

STREET SCENE

Can anything top a Bacharach bash for Ben Folds Five?

riding high on the success of the ballad "Brick," Ben Folds is already letting stardom get to him.

"You'd think I'm happy, but I'm not. It's isolating me. People don't understand me. I can't get my model tray right. I'm having thoughts about jumping out windows," said Folds, the pianist and singer of his namesake trio Ben Folds Five.

Calling from his home in Chapel Hill, N.C., he reveals his facetiousness.

"No," he said with a laugh. "I'm kidding. Everything's fine. I've just barely had time to get that way. I've been like a machine, which is OK. But when you come down from being a machine, you have two years of personal life to deal with."

To longtime Ben Folds Five

fans, it's surprising that "Brick" from the album "Whatever and Ever Amen" (Sony 550 Music) was the single that broke through to mainstream radio fans. Ben Folds Five is best known for punchy, cynical piano-pop songs. Radio listeners passed right by the first two singles, "Battle of Who Could Care Less" and "One Angry Dwarf and 200 Sleemn Faces," which showcases that trait.

"I think with our real fans, that's the acid test. If you're surprised it was 'Brick' (that was successful) then you're really happy with what we did before," Folds said.

But "Brick," an autobiographical tale Folds and drummer Darren Jessee wrote about Folds taking his girlfriend to an abortion clinic, has allowed the band

to do "a lot of neat things."

"We played the other night on the Burt Bacharach special," he said of the TNT show "Burt Bacharach: One Amazing Night." Ben Folds Five, which is rounded out by bassist Robert Sledge, performed "Rain Drops Keep Falling on My Head."

"That was one of the neatest things that we've ever done. To do something like that, we could quit after that. I can't think of much that we haven't done that would rank up there. We could go play Giants Stadium, that's another one on the list. Madison Square Garden? Oh, we never got to be on The Muppet Show! That's a bummer," he added.

Folds, whose band is opening for Dave Matthews Band at Giant Stadium on June 7, is pleasantly surprised that "The

Muppet Show" was recently resurrected.

"Maybe that's something to conquer," Folds said enthusiastically.

One thing that Folds isn't too thrilled about is Caroline Records' release earlier this year of "Naked Baby Photos," a collection of b-sides, demos, and live tracks.

"I'm glad it's documented, but I can't say I'm proud of it as an album. If I were a true fan of someone I would like to have that album. But if I was marginal about the band I'd be proud (tickled) off that I bought it."

He is proud of "Emaline," a song, which according to the liner notes, was cut off its self-titled debut (Caroline Records) because the label wasn't comfort-

able with marketing an album with 16 songs.

"I would have been really happy for 'Emaline' to be a single, but it's kind of hard to compete for a single with Sony. Caroline would get squashed like a grape."

To further promote its proper release "Whatever and Ever Amen," Ben Folds Five along with Sean Lennon is opening for Beck on Tuesday, June 2, at Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston. The band's previous shows in the area haven't been as cushy.

Ben Folds Five, on its tour supporting its 1995 self-titled debut, had a memorable show at The Shelter below St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit.

"I remember that because of the trip down the stairs with

that piano. (The punk band) Fenix was really loud. These two kids were following me all around town, too," Folds said.

"I wouldn't have thought that it would be so bad for us so early. It's the fanatics that get to you anyway. If your fan base is not that big it's made up of all fanatics. It gets better when the mainstream comes and washes away the fanatics. They're on to something else. The worst it gets now is someone knocks on my door, takes my picture and runs."

Tickets, \$20 pavilion and \$15 lawn, are still available for the 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 2, show at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Independence Township. For more information, call (248) 377-0100 or visit <http://www.palaceticket.com>.

Semisonic pitches its seductive sound to the bedroom

Dan Wilson wanted his band's sophomore effort to be "a bedroom record."

"I imagine singing to one person, that I'm whispering in one ear," Wilson explained.

His intimate love letter is "Feeling Strangely Fine," Semisonic's second release for MCA Records.

In the addictive "Singing in My Sleep" tells of how Wilson was charmed by gift he received.

"The main inspiration of that was I got a real amazing compilation tape from a woman who was trying to seduce me, I think. It's nothing that I do very well but I've gotten compilation tapes from friends and when they're done, they're so powerful," Wilson said.

"There's a line in the song, 'I've been living in your cassette/it's the modern equivalent of singing up to a Capote' in a balcony in your mind. Now people serenade each other with cassettes rather than going to somebody's balcony, taking an acoustic guitar and singing up to them," he added.

Did it seduce him? He won't

say.

In the piano-driven "Made to Last," Wilson is adoringly "beautiful one/Asleep in the sun/Secret, sweet and sublime/I hope you last a long, long time."

His favorite song on "Feeling Strangely Fine," however is the coy "DND" in which he sings "DND/Don't disturb us no more."

"It has the perfect combination of passion and groove. To me it has lots of emotion, a great melody which is an amazing combination. Everything is perfect for my taste," Wilson said.

He and bandmates bassist John Munson and drummer Jacob Slichter, alumni of WPLT's "Planetfest," went into Minneapolis's Seedy Underbelly studios to record "Feeling Strangely Fine" with no plan in mind.

"We didn't plan on how to play them (the songs) or how to record them. I'd spring something on the guys, turn on the tape and respond to it then and there," Wilson explained.

"We wanted to try to create a process in making the album. We

wanted as many first tries as possible. Like for 'Secret Smile,' we did a disco version of that song. We threw it away and tried something else."

The final version of "Secret Smile" is a laid-back, organ-led ballad.

Semisonic also treated each song as an individual entity as opposed to taking the record as a whole.

"Every song was a separate project from the last. On the 'Great Divide' (Semisonic's stunning debut) we probably included every idea we had on every song. In the end, we had to take some things off," Wilson explained.

"This time we were lavishing attention on each individual

song. We recorded more tracks than we needed by quite a bit."

Whatever the process, "Feeling Strangely Fine" is a pop gem. Semisonic and Athenaeum perform Wednesday, June 3, at the 7th House, 7 N. Saginaw, Pontiac.

ac. Doors open at 8 p.m. for the 18 and older show. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For more information, <http://www.59music.com> or call (248) 335-8100. Semisonic's e-mail address is semisonic@aol.com.



Coming to town: Minneapolis popsters Semisonic perform songs off its latest album "Feeling Strangely Fine."

"THIS MOVIE IS A SCANDAL, AN OUTRAGE AND IRRESISTIBLY ENTERTAINING"

BULWORTH IMAGINATIVE BRILLIANT

IMAGINATIVE: An imaginative anything-goes escapade... Made with the visual elegance of earlier comedy films... It has both style and pizzazz.

BRILLIANT: Brilliant! Bulworth is savagely funny.

OUTRAGEOUS

Bulworth is more outrageous than 'Being There,' more slashing than 'Network'.

www.bulworth.com

NOW SHOWING!	AMC AMERICANA WEST 313-242-4300	AMC BEL AIR 313-242-4300	AMC EASTLAND 5 313-242-4300
LAUREL PARK 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD 313-242-4300	STERLING CTR. 313-242-4300	BIRMINGHAM 8 313-242-4300
CANTON CINEMA 313-242-4300	AUBURN HILLS 313-242-4300	PONTIAC 6-12 313-242-4300	SHOWCASE 313-242-4300
WESTLAND 313-242-4300	STAR TAYLOR 313-242-4300	STAR JOHN R AT 14 MILE 313-242-4300	STERLING HOTLS. 313-242-4300
ROCHESTER 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD 12 313-242-4300	TAYLOR 313-242-4300	LINCOLN PARK 313-242-4300
FAIRLANE 313-242-4300	UNITED ARTISTS 313-242-4300	WEST RIVER 313-242-4300	COMMERC TWP. 14 313-242-4300
			FORD-WYOMING 313-242-4300

"SANDRA BULLOCK'S FINEST PERFORMANCE EVER. EMOTIONS SOAR IN 'HOPE FLOATS'."

"SANDRA BULLOCK DELIVERS A SUPERLATIVE PERFORMANCE. It could be Sandra Bullock's first Oscar Nomination."

"EMOTIONALLY ON TARGET. 'Hope Floats' is distinguished by its acting."

HOPE FLOATS

STARTS FRIDAY AT THESE THEATRES:

AMC AMERICANA WEST 313-242-4300	AMC BEL AIR 313-242-4300	AMC EASTLAND 5 313-242-4300	AMC ABBEY 8 313-242-4300
SOUTHFIELD 313-242-4300	STERLING CTR. 313-242-4300	WONDERLAND 313-242-4300	LAUREL PARK 313-242-4300
NOV TOWN CTR. 313-242-4300	AUBURN HILLS 313-242-4300	PONTIAC 1-12 313-242-4300	BIRMINGHAM 8 313-242-4300
WESTLAND 313-242-4300	STAR TAYLOR 313-242-4300	STAR JOHN R AT 14 MILE 313-242-4300	STERLING HOTLS. 313-242-4300
ROCHESTER 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD 12 313-242-4300	TAYLOR 313-242-4300	LINCOLN PARK 313-242-4300
FAIRLANE 313-242-4300	UNITED ARTISTS 313-242-4300	WEST RIVER 313-242-4300	COMMERC TWP. 14 313-242-4300
			FORD-WYOMING 313-242-4300

CHRIS FARLEY **MATTHEW PERRY**

Almost History... Almost Legends...

ALMOST HEROES

Mostly Ridiculous...

STARTS FRIDAY!

AMC AMERICANA WEST 313-242-4300	AMC BEL AIR 313-242-4300	AMC EASTLAND 5 313-242-4300
LAUREL PARK 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD 313-242-4300	STERLING CTR. 10 313-242-4300
CANTON CINEMA 313-242-4300	AUBURN HILLS 313-242-4300	BIRMINGHAM 8 313-242-4300
WESTLAND 313-242-4300	STAR TAYLOR 313-242-4300	STAR JOHN R AT 14 MILE 313-242-4300
ROCHESTER 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD 12 313-242-4300	TAYLOR 313-242-4300
FAIRLANE 313-242-4300	UNITED ARTISTS 313-242-4300	WEST RIVER 313-242-4300
		FORD-WYOMING 313-242-4300

"A THRILLER WITH BRAINS. 'Deep Impact' is solid and intelligent - with tension, authenticity and heart-squeezing emotion."

"ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FILMS YOU'LL SEE THIS SUMMER! A real heavy hitter!"

KICK THE SUMMER BLOCKBUSTER SEASON OFF EARLY!

"REFRESHING AND INSPIRATIONAL!"

DEEPIIMPACT

AMC AMERICANA WEST 313-242-4300	AMC BEL AIR 10 313-242-4300	AMC EASTLAND 5 313-242-4300
LAUREL PARK 313-242-4300	SOUTHFIELD CITY 313-242-4300	STERLING CTR. 10 313-242-4300
BIRMINGHAM 8 313-242-4300	CANTON 313-242-4300	RENAISSANCE 4 313-242-4300
SHOWCASE WESTLAND 313-242-4300	STAR GRANT AT 15 MILE 313-242-4300	STAR LINCOLN PARK 8 313-242-4300
STAR ROCHESTER HILLS 313-242-4300	STAR SOUTHFIELD 313-242-4300	STAR TAYLOR 313-242-4300
STAR COMMERC TWP. 14 313-242-4300	STAR FAIRLANE 313-242-4300	STAR OAKLAND 313-242-4300
STAR 12 OAKS 313-242-4300	STAR WEST RIVER 313-242-4300	FORD WYOMING 313-242-4300

"IT'S A MOVIE TO SHOUT ABOUT!"

ROBERT REDFORD HAS TRANSFERRED THE HORSE WHISPERER FROM A POPULAR NOVEL TO A BRACING FILM OF STRENGTH AND GRACE.

THE FIRST GREAT FILM OF 1998!

MOVING, INVOLVING, A GORGEOUS FILM VISUALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY STUNNING.

ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR!

THE HORSE WHISPERER

AMC EASTLAND 5 313-242-4300	AMC LAUREL PARK 313-242-4300	AMC SOUTHLAND 3 313-242-4300
STERLING CTR. 10 313-242-4300	BIRMINGHAM 8 313-242-4300	CANTON 313-242-4300
NOV TOWN 313-242-4300	HANSAWAS MAPLE ART 313-242-4300	SHOWCASE WESTLAND 313-242-4300
SHOWCASE DIABLO 313-242-4300	SHOWCASE BIRMINGHAM 313-242-4300	STAR TAYLOR 313-242-4300
STAR LINCOLN PARK 313-242-4300	STAR ROCHESTER HILLS 313-242-4300	STAR SOUTHFIELD 313-242-4300
STAR COMMERC TWP. 14 313-242-4300	STAR WEST RIVER 313-242-4300	