

FIREFLIGHT

U N B R E A K A B L E

Are you **accused** or **beaten** down?
Want to **dream** again? Reach your **destiny**?
DO NOT BE AFRAID.
Faith is **moving** without knowing.
No one can touch you, **nothing** can stop you.
You are UNBREAKABLE.

All you need to do -- is **trust**

Strong words, yet these are the very thoughts behind the title track of **Fireflight**'s latest offering *Unbreakable*. And they just might be on to something. Who among us hasn't felt the need to dream again? To move past the things that beat us down, to feel (dare we say it?) unstoppable? It's these daring sentiments that urged music execs at the NBC network to license "Unbreakable" for its fall promos of primetime TV show "Bionic Woman," making the inspiring soundtrack into one of the definitive rock anthems of the popular hit series.

"Unbreakable," based on the classic gospel story of the adulteress set to be stoned, examines the woman's empowered mindset after the tables are turned on her accusers.

"The people in charge were ready to kill her, and Jesus speaks up for her, changes their minds and makes them feel ashamed for accusing her," explains Dawn Michele, the group's fiery lead singer. "How would you feel if you were the woman? She knows she's guilty, and yet she's suddenly free and given a second chance." True to Michele's resoluteness, lyrics from the band's sophomore project capture that same spirit of renewed strength.

"Unbreakable," which also serves as the title track single for Fireflight's new Rob Hawkins-produced album, epitomizes the disc's duality. The band possesses the youthful exuberance of fellow female-fronted acts like Paramore and the Distillers, yet Dawn's commanding vocals recall such bold proto-punk icons as Patti Smith and Runaways-era Joan Jett. From exceptional musicianship to melodic and passionate vocals, the band creates sonic tension that seesaws between anger and remorse, strength and vulnerability, fear and faith. While the production is crisp and the melodies undeniably catchy, the music barely contains the gritty emotional energy that bursts from every note.

"'Unbreakable' best represents the new album and the differences between this album and the last," says bassist Wendy Drennen, whose husband Glenn plays guitar in the band. "The song is about overcoming a defeated mentality and finding the power to remain strong amid the landscape, not allowing fear to hold us back from having victory over the things that used to control us."

Like the title track, *Unbreakable* addresses the many trying circumstances that can strike one's soul. "The Love We Had Before" examines the disagreements that can swallow a relationship whole, while "Brand New Day" addresses the traps of depression and the power to move past them. "Forever" takes a more somber tone with admissions of loneliness and isolation, yet "You Gave Me a Promise" exudes defiant hope against a backdrop of *Siamese Dream*-like guitar layers. "Wrapped In Your Arms," the album's acoustic closer, ties all the themes together with one final statement of faith and triumph.

Fireflight, which self-released an album and EP before debuting nationally with 2006's *The Healing of Harms* (Flicker), spent years as tireless road warriors on the concert circuit. While they are straightforward rockers, the Sunshine State band learned to ramp up its live show to play alongside heavier acts as well. "We push it as heavy as we can without being metal," says guitarist Justin Cox, yet the band's natural melodic touches helped *Harms* score Christian rock No. 1s with "Waiting" and "You Decide" (also Top 10 at CHR). The band, rounded out by drummer Phee Shorb, skillfully used their road miles to inject more live energy into *Harms*, but by actually writing *Unbreakable* on tour, Fireflight found an even greater wellspring of inspiration.

"It almost felt like things were out of control," says Dawn. "We'd gone through a difficult year as a band with a lot of emotional ups and downs. We basically lived together in a van while writing the new album, and that put us in a pressure cooker. All the stresses were magnified because you're completely out of your comfort zone, and it really does crank up the intensity of the writing. We poured all of our hope, sorrow, anger, dreams and fears into the music."

Justin adds, "This year, everyone in the band has been through a ton and this album really touches on what we've each been through personally."

Among the tough times between albums, Justin suffered through the end of a long-term relationship. Since the band was on tour nearly the entire time, everyone missed the security of family and friends, and emotions intensified as they had a front-row seat to Justin's heartache. Nevertheless, the band found a way to channel these feelings into songs that inspired them as much as they now inspire their fans.

"These songs intimately share raw emotion because the band truly experienced the moments we wrote about on *Unbreakable*," Dawn elaborates. "Lyrically, we've broken things down to the base feelings and described situations that everyone in the band has faced. If you write from what is real, songs can be catchy without being superficial."

Music aside, Fireflight is very real about putting their passions into action. The group actively supports causes like *To Write Love on Her Arms*, which addresses issues like cutting, and they're currently championing *The Legacy of Hope International*.

"My brother, his best friend and his wife started the organization," Wendy remarks. "They are building an orphanage and school in Cambodia to house abandoned children and victims of the sex slave trade, which is sadly still strong there. Our friend's wife is Cambodian and they've made this their life cause. We've adopted their vision for helping the Cambodian people."

At home, Fireflight passionately embraces the cause of one-on-one outreach. The group manages its own MySpace page and personally responds to all messages. Likewise, band members hang out after shows to talk with anyone needing help.

"The heart of the band is to develop relationships with people," says Wendy, who uses the word "approachable" as a defining trait of the band. "We want to meet people and impact them on a relationship level, not just on a music level."

Dawn, whose rocky childhood included the tragic loss of her little brother, adds, "I understand what it's like to worry about what everyone thinks. I know how it feels to be depressed and to go through hard times, but I also know how it feels to wait it out and snap out of it. I made it through those situations and now I can help others. So many kids are hurting, and we let them know there's someone who cares and wants to listen and believes they have a huge amount of value."

Fireflight's music offers a haven for the accused and beaten down and an inspirational spark to trust and dream again. Seeing the faces of the fans they've touched and watching the impact of their new online support community, **Iamunbreakable.com**, the band knows their message is getting through. As the title track proclaims, for all those who are broken and have lost their way, there is a hope and love that is *Unbreakable*.