

Reviews of Randy Ellefson's *The Firebard*

Brave Words, KnuckleTracks #84 CD Liner Notes

Buoyant, melodic, and fresh with vitality, Randy Ellefson's playing is an inspiration all over this intimate, personable yet rocking instrumental album. Playing since age 13, Ellefson is classically trained and well equipped to soar with this debut album.

Brave Words and Bloody Knuckles

issue #83, November 2004

by Aaron Small

Rating: 7/10

No relation to David Ellefson (ex-Megadeth), Randy Ellefson is a remarkable guitar virtuoso. Recovering from severe tendonitis in both arms, it took Randy two years to record his debut instrumental album, *The Firebard*. Containing ten tracks, this is not your usual fret board wankery. Of course the solos are plentiful, but the focus is on bright, energetic riffs ranging from crunchy to melodic. Randy also supplies the bass parts and drum programming. The fact that the percussion is computer generated is fairly obvious, nevertheless Ellefson utilizes the technology to its utmost advantage. Not content to play a Fender, Gibson, or Ibanez, Randy actually manufactures his own homemade guitars, which he certainly makes sing.

Guitar Gods Series at Tinfoil Music

April 2005

by David McLean

Randy Ellefson's debut CD, "*The Firebard*", opens with a driving rhythm setting up the perfect rocking backdrop for his searing, melodious guitar work...and sets the pace for the entire CD. From start to finish of this 10 song collection, Randy unloads with displays of instrumental rock guitar fury that place him immediately at the top of the heap. No mere superficial shred-fest, Randy displays a sophisticated sense of composition, lush harmonies, and intricate rhythms, as well as full command of advanced guitar techniques, which he uses to drive forward the song without ever falling into shows of soulless excess. Songs such as "Legends", "Accolade", "Still at Large", and "Journeys" all display an epic, almost cinematic air, giving the sense that they would be equally at home in a movie soundtrack as on rock radio. "*The Firebard*" is an excellent debut offering and promises great things to come.

Classic Rock Revisited

December 2004

by Jeb Wright

Rating: C+

At Classic Rock Revisited we get tons of CD submissions from guitar players claiming to be the next Steve Vai. Every one of them tells us they are the real deal and that we will love them more than Led Zep or Stevie Ray. Over the years we have learned that most of the time they are either lying or they are full of hubris. In any event, we almost never accept unsolicited cds. If people email us first we either delete or go to a website to hear some MP3s. Several months ago, I received an email from Randy Ellefson. He told me that he played in the Steve Vai style and that he was pretty good. He was humble and said he had a self-produced CD and would like me to review it. I told Randy that we usually don't do that but he was kind, polite, yet persistent so I told him to send me one and that if I liked it I would review it. Randy sent it and I shelved it for months as I kept getting in new releases that needed to be done. Deadlines and commitments got in the way. Randy probably thinks we rejected it. Well Randy, the time has finally come where I gave it a spin. We are reviewing it so that must mean we like!

For starters, Randy can f-ing play. His playing is very fluid and melodic. "Legends" actually does bring to mind Steve Vai! "Journeys" is one of the most complex and musically rewarding tracks on the disc. There are moments in every song but these two bookends on the track listing seem to sum up most of what Randy has to say. His writing is very melodic. His solos are very precise and his musical pallet is colorful. He should spend more time playing with a live band as this really sounds as if he played all the instruments. Better production and a better studio would help the overall sound but that said; this is a damn good record.

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If you are a guitar buff and want to try something new then go to Randy's website link above and email Randy and buy a CD. In the meantime Randy, getcha an agent and get your stuff heard by Steve Vai's *Favored Nations*.

Metal-Rules.com

Randy Ellefson - *The Firebard*

September 2004 | Released: 2004, Guitarosity Records | Rating: 4.0/5 | Reviewer: Robert Burse

Hailing from Maryland, USA, classically trained guitarist Randy Ellefson delivers a strong instrumental debut album. Randy received his Bachelors of Music degree in classical guitar, which in turn partially led to him suffering from a severe case of tendonitis. He did his 4 years of playing requirements in only 2 years. He was unable to play guitar for over a year and even then he could barely play once a week. Four years passed before he could play Rock music again and even now is restricted to 3 hours a day every second day. It was because of this that it took over 2 years to get this record recorded.

Clocking in just under an hour this all-instrumental album ranks up there with the greats like Satriani and Vai. The crunchy yet melodic guitar sound is very reminiscent of the great guitar albums of the late 80's and early 90's (Think SURFING WITH THE ALIEN). Randy has brought back guitar solos, which seem to be missing in a lot of today's newer releases. Add in great riffs and a solid rhythm section and you got THE FIREBARD. There is nothing really slow on this disc just a lot of great guitars overlapped with some amazing solos that can put Malmsteen to shame. You can easily see the classical influence and training in places. There was no holds barred when recording this, Randy just gave it everything he got. You can tell he was playing with everything he had. Even without knowing the hardship he went through you will still appreciate this recording and easily rank it up there with the greats of the past.

Hard Rock has a new name in guitar players and it is Randy Ellefson. Hopefully this is just the beginning.

Music Monthly

issue #241, October 2004

by Greg Yost

Another regional guitar wizard is Randy Ellefson. Not only is Ellefson a talented musician, but he is also a study in perseverance. It was not that long ago that a severe case of tendonitis in both arms forced Ellefson to abandon playing guitar for almost a year. Now he has recovered and has released a new album, *Firebard*. While it is obvious that Ellefson is an amazing rock and metal guitar player, it is even more impressive that he played all instruments on the album - making it a true "do-it-yourself" project.