REVENGE of the NERDS

they look like dorks but they play rock people love.
meet the promise ring, if you haven't already, p.4A
It’s not surprising that an album like this would be on a label founded by David Byrne. White and a collaboration of producers have constructed a redefinition of how we listen to stories, folk and country. But regardless of these musical roots, Jim White simply functions as himself, and lets his storytelling and eclectic music define itself.

No Such Place takes down-home storytelling to a new level by combining spacey slide guitars, gritty lyrics and atmospheric sound to create country music in the city. In "Covniel" the lyrics speak of emptiness and purposelessness in a metaphorical working man’s sense. But the music contrasts with the simplicity of the words and brings the track to a feeling of urban desolation. White doesn’t sugarcoat this new rendition of folk with sappy words and obvious questions of anger and revenge. His strained, flat voice asks the questions, and lets his storytelling and eclectic music create the atmosphere, and tonal pattern. They borrow from early ‘80s no-wave and early ‘90s touch-&-go punk. The bassist locks in on the backbeat, and the drums round out the sound. Jagged guitars and a barely inaudible bass line, backed by some amazing technical drumming. Jagged guitars and a barely inaudible bass line, backed by some amazing technical drumming. Jagged guitars and a barely inaudible bass line, backed by some amazing technical drumming. Jagged guitars and a barely inaudible bass line, backed by some amazing technical drumming. Jagged guitars and a barely inaudible bass line, backed by some amazing technical drumming.
SOUND- SOUNDESTYLE*

are far more listenable than other former
frontmen's solo albums.
Stephen Malkmus isn't really different
from any Pavement album. We have the
same atonal experiments, insatiably
catchy melodies, silly rhymes and chirpy
guitars that trademarked its sound. The
album picks up musically where
Pavement's last album, *Terror Twilight*,
left off, concentrating on guitar emer­
gence and quirky melodies while foregoing
anything terribly experimental. While it is
a satisfying listen, the sound might be too
clean and conservatively mellow for some
*Sla lted and Enchanted* Pavement fans.
Not a fan of being emotionally trans­
parent with its lyrics, Stephen Malkmus
listens as a series of unconnected charac­
ter vignettes and armchair traveler fan­
tasies. On "The Hook," Malkmus cele­
brates sailing the Mediterranean with
Arab pirates, and on "Peak India," he's
determined to be a man as he hops
around Asia.
Malkmus' guitar work on the album is
intricate and beautiful — no one sounds
quite like him. Further exploring his
amazing knack for intoxicating melody,
Malkmus proves that Pavement or not,
he's way too talented to be ignored on his
own. (Andy "about to hit it with Kelly Martin"
Sywak)

Matthew Good Band | Beautiful Midnight | Atlantic

Smart record execs know the impor­
tance of packaging a band, especially in
today's image-conscious market. Bands
with names like Crazy Town or Dream let
today's dim music consumers know exact­
ly what they're getting. But relative rock
newcomer Matthew Good Band differs
from these crap-mongers in a few key
ways. For one, Matthew Good Band is
actually a guy in the band; and two, its
pretty damn good.
MBG hails from Vancouver, Canada,
the country that imported such fine musi­
cal acts as Neil Young, Sarah McLachlan
and Paul Schaffer. All joking aside,

Beautiful Midnight is a worthy addition to
alternative rock. The album is filled with
catchy melodies and soon-to-be hit songs.
Good's powerful, soaring vocals easily
switch from harder songs to slower and
more emotional numbers. All this sounds
even better when matched with his well­
crafted lyrics.

This album seems primarily geared to
radio-friendly alternative rock. In fact,
when listening to this I often asked
myself "Haven't I heard this already?" The
answer is probably yes. The band's singles
"Hello Time Bomb" and "Load Me Up"
have been receiving much airplay recent­
ly. However, MGB separates itself from
the mass of identical rock pop groups.
Even if you don't check out this album,
expect to be hearing the songs on the
radio soon. (John Syquia)

Mike Reiss
March 1
Corwin Pavilion
Tickets at A.S. Ticket office
“My girlfriend said the only way I could come is if I promised to drink lots of water or else my head will cave in, and nobody wants that.”

Just months after recovering from surgery, Davey von Bohlen and his Milwaukee-based emo band, The Promise Ring, traveled to Pomona’s Glasshouse to headline for Deathcab for Cutie and The Jealous Sound. Artsweek endured loud trains, cold weather and punk rockers scrounging for change to get inside this lead singer’s head.

Artsweek: So what’s the story behind the name The Promise Ring?

von Bohlen: I’m sick of talking about it; it’s old. I think its one of those things where if you say your name enough you’re like “God, my name sounds weird.” And Promise Ring, that’s just a bad rock band name. It’s not at all intimidating or cool.

If you were a boy band, what would your name be?

First of all, who’s to say we aren’t a boy band? We promised to drink lots of water or else my head will cave in, and nobody wants that.

What are your boy band personas?

It was just out of nowhere? I went through a windshield in February of ’98 and then my body stopped working in April of 2000. I found out I had a brain tumor. I had it removed the first weekend in May, recovered, found out that I had a bone infection from the surgery. I had surgery to remove the bone in November of last year, and I’m healing from that. November 2001 I’ll have a plate put in my head, and hopefully that’ll be the end of it.

I had really bad headaches in ’98 and all of ’99, and then my body stopped working in April of 2000. I found out I had a brain tumor. I had it removed the first weekend in May, recovered, found out that I had a bone infection from the surgery. I had surgery to remove the bone in November of last year, and I’m healing from that. November 2001 I’ll have a plate put in my head, and...

Was that a car accident with the band?

Yeah, another great lore. “The Promise Ring: Disasters and Other Great Tales.” That was Feb. 3, 1998. We had a big accident, and I was fine. But two years later, and I have this. It could conceivably grow in two years — it could grow that same size in 20 years. It’s a waiting game. I can’t really do anything active. Cracking your skull is one thing, but not having a skull could break your brain, and you’re not supposed to break your brain — that’s what I hear.

Yeah, probably not a good thing. Are you planning any tours in the future?

No, actually. Just maybe a week here, two weeks there. It’s hard to plan things four months in advance because who knows if I won’t be back in the hospital. People were surprised you went on tour with Bad Religion. What was that all about?

We’d never really been asked to do a tour before. But they asked and were pretty adamant about having us play with them. It probably wasn’t the best thing for us to do. But apparently, across the board, you open for Bad Religion, it’s just bad. But I dunno, it’s fun — we were the bad guys. When does Promise Ring ever get to be the bad guys?

If Promise Ring’s albums, which is your favorite?

Very Emergency. It’s the best one. I mean whether people like it the best, I don’t know. From what I’ve heard, people have said it’s not as good as the one before and that Nothing Feels Good would be the best one. But I don’t think that’s true.

Guess what! There’s more to this interview. Just go to www.ucsbdailynexus.com to read the rest!
"Bash," written by Neil Labute in 1999, is the must-see play at UCSB this quarter. The essence of the word "bash" is what Labute wants you to witness in three different monologue one acts, each leaving you more chilled to the bone than the one before. Arziveek got the chance to interview grad student director Marc Shaw about this disturbing quilt of dysfunctional American life woven by four otherwise average All-American Mormons.

Arziveek: What is your connection to "Bash" and to Neil Labute?
Marc Shaw: I went to Brigham Young University, as did Labute. As you know, the subtitle of the play is "Latterday Plays," as in Latter-day saints. I got interested in Labute when I was at BYU because I heard a lot about him. I remember asking professors about him. I got my hands on the script four months after the off-Broadway play was produced with Calista Flockhart and Paul Rudd.

What did you think of the off-Broadway version of "Bash"?
They did a lot of stuff we did, but that we'd already thought of. We did a lot of stuff that I like better. In their rerun, they don't move around, and you kind of need that with a monologue. Theater is so much better live — and I saw it on Showtime — especially when it's done in a small theater because it's more personal.

What is the significance of "Bash"?
He's made the point that the Mormon subtext isn't a comment on Mormonism. He's not saying that all Mormons are bad just because some of these Mormons in the play are bad. That's beside the point. Usually if you see a Mormon in a movie or a play, they're the anomaly and aren't really seen. Labute is Mormon — and he's showing Mormons in this bad light — but I think it's a good thing because he's showing us these "mainstream" American Mormons.

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Bash: cont. from p.5A

Mormon characters. He uses "Mormon" as a universal for people who grow up in religious communities in general.

How did you get to direct "Bash"?

Last year two of the actors in this production did "A Gaggle of Saints," as a side project that I put together, and the faculty liked it, so I got to do it this year.

Is "Bash" a commentary on American life and culture to show what is wrong with it?

I think it's a comment on everyone. It says that even if you have religion, you're not necessarily a good person. It also makes the point that all of us can do cruel things. Labute shows us the worst, and hopefully we're tiring out that and finding ways to be better people. You can identify with these characters too, especially in "A Gaggle of Saints" because they're college kids going to a big dance. All the characters are likeable — it's not like they're scraggly.

What kind of message does "Bash" send out?

I don't think the play has an obvious message. You have to draw from it. It's like the elevator doors that open, and then they close, and you think, "Wow, what did I just see?" The real message lies within the characters. We can look at these evil people and understand what they did. Theater is all about being able to walk in someone else's shoes, trying to understand people and trying to see things as other people see them.

What is it about "Bash" that makes it worth seeing?

My first goal for "Bash" is to create a really good night of theater for people. Hopefully it's as good theater as you're going to see at UCSB[?].

Another goal I have for people is to find out about Labute if they haven't already. The test itself is so good. I think adding the transitions between the three acts isn't something that Labute would have done, but I wouldn't be embarrassed for him to see this. The script is so good, the actors, do we want to excuse their actions?

I wouldn't say that what they do is okay. They're not villains; they're people who do villainous things. Labute gives us the angles, and that's what makes it beautiful. Labute calls himself an irresponsible optimist. His outlook is often grim, but he has hope for everyone. There isn't a moral at the end because it's a subreality. In each one of the three acts, you can see where they could have stopped and nothing bad would have happened. We're not going to change how they are. In "A Gaggle of Saints," he feels powerless and can't let it go. Does he do what he does consciously or subconsciously? We don't know. Or in "Medea Redux," she's spared and swells on it her whole life. In "Iphigenia," the guy is caught up in his materialistic life, and that causes his downfall.

What do you think the word "Bash" refers to?

I think it could refer to the party in "Gaggle," the big bash. It could also mean gay bashing. And the Latter-day part is because of the Mormon thing and also because they are retelling old myths today, which is the latter-day.

"Bash: Latterday Plays" opens Friday, February 23, 8 p.m. and runs through March 3 at UCSB Performing Arts Theatre. For tickets and more information, call 893-3535.
Like tribute albums, remakes are tricky territory. After all, if you're going to redo someone else's work, how are you going to make it better or different so that it's worth watching over the original?

A remake of the 1969 film by the same title, "Sweet November" provides fresh evidence (alongside "Gone in 60 Seconds" and "Psycho") that it is generally a good idea for directors to steer clear of remakes. Possibly a few rungs above being a paint-by-the-numbers chick-flick romance, "Sweet November" still doesn't manage to elevate itself up from its time-tested opposites-attract premises. Mostly wooden acting and lame dialogue also fail to contribute to a romantic atmosphere.

Square advertising executive Nelson Moss (Keanu Reeves) starts out the movie hitting it with his hot girlfriend in his posh penthouse. "That was good," he says as he steps away from the bed, but we know it didn't mean a thing to him. He turns on eight TV sets simultaneously, drinks his coffee and goes to the office, totally ignoring his needy girlfriend.

Every bit the cell-toting, arrogant yuppie, Nelson doesn't know that he is in for a little surprise. You see, he's gonna meet somebody different from him, a free spirit, wonderfully unencumbered by any care whatsoever for other people's thoughts of her. And fortunate for Nelson, this spirit turns out to be an attractive 6-foot blonde who likes to invite men over to her apartment for exactly one month (and no more) of complete attention and pampering — no strings attached.

Sitting next to her at a DMV test, Nelson meets Sara Devere (Charlize Theron). Failing the test in order to help him, Sara is forced to ask Nelson for rides around town. Hanging out together, she thinks he's an asshole and he thinks she's a new age fruit. But Sara "likes to help people," and wants to make him realize how to enjoy life by inviting him to her apartment for the month (at times, it's a little confusing which month it is). After he loses his amazing job and girlfriend, Nelson takes Sara up on her offer and goes off to her apartment. Soon the sparks are struck, and we have this completely predictable and wacky romantic comedy on our hands.

In 1969, the story of a hippie reforming the drab institutional man had a lot more edge and immediacy about it. In 2001, when hippies and yuppies have co-opted and overlapped each other (San Francisco, after all, is the "bobo" capital of the world), the story comes across as a little silly and forced. In fact, Sara and Nelson's archetypes of square peg and round hole are so stereotyped and dull that their characters are often not believable.

The main highlight of the film is the beautiful cinematography of San Francisco. Director Pat O'Connor ("Circle of Friends") manages to capture the romantic and quirky elements of the city without drowning us with views of cliched landmarks. Usually unseen in popular cinema, neighborhoods such as Portero Hill and Dolores Park are beautifully displayed in the film.

"Sweet November" isn't horrible, but it certainly isn't very good either. At its best, it's a good first date movie. At its worst, it's a boring, redundant, overly long, poorly acted, weakly scored, lamely written, unimaginative romance movie. You be the judge.
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THE FINAL GAME OF THE YEAR VS PACIFIC!

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DUST OFF YOUR OLD BELLBOTTOMS AND SHINE UP YOUR GOLD CHAINS!
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On February 22, 1950, NIRSA was founded by 20 African-American individuals, representing 25 Historical Black Colleges/Universities. Today NIRSA has become a dynamic professional association with thousands of members throughout the nation, all with the goal to promote interaction and exchange through “motivation, dedication, innovation and complete participation” in Recreational Sports.

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2/25 Cycling Crit (Race) 8am - Goleta
2/28 Men’s Rugby 7pm @ Harder
3/3 Women’s Lacrosse 1pm @ Harder
3/4 Women’s Lacrosse 1pm @ Harder

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February 22nd

Mountain Climbing Ocean Kayaking Rock Climbing Ropes Course Fencing

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