beat is complex. This track is typical dance music.

Williams closes the album with "Goodbye," a soulful ballad that al-

lows her to show off her pitch and control without forcing her out of her vocal range.

Williams is probably incapable of the vocal gymnastics performed by pop stars like Whitney Houston. Still, her melodic voice and the excellent orchestrations on "The Comfort Zone" make it a surprisingly good album.

—Andrea Christensen

"Metallica"
Metallica
Elektra

Groups that are clumped into this media creation called heavy metal tend to fall into their own branches of the genre. For example: Glam metal — Mötley Crüe. Speed metal — Slayer. Intelligent metal — Queensryche. Poppy metal — Nelson, Winger, Warrant, Slaughter, Trixter, etc., ad nauseum. Metal has become a forceful file of popular music on its own, although a look back at bands like Blue Cheer tend to make you question why.

How the four guys in the band called Metallica ever sold millions of albums is both astounding and delightful. Here is a band who wails in ferocious musicality against the system, the government, destruction of love and life and anything else that could seriously enrage most adolescents. They also never released a single or a video until 1989. Somehow, they amassed a tremendously large and pretty frightening following and sold out arenas wherever they went. If you're a fan, be aware that their fifth full-length self-titled release is arguably their most impressive yet. Really.

The reason is primarily because of the addition of producer Bob Rock, better known for his work with making acts like the Crüe radio-friendly. He is the only producer that has been



Courtesy of Polygram Records

allowed to mess with Metallica in their entire history, and he's done wonders.

The first thing you notice about the new album is the sound. Rock has jacked up the Titan rhythm section of drummer Lars Ulrich and bassist Jason Newsted to levels never before heard in their albums. If you thought the fundamental, but still impressive, drumwork on their 1989 single "One" was nifty, you'll experience chest pains once laser hits disc on the first track.

The macabre lullaby "Enter Sandman" is an entire track built around one riff, but it's the power of the rhythm mix that makes the song such a forceful exploration into the new sound.

The rest of the album's originality comes from the fact that the boys are assured of themselves enough musically to sustain one mood for one song.

In the past their ballads have started out calm and ended up in a train wreck. Here they remain conspicuously restrained.

On guitarist Kirk Hammett's two acoustic-based outings, "The Unforgiven" and "Nothing Else Matters,"

the band uses enough dark strings and impassioned singing to classify the two as bona fide ballads. Singer James Hetfield tries his darndest at singing in his own rich tenor, and whaddya know, it works like a charm.

And if you feel the band has lost its thrash edge and has wimped or sold out, "Through The Never" and the barn-burner album closer "The Struggle Within" are capable of sending the most conservative haircuts into utter abandon thrashin' around the living room.

What makes the album stand on its own and not seem like another dry concept piece is the sustained intensity of every song and the debt each of them owe to metal's forbearers. Metallica has proven its own individual merit many times before. Now they can afford to build a classic collection in the great tradition of all hard rock albums.

Go out and buy the thing. If nothing else, it'll give you instant attitude as you cruise along the highway.

—Paul Winner

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