



KEVIN SMITH AND THE FLASHBACK RABBITS

Members of Kevin Smith and the Flashback Rabbits are David Baxter, Kevin Duff, Randy Wassermann and Kevin Smith. The quartet will perform tonight at Fitzwilly's at 9:30 p.m.

Photograph: Tim Moog

For this local 'Texas music' band, crowd participation and rowdy cover songs steal the show

BY RHONDA REINHART
THE BATTALION

When Kevin Smith and the Flashback Rabbits Hop-pin' Country Band takes the stage, audiences can expect old country with a new voice. The band's live shows include covers of old country classics, originals and plenty of crowd participation. Kevin Smith and the Rabbits will play tonight at Fitzwilly's at 9:30 p.m. Smith, a senior recreation parks and tourism major, said the band's after is for the crowd to have a good time. "We really try to get the crowd into the show," Smith said. "I definitely like crowd participation." Liz Porter, the band's manager, said the Rabbits' shows are rowdy. "It's more like a party with the band instead of a band coming to play," she said. "There's lots of interaction. The crowd really seems to love them."

Kevin and the Rabbits has been playing at The Ptarmigan Club every week for about a year. The band has opened for Jack Ingram, Little Texas and The Derailers, and also plays private parties. Scott Rosenberry, a senior history major, has hired the band to play at about four of his parties. He said the band members work well together and seem to be having a good time. "They're really good, really talented," Rosenberry said. "They're fun to have around. They play toward the crowd, and not many bands play old country like that." Smith said his favorite part of being a musician is performing and seeing people have a good time. "There's nothing I enjoy more in the world than singing," he said. "Every time I get through performing somewhere, I'm just on top of the world." Smith said he has been around music his entire life. "Virtually everyone in my family is musically inclined

somehow," he said. "I first started getting into it in elementary school, as far as singing and performing, and I've been doing it ever since. I've never had a lesson in my life. I've learned from watching other people, practicing and just playing." Smith said he also enjoys writing his own music, which he classifies as Texas music. "I write about anything and everything," he said. "An idea just pops into my head, and I write it down in about 10 or 15 minutes. I write about everything from lost love to my favorite beer, which is Pearl Light. My influences are Robert Earl Keen, Jerry Jeff Walker, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings and Gary P. Nunn, just to name a few." Rosenberry said his favorite Smith originals are "68 Calories," which is a tribute to Pearl Light, and "Sittin' on the Front Porch." "A lot of the stuff they play is real upbeat," he said. "Some songs are just 'sit back and have a beer' songs, but whatever

er mood you're in, if he's playing, you can have a good time." Smith, a 23-year-old Austin native, said he wants to release a CD before he graduates in December. "After graduation, I'm going to pursue my music," he said. "It's something I've wanted to do since before high school. I want to be able to support myself and eventually my family — as long as I'm having a good time. I won't quit until it happens." Porter said the band has developed a following through playing at The Ptarmigan. "People come back each week to see them," she said. "All of the musicians are extraordinarily talented. Their musicianship will blow anybody away. Hopefully, in five to 10 years they'll be playing for crowds of thousands." Rosenberry shares Porter's optimism about Smith's future. "He's got a lot of desires for music," he said. "If he keeps going the way he's going, he can probably be really successful."

WEEKEND PREVIEW

Thursday June 19

Cloud Six, an alternative rock band from Houston, is playing at Chelsea Street Pub and Grill at 9 p.m.

Kevin Smith and the Flashback Rabbits, a Texas music band from Bryan-College Station, is playing at Fitzwilly's at 9:30 p.m.

Tina and the B-Side Movement, a rock band from Minneapolis, Minn., is playing with Jazztop, a rock band from Bryan-College Station, at Dixie Theatre at 9 p.m.

Friday June 20

Centro-matic, a rock band from Denton, is playing an in-store performance at Marooned Records at 5 p.m.

Cloud Six, an alternative rock band from Houston, is playing at Chelsea Street Pub and Grill at 9 p.m.

Maia Sharp, a pop/rock/folk musician from California, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java at 9:30 p.m.

Ruthie Foster, a blues musician from Bryan-College Station, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina at 9 p.m.

Superband Wasteband, a classic rock band from Bryan-College Station, is playing at Fitzwilly's at 9:30 p.m.

Tripping Daisy is playing an in-store performance at Marooned Records at 5 p.m. The Dallas rock band is also playing with Centro-matic, a rock band from Denton, at Dixie Theatre at 9 p.m.

The Woodies, a folk band from Bryan-College Station, is playing at Crooked Path Ale House at 9 p.m.

Saturday June 21

Cloud Six, an alternative rock band from Houston, is playing at Chelsea Street Pub and Grill at 9 p.m.

J. Goodin, an acoustic musician from Bryan-College Station, is performing at Crooked Path Ale House at 9 p.m.

Beef Jerky, a rock band, is playing with Throwaway People, a blues band from Bryan-College Station, at a teen show at Dixie Theatre at 9 p.m.

W.C. Clark, a blues musician from Austin, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina at 9 p.m.

Ruthie Foster, a blues musician from Bryan-College Station, is playing at Fitzwilly's at 9:30 p.m.

Movin' On Up

Tina and the B-Side return to Aggieland

BY WESLEY BROWN
THE BATTALION

Tina Schlieske has come a long way since 1984, when she had to lie about her age to perform in Minneapolis clubs.

Now Tina and the B-Side Movement, is touted by many critics as the best "bar band" in America, but its appeal is growing past the point at which terms like "bar band" are adequate. Last week they were voted one of the top ten acts at the world-class City Stages Festival in Birmingham, Ala., that featured 600 competing bands. Its major label debut, *Salvation*, proves that Schlieske's voice is truly a force to be reckoned with.

That is not to say that Tina and the B-Side Movement is a newcomer. Long before the female-fronted rock band was en vogue, Schlieske was defying the image of the female singer as a cupcake. She owes more to Aretha Franklin and Billie Holliday than to Pat Benetar or the Go-Gos. Yet she does not count her band among the recent flood of female-fronted bands.

"For a while, it was tough to get anyone to care about a girl who sang rock tunes," she said. "I think it's great that we're seeing more of it now, but we were doing it a long time before it was 'in.'"

The band has been around, with several changes, since the early '80s. It released three albums under Schlieske's own label, and by cutting deals with some of the major retail chains, managed to sell 35,000 copies before their discovery by Elektra records. The band has evolved significantly from their self-titled first album to *Salvation*, but never lost touch with its roots.

"The first album was raw, a live recording," Schlieske said. "This last album is a lot more mature, but it's still basically the same kind of music. At the heart of it, it's always folk rock."

Perhaps more at the heart of it is Schlieske's voice, a straight-from-the-gut style that garners comparisons



Tina Schlieske

to the likes of Janis Joplin and k.d. lang. *Salvation* centers on this vocal style, but Patsy Rudie, the band's manager, said Schlieske has to be seen to be believed.

"It's said that she has the intensity of Joplin, but when she's playing live, she rocks more like Springsteen."

In a slightly more blunt vein, Scott Register of The Birmingham News wrote that Schlieske "combine[s] Janis Joplin-ish charisma and energy with the soulfulness of Aretha Franklin, the folk songs of Indigo Girls and attitude that makes Melissa Etheridge look wimpy."

The performance at the City Stages Festival is an indicator of the band's increasing presence in the South.

Please see TINA on Page 4.

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