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IN NEWSWEEKLY

2007 BOSTON PRIDE SUPPLEMENT

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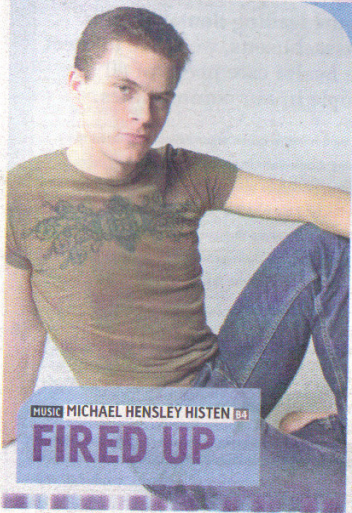
AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE:
THE 2007
NEW ENGLAND
PRIDE GUIDE

THIS WEEK'S I.N. PICS PRIDE WEEK PHOTOS

SNAPSHOTS ALL



THIS WEEK'S I.N. NIGHTLIFE



MUSIC MICHAEL HENSLEY HISTEN **FIRED UP**

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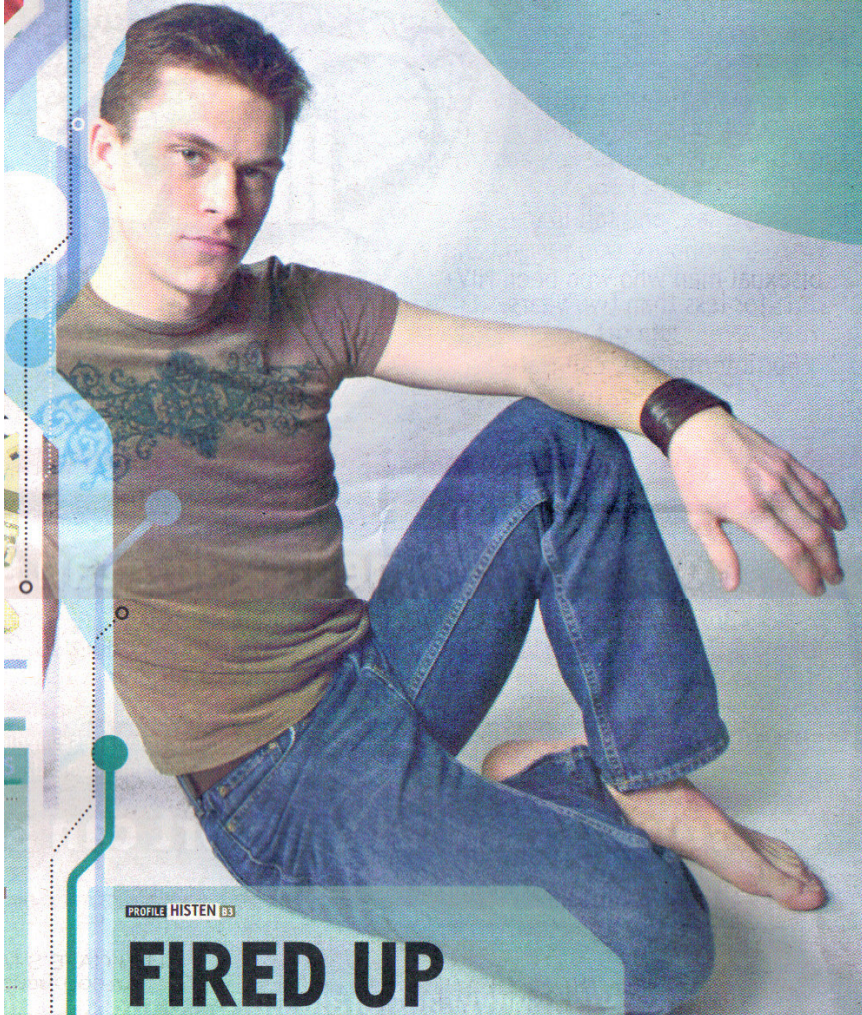
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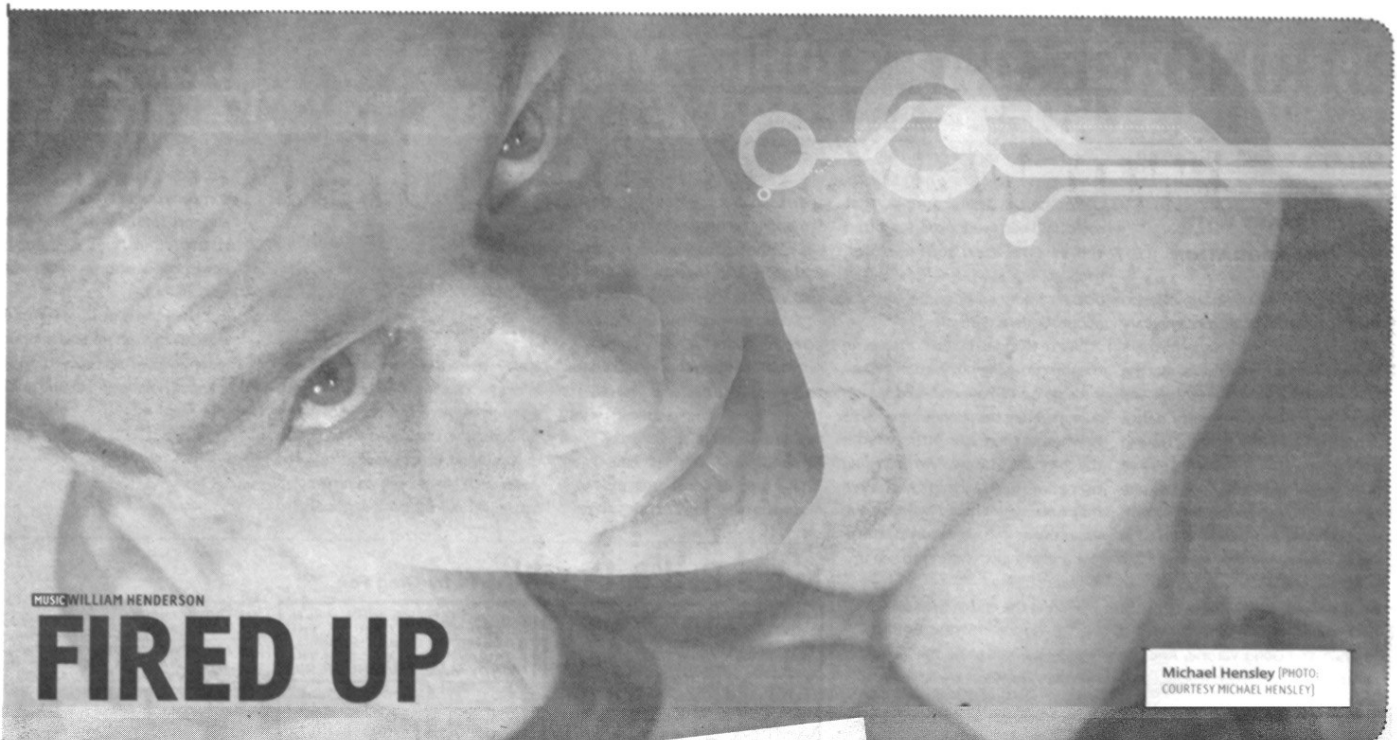


PROFILE HISTEN **03**

FIRED UP

MICHAEL HENSLEY HISTEN FULL-LENGTH CD,
'FIRE BEHIND ME,' NOW AVAILABLE; CD RELEASE
PARTY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 22 AT SHINE

Michael Hensley Histen



MUSIC WILLIAM HENDERSON
FIRED UP

Michael Hensley (PHOTO: COURTESY MICHAEL HENSLEY)

MICHAEL HENSLEY HISTEN FULL-LENGTH CD, 'FIRE BEHIND ME,' NOW AVAILABLE; CD RELEASE PARTY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 22 AT SHINE

Coinciding with the release of his first full length CD, "Fire Behind Me," out performer Michael Hensley Histén played Faneuil Hall Day on June 2, launched a new Web site and has planned a CD release party for Friday, June 22 at Shine in Kendall Square. A favorite of In Newsweekly, Histén spoke with us last week about the difference between recording an EP and a CD, the challenges in performing live and the song that almost wasn't.

IN NEWSWEEKLY (I.N.): What do you credit for the stylistic and tonal changes between the first and second albums?

MICHAEL HENSLEY HISTEN (M.H.): I view the EP "Everyone Wants to Feel Something" as more of a preview of the first album. It had four songs essentially in demo form. I got to see people's reactions, see what they responded to, see how the flow felt. I realized I had this duality — harder, rougher songs like "Everyone Wants to Feel Something" and softer, more meditative tracks like "Take Me Away." I wanted to make the album go all out in explor-

ing both ends and pushing them to the extreme, while also finding something in the middle ground. "Walk In" is the perfect example of finding that balance. I wanted something uptempo that had a lighter quality, and it was also the last song I wrote. I felt like there was an element missing from the album in terms of something more joyous, and "Walk In" filled that spot perfectly. Plus, with live performing under my belt, I realized I wanted to make the songs really engaging in a way that would translate well into a live setting.

I.N.: What did you learn in the process of recording the first album that you were able to incorporate into the second album?

M.H.: The biggest thing I learned is that I wanted another person working with me to get the new album perfect. I knew I had good songs, but it was in the finishing touches that I didn't have the experience. It was kind of hard to admit I couldn't do everything myself, as I did literally everything on the EP — from writing and performing to producing and mixing. For "Fire Behind Me," I brought in mix engineer Yasuhiko Fukuoka and together we really brought the songs to the next level. It was strange opening up the creative process to someone else but once I heard the results he had my full trust.



Most of his work was just mixing/mastering but he added a few elements here and there that really made the songs go from good to amazing — he's got incredible talent. I'm hoping we can work together again.

I.N.: You've started performing live, what are the challenges you face? Similarly, does performing live allow you the chance to do something that you weren't able to do on the record?

M.H.: The biggest challenge in performing live is really logistical. I'm not part of a band, I don't use live instruments, and most of my music is sequenced. I brought in my friend J. Jacob Krause to perform with me live, and together we each man a keyboard. We split the keyboards up so that the two of us together might be playing as many as 5 or 6 instruments simultaneously, while the

backing beats are prerecorded. But it's also fun! Just hearing my music loud and live and seeing the crowd get into it is great. I can also potentially test out some new material and new arrangements live without having to have it all finished in the studio.

I.N.: How did your Faneuil Hall Day gig come about?

M.H.: It just sounded like a great opportunity — it's kind of a big jump to go from brand new artist on the scene to performing in such a big production with a potential audience of thousands. Next year, I'm hoping I can play as part of the Festival on Parade Day. I think I bring something really valuable to the music scene at Boston Pride — I'm local and openly gay, and my style of music is not something you often get to hear live around here.

I.N.: Any songs on the new album stick out as being particularly significant or important?

M.H.: "Walk In" was really important to me, as it proved to me I could really make a great straight-up pop tune. But lyrically, much of the album was an exorcism for me. I put my anger and fear and desire down in words and the whole concept was to leave that "fire behind me." In listening to the finished CD, I was

really struck by the lyrics I had written for "The Wrong Truth" — "so little is in my control / I have to sort out what matters." It's sort of the perfect closer to the album (aside from the remix at the end), because I sing about fear and confusion, but from a much more confident standpoint. There's this realization that you can't know everything and that you just have to forge ahead, even if the questions remain. It's a good analogy for my whole music career — so much has been trial and error, I realized fairly quickly that the most important thing was to just go for it and trust that it will all work out.

I.N.: What's next for you?

M.H.: I'm putting my all into promoting "Fire Behind Me." I'm enormously proud of this record — it's everything I hoped it could be, and I really think I have a great album on my hands. I want to book more live shows, get more press, and try to reach as many people as possible. Some of these songs have been gestating inside of me for so long they feel more like their own entities, and it's just my job to help them get discovered. I'm also feeling a renewed creative push to write more new material. If everything goes well with this CD, hopefully about a year from now I'll be working on the next one! • A CD RELEASE PARTY FOR "FIRE BEHIND ME" WILL TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY, JUNE 22, AT SHINE, 1 KENDALL SQUARE, BOSTON. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTY OR HISTEN, CONNECT TO WWW.MICHAEL-HENSLEY.COM.