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The Frenettes – Battle of the Network Stars EP

by [BRENDON HERTZ](#) on Aug 15, 2013 • 1:10 pm

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This writer never really understood nineties movements in rock and roll. It may have been the fact that popular music escaped the middle school bus driver's preference in radio station, the ever-present Weezer "W" symbol on t-shirts constantly reminding me that I was on the "out," or the fact that the incessant downstroke guitar chords were just never my thing. Fast-forward almost twenty years, and a band emerges on the scene in Eau Claire, The Frenettes, that dredges up many of those awkwardly-endearing years throughout middle school and high school many of us twenty-somethings have tried to forget.

It's easy to see why one might be reticent to accept the somewhat resurrected sound created by this group of talented standouts in the Eau Claire music scene. However, the new EP, entitled *Battle of the Network Stars*, shows a new level of cohesion and adaptation amongst band members, from the choice of lead singer on individual tracks (the band has three outstanding lead vocalists in Paul Brandt, Eric Rykal, and Trevor Ives) to the perceived snugness of production and arrangement of instrumental parts: guitars, bass, keys, vocal harmonies, and drums all reflect a precisely conducted outcome.

Also important to note is the album's post-modern flair in the lyrical domain. Disillusionment and fanaticism interlace creatively with pop-culture standouts such as *How I Met Your Mother's* Cobie Smulders and *Game of Thrones'* Margaery Tyrell (both namesakes grace two of the five track titles), creating a fragmented narrative that seems to give light-hearted commentary on modern love, confusion, and disappointment. Despite the upbeat, melodic nature of the music, this writer can't help but get a sense of prevalent star-crossed themes examining ideas regarding the division of hope and reality, shown in the lines "It was a Saturday night staple/the local legends on display full of hope but hopelessly underage" from the song entitled "Gravedigger's Biscuits."

As the speaker in EP closer "Milky Joe" epically echoes, "But I know this is not what we've always talked about," The Frenettes aren't what one might expect in the progression of musical stylings, but *Battle of the Network Stars* shows that there is something in refining and revisiting periods in music that have yet to be perfected—even those that we may want to forget. The Frenettes, with this record, have certainly found a way to take all of the good things that a past era of rock had to offer—soaring vocals, melancholic stories, tight production—and push it forward towards something new.

Check out the whole album here:

[The Battle of the Network Stars by The Frenettes](#)

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