



## Red Lion grad launches debut album with local concerts

# Route 74 and beyond

By MARY BEILER  
For The York Dispatch

**M**usic has long been part of Eric Astor's life. From age 5, he was playing the piano and singing into pretend microphones.

"There was always music in the home," said mom Pat Astor. That's why it's no surprise to his parents that he has fulfilled his dream and released his first album. A 1999 Red Lion graduate, he returns to the area this month to perform songs from his debut CD, "Coolfire," a mix of jazz, blues, funk and rock.

Though he has been living in Los Angeles for five years, Astor hasn't forgotten his roots. The first song on his album, "Route 74," was inspired by the road that runs through Red Lion.

After a visit home, the song just started flowing out of his guitar, he said. "It reminded me of high school," said the now 28-year-old. "After school we'd hop in the car and head down that road with the windows open."

Astor was 12 when he took his first guitar lesson. His teacher, Marilyn Warner, remembers him well.

"He was just a natural," said Warner, who continues to teach guitar lessons at Menchey Music in Springettsbury Township. "I know Eric said I was inspirational to him. He was inspirational to me. Eric was just an awesome student."

Astor recalls Warner's focus on improvisation as his favorite part of the lessons.

**Preparation:** Astor majored in recording and jazz studies at Lebanon Valley College. There he learned how to perform, write, record and produce, developing all of the talents he would need to produce his first album.

After college, he spent several months working on cruise ships, where he played diverse music from jazz to reggae to rock.

"I've experienced a lot of different genres and styles," Astor said.

Those experiences led to the diverse sound of his album. Getting input from other musicians allowed the music to "constantly evolve," he said.

Creating the album was a two-year process, sometimes time-consuming and tedious, but Astor said he is pleased with the final product.

"I wasn't willing to let it go until it was as good as it could be," he said.

**Work and play:** Astor's parents attributed his success to his drive and determination.

"He's always had a strong work ethic," his mother said. "If he has his mind set on something, he will go for it."

The Astors admit it was a little nerve wracking when their 22-year-old son told them he was moving to L.A. without a pre-arranged job or a place to live. Their pride is tempered with caution.

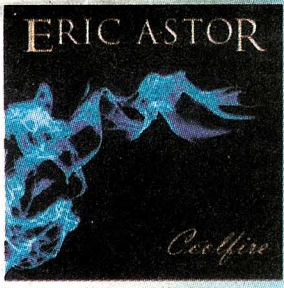
"We know he has the talent and ambition, but it's so hard in the music industry to make it," Pat Astor said.

Eric Astor said that when he feels stressed and overwhelmed — not uncommon in the industry — he focuses on having fun and enjoying the music. That's where his improvisational skills come in handy. Sitting down and just playing is how he gets the creative juices flowing.

Astor said it reminds him of why he got into the business in the first place.

"Creating music — I feel it's what I'm here to do," he said. "It's been very rewarding so far."

Reach Mary Beiler at 854-1575 or news@yorkdispatch.com.



Jazz guitarist Eric Astor's debut album "Coolfire."

### Three local concerts

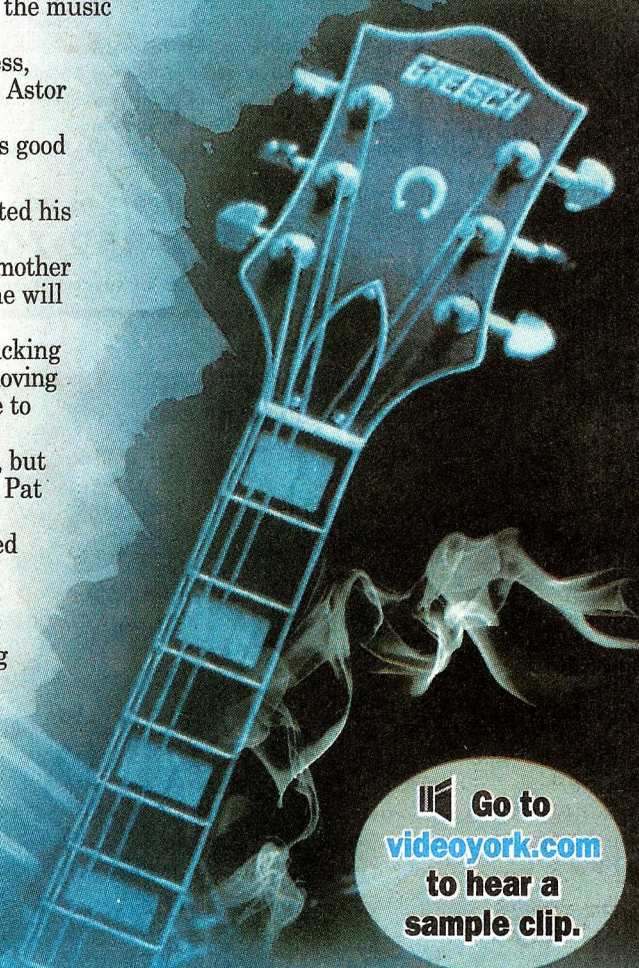
York County native Eric Astor returns to the area this month to perform songs from his debut CD "Coolfire." He will give three local shows:

■ **7 p.m. Thursday** at Borders Books, Music and Cafe, 3000 Whiteford Road, Springettsbury Township. This show is free.

■ **3 p.m. Sunday** at Red Lion Senior High School, 200 Horace Mann Ave., Red Lion. Astor will perform with alumni for the music program's 75th anniversary show. Advance tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for students at the door.

■ **7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 30,** at DreamWrights Youth & Family Theatre, 100 Carlisle Ave., York. Tickets are \$15.

For more information, visit [www.ericastor.com](http://www.ericastor.com).



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