

## Music review continued...

By Nelson Whipple

### Firehose

"Fromohio"

**Firehose's third album, *Fromohio***, has a definite "garage sound". For those of you who do not know, the bassist and drummer, Mike Watt and George Hurley, are from the now defunked Minutemen.

Ed Crawford, singer and guitarist, seems heavily influenced by bands like the Byrds, CSNY, and R.E.M. Between the edgy/funky hardcore sound of the rhythm section and the melodic/jangling guitar sound of the singer/guitarist, this album is a nice departure from most record company oriented "rock".

Mike Watt pens the bulk of the lyrics, and presumably he is speaking of his old friend D. Boon from the Minutemen when he writes "...listening, whistling, missing that other dude-" in *Riddle of the Eighties*. In general, the lyrics are fairly candid without being overly graphic or depressing. For those of you who

are looking for yet another band to complain about all of the wrongdoings of this cruel world, look elsewhere.

The live feel of this album is fantastic, but, in some respects proves to be a limitation. It took about 60 hours total to record and mix, so the craftsmanship is pretty raw. The vocals do not cover up the rest of the music, which is a nice change, but the overall sound is on the muddy side. Some of the more novel album tracks are two drum solos and a solo guitar piece. The drum solos are painlessly short and provide a nice change of pace towards the end of each side of the album, and because of their shortness, they easy compositions to follow. *Vastopol*, a traditional guitar song, is well done by Ed Crawford.

Mr. Crawford, while showing a great melodic sense, also blends in well with the Watt/Hurley groove without much trouble at all. While he does not have that really raunchy feel that Boon had, he definitely adds to the character and overall sound of the band.

Now, of course, we must say a few nasty things about the album so that nobody gets too good of an impression from the previous paragraphs. *Liberty for our Friend* is a drunken-sailor-turned-buddy anthem that is less than acceptable for this record. Jimmy Buffet would have thrown this one out without blinking an eye. Some of the lyrics in the songs are very sappy, but this fact is countered by the fact that they are quite hard to understand in most cases because of the production.

There are songs on this album that should not be missed. For instance *Whisperin' While Hollerin'* is stupendous. The second side, for the most part, is very enjoyable, keeping a great groove without catering to the "Guido's Element", so to speak.

In short, the album is fun without being mindless. It does not cater to current trends either in music, lyrics, or production values. As time passes, I suspect that more and more people will realize the true value of this record, so remember where you heard it first.

