

ellison

New label, album for local pop-rockers



Members of local band Ellison – Ian Bolender (guitar), JD Carlson, (bass, backing vocals), Josh Hill (vocal, guitar, synth) and Mitch Wyatt (drums, percussion) – celebrate the release of new disc *Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone* on Saturday at the Mad Hatter.

JUST THE FACTS

WHAT: Ellison's CD release show for *Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone*. With The Turnbull AC's, The Flight Station, Close To Home and A Decade To Die For.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 2

WHERE: Mad Hatter, 620 Scott Blvd., Covington

PRICE: \$8-\$10

PARKING: On street

CONTACT: 859-291-2233 or www.ellisonsite.com

ETC: To celebrate the CD release, Ellison and Sam Ash will be giving away one free guitar signed by JT Woodruff of Hawthorne Heights.

RODNEY WILSON | CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

Good news – emo is not dead.

Sure, it might have seemed like it in recent years, what with neofolkies and new-new wave bands getting so much attention. But there will always be room for emotion ... there's always a place for sad songs. And in pop culture, that means artful pop-rock communicating tales of loves lost and long, lonely drives home.

And 'round these parts, that means Ellison.

TWIST OF FATE

While "emo" might be an overly-simplistic term, the guys in Ellison – Josh Hill (vocal, guitar, synth), Ian Bolender (guitar), JD Carlson, (bass, backing vocals) and Mitch Wyatt (drums, percussion) – are certainly bringing sad pop songs back to the people.

They just nabbed a recording contract with Carbon Copy Media, a label started by JT Woodruff,

lead singer of band-of-the-moment Hawthorne Heights. They have distribution through the powerhouse label, Victory Records, and Sony Red. And they're setting out on the road with Waking Ashland, one of the more popular bands on the rock scene. And to what do they owe all this success? Well, school, of course ... sort of.

"I had a class at Miami in Oxford with this girl, Niki, and my friends always called her Niki FM – because Hawthorne Heights has a song called 'Niki FM,'" Wyatt explains. "And it ended up being the Niki FM. So I gave her our EP, *Indecisive and Half-Hearted*."

The collegiate muse passed the disc along to Woodruff, who phoned the band last summer and later (in January) asked Ellison to be the first band signed to Carbon Copy.

SAY GOODNIGHT,

Ellison's Carbon Copy debut is *Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone*, 11 songs of pristine pop and high-ener-

gy rock that call to mind such acts as Jimmy Eat World, Copeland and Dashboard Confessional. Lovelorn lyrics sung with lush harmonies lay atop expertly executed pop instrumentation, with ambient guitars and synths adding layers for a textured sound.

Aside from the quality of their music, Woodruff was drawn to Ellison's self-reliance when it comes to recording. "That was one of the things that JT liked about us," Bolender says. "We can pretty much do everything ourselves."

Boasting crystal-clear production that suggests professional studios and top-tier record producers, *Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone* is actually the result of Ellison's own endeavors. The group opted to make the album in its practice space in Hill's basement, which Hill describes as "a room full of carpet."

Recording on their own gave the band freedom to make an album that sounds the way the members want.

"We could spend as much time on it as we wanted," Wyatt says. "There's always stuff I'd like to change, but at some point you have to say it's good enough. Otherwise we'd still be working on it today."

Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone also gave Ellison the opportunity to grow as a band. "We just came to record with a bunch of ideas, but nothing really solid," Bolender says. "It was pretty organic."

FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT ...

Ellison is still a young band – both because the members have not been making music together that long and because they're all in their early to mid-20s. But that doesn't stop them from looking to the future.

"I hope one day soon we'll have time to just hang out and jam on songs all day and write things together," Hill says. "To wake up in the morning and just have rocking to do for the day – that's it."

In the meantime, Ellison is going to keep doing what the group does best. "We will just keep touring until the CD stops selling," Bolender says. "Then we'll make another."

INSIDER INFO

The phone message explained

Ellison's debut LP, *Say Goodnight, Sleep Alone*, ends with a cryptic phone message detailing the combustion of a van somewhere in Oklahoma. The story involves an '87 Dodge Ram van that Ellison sold to local band Landen Falls – with tragicomic consequences.

"I think 2 to 3 days after I sold it, one of the guys calls me and all I hear is, 'Josh, dude, the van caught on fire,'" explains lead singer Josh Hill.

"So he hung up on the kid," laughs bassist JD Carlson.

"Yeah," Hill says. "Then he calls back and leaves me a message on my phone and that is what's on the CD." And while Landen Falls wasn't angry, the Ellison guys did what they could to make it right with the band.

Ellison's new ride won't be presenting any similar problems: The group is touring in a Ford Econoline conversion van with a custom TV box and a measly 50,000 miles.

"We have a sweet trailer, too," adds guitarist Ian Bolender.