

A Lighthouse legend returns to Elon

Ashley Busch
Reporter

The Lighthouse's long lost secret is coming back to town, and he won't be a secret for long. Brian Wiltsey, a 1999 Elon graduate, is making a comeback on Sept. 18 with his band, The Brian Wiltsey Band. "The Lighthouse used to be the most happening place on the weekends and

weekdays alike. I want to bring that back," Wiltsey said, explaining his interest in coming back to Elon.

In the late 90's, Wiltsey played in a band called Montgomery Burns Band (later known as MBB) in local clubs. It wasn't long before they were opening up for acts such as Blessed Union of Souls and Edwin McCain and generating interest with local audiences and big-time labels alike. MBB was going places. "We had a really great thing going on," he said "It was fun."

But that was two years and three albums ago. "After most of us graduated, we moved to Greensboro to try the scene there, but after awhile we decided not to play together anymore. I wanted to move on," Wiltsey said.

After the band broke up in the beginning months of 2001, Wiltsey said he decided to stretch his creative boundaries. He

tried for a new sound as a solo artist in Atlanta, a city known for such acts as John Mayer and Lenny Kravitz. Wiltsey started performing in various open mic nights trying to perfect his blend of popular rock and pop, mixed lightly with the more soulful sounds of R&B.

"I'm trying for a new sound," Wiltsey said. "I've been listening to a lot of Motown lately and I'm trying to blend that into my music." Playing up to four nights a week paid off. Wiltsey was able to win the city's overall open mike competition, and the doors of larger venues began opening for him throughout the city.

"I just played as often as I could. I was never home anymore!" said Wiltsey, laughing. Opportunity arose at the end of 2001 when he met his future band mate and guitarist, Bret Hartley. Hartley then introduced Wiltsey to Shawn Malone, better known as Bass, who began playing the drums with them. The final piece of the puzzle came six months ago, fresh from touring with the Marshall Tucker Band and writing songs for John Mayer. Clay Cook, playing bass, made the band complete. "I wasn't sure

how things were going to work but Clay played with us and it just fit," Wiltsey said. "We all clicked, and now we're a family. It doesn't feel right when the four of us are not on stage together."

The band has been hitting various nightspots in Atlanta such as CJ's Landing, Smith's and 10 High, trying to get as much exposure as possible. That is what brings Wiltsey and the guys back to the Carolinas.

The upcoming show at The Lighthouse will be a sort of homecoming for Wiltsey and help expand the following he's created in Atlanta. The aspect of leaving Atlanta to tour leaves him with a sort of nervous excitement, but he said he is also anxious to get his new sound out to more people. "I'm really excited about playing in Elon again," Wiltsey said. "It will be a show that you do not want to miss!"

The doors will open at 9 p.m. and the opening band Clay Cook Band will get things started around 10 p.m. There will be CDs sold at the show as well.

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Photo courtesy of brianwiltsey.com

Wiltsey and band mates, including Clay Cook who co-wrote John Mayer's "Room for Squares," will be returning to play at The Lighthouse Thursday Sept. 18 at 10 p.m.

Weekly Sneak Peak

Thursday, Sept. 11- Sullivan/Erdmann Quintet
7:30 p.m. in Yeager Recital Hall

Friday, Sept. 12-
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7:30 p.m. in McCrary Theater

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