

'Flame' gets notice on NYC radio station

Band included in program about musicians with disabilities

BY JOE MAHER
Gazette Reporter

Flame, the soft-rock band from the Fulton County ARC has taken a big step forward in its search for a national audience.

The band, comprising 11 people with physical or developmental disabilities, is featured in a National Public Radio program titled "Musical Abilities."

The program debuted recently on NPR's WFUV, a 50,000-watt New York City station with 350,000 listeners.

WFUV Assistant News and Pub-

lic Affairs Director George Bodarky hosts a Saturday-morning show called "Cityscape," which tackles a different topic each week. Recently, the topic was musicians who have excelled at their craft despite physical or other limitations.

"As a reporter, it was something I wanted to bring to the attention of my listeners," he said.

Bodarky said Thursday that he was doing research for the "Musical Abilities" segment when he came upon Flame on the Internet.

"It seemed like a very unique band to profile. We're talking about 11 people with developmental disabilities," he said.

Bodarky recently traveled to Gloversville to take in a Saturday night gig at St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church and came away impressed.

"Flame clearly is a band taking what they have to offer to new heights," he said.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Members of the band Flame play at a recent performance.

He said he was impressed by the band's extensive touring schedule and also audience reaction. People were up dancing and having a good time that night, he said.

"It was a hit with people because they clearly have a lot to offer and show. It's certainly an interesting band to watch," Bodarky said.

Lexington Center spokesman Tim Fiori has heard the program and said it features interviews with band members, fans and staff and clips of songs the band performed at the church that night.

The program, which is available online at www.wfuv.org, also featured two other artists with disabilities.

One was Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen, Bodarky said, who lost an arm in a car wreck in 1984. Allen returned to the stage with the hard-rock band and continues to perform.

"What's unique about this is he was already famous at the time he became disabled," Bodarky said.

The other artist profiled is Vic Chestnutt of Athens, Ga., who was in a car wreck at age 18 and is a quadriplegic. He has gone on to become a successful singer, songwriter and performer.

Chestnutt, who has 10 albums to his credit, was discovered by REM frontman Michael Stipe, and Stipe produced his first two records, according to his page on allmusic.com.

So what's Bodarky's take on this story?

"Disabled is the wrong word. We're all differently abled," he said.

Reach Gazette reporter
Joe Maher at 725-8412 or
jmaher@dailygazette.net.