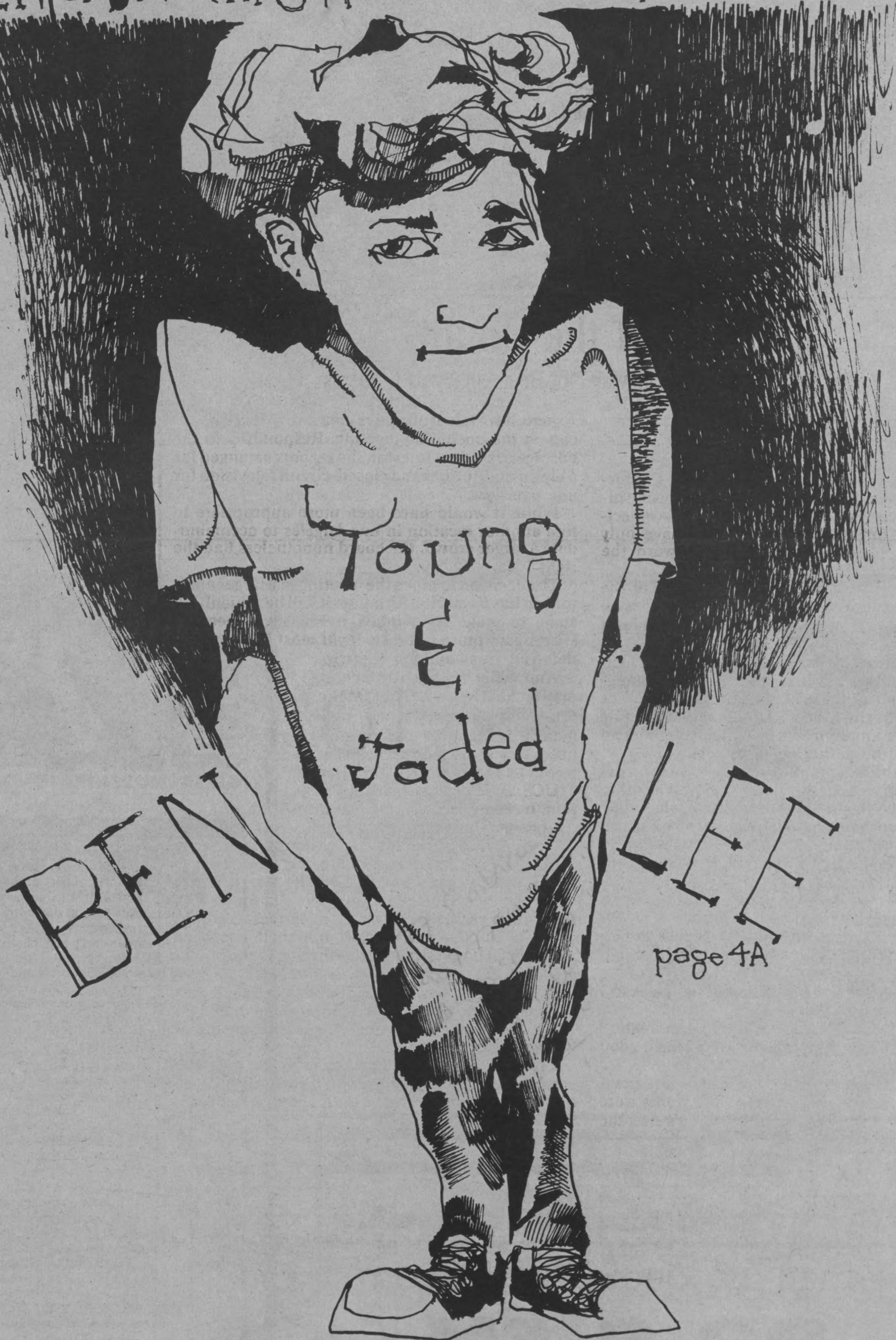
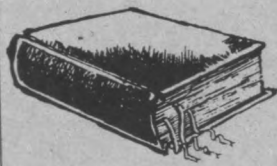


ARTS WEEK

The Entertainment Supplement for the daily Nexus for June 1-7, 1995



page 4A



Gangsta Rap

OK, so the premise in Tibor Fischer's novel *The Thought Gang* sounds rather intellectually snooty: A professional philosopher who happens to be a bum and an amateur one who happens to be a criminal join forces to become the most aesthetic and culturally enriched bank robbers in modern and ancient history, stealing just enough money to prove that they can, and doing a lot of hard drinkin' and thinkin' between heists. The narrator, one Eddie Coffin, also happens to have a proclivity for obscure words that begin with the letter "z" — fortunately for the reader, there is an extensive glossary of all

"Fischer seems driven by the ghosts of Monty Python troupes, galactic hitchhikers and Quentin Tarantino"

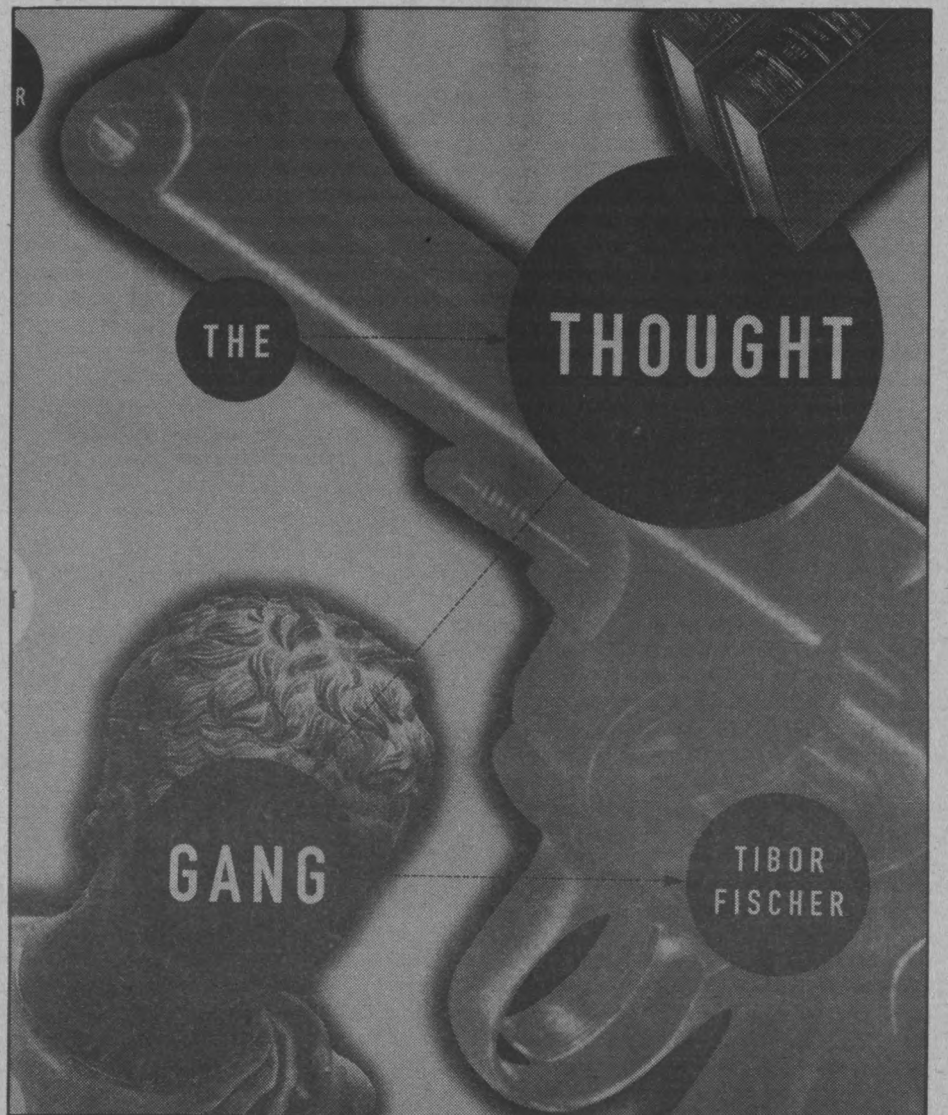
the "z" words in the back.

Fischer's prose is extremely challenging, using academia and erudition as beacons to enlighten the sketchy and simple plot. He employed these same techniques in his first novel, *Under the Frog*. If he has a chance to say something simply, he won't. The book jerks and stutters from bursts of action to long-winded discussions about sleep, drinking and the nature of philosophy and crime. For example, this is the account of Eddie's first encounter with one-armed bandit Hubert, who was attempting to mug him:

"Your money," he demanded with admirable succinctness, a quality much lacking, I feel, in modern philosophy. Untutored as I am in firearms, I could see with the merest of visual licks that this was enough gun to kill me and three or four major philosophers. It has to be declared that moments like this are an excellent justification for decades of gross intemperance. Imagine how great my distress would have been if I had spent my mornings gasping around jogging, abstaining from wine and beer, shunning pâtisseries, dodging rotundity by one square meal a day, only to be plugged like a fairground bull's eye in a cheap hotel.

And so on. This is probably one of the least violent, grotesque and sexual passages in the whole book. Fischer seems driven by the ghosts of Monty Python troupes, galactic hitchhikers and Quentin Tarantino to create sheer voluminous blather. In the midst of all of the mayhem, there are lengthy philosophical time-outs to keep the reader up to date on ancient and modern philosophers, follies and trends. Or, perhaps this book is a treatise on philosophy with lots of sex and violence to liven up the discussion. I don't know.

The obvious glee for language, English and otherwise, propels our dynamic duo into ludicrous situations as they travel through Europe, but it is this slippery wit that also saves them as they take on vengeful police inspectors and an assortment of brutes, thugs and other members of the bank-robbing community. *The Thought Gang* commits many minor heists as they plan the best, most unbelievable bank robbery of all time: to rob a bank successfully after telling the bank authorities and the police the exact time and date of the robbery. For me, the buildup is the fun part and the final robbery itself is almost an afterthought. Fischer takes his sweet time to tell his story, making frequent and lengthy detours at will, kind of like Uncle Bob does when he shows the slides from



his latest vacation.

The Thought Gang is the sort of road movie you want to dub from your friend and watch on a shaky, 13-inch black-and-white TV in the wee hours of the morning as you eat undercooked, salty tater tots with lots of ketchup. It is the sort of thing

you will either love or hate, due to the use and abuse of the English language. Poetic, beautiful and moving it is not. Crass, funny and annoying are better descriptions, but if you like your prose hard, fast and pretentious, you're in luck.

—Rena Tom

KJEE TOP 10

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 COLLECTIVE SOUL | DECEMBER |
| 2 MAGNIFICENT BASTARDS | MOCKINGBIRD GIRL |
| 3 SPONGE | MOLLY |
| 4 GREENDAY | SHE |
| 5 IVY | GET ENOUGH |
| 6 PRIMUS | WYNONA'S BIG BROWN... |
| 7 MOONPOOLS & CATERPILLARS | HEAR |
| 8 SOUL ASYLUM | MISERY |
| 9 NEDS ATOMIC DUSTBIN | STUCK |
| 10 KMFDM | JUKE JOINT JEZEBEL |

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Feeding Frenzy. Friday.
 The Weekend Connection. In the Nexus.

M RED TIDE

Shh! Can you hear that? It's the crackling sound of tension in the air as Denzel Washington and Gene Hackman battle over control of a nuclear submarine, the *USS Alabama* (thus comes the name *Crimson Tide*). Russia is in a civil war between Yeltsin's government and Russian rebels, led by ultranationalist (read: psycho) Vladimir Rochenko. The rebel forces have taken over a naval base with nuclear missiles near Vladivostok.

The U.S. sends the *Alabama*, a boat Captain Ramsey (Hackman) modestly calls "the greatest killing machine ever devised," to patrol the area. Lieutenant Commander Ron Hunter (Washington) comes on as its new executive officer. A radio message tells them that the re-

bels have the launch codes to the nuclear missiles, and to attack the base. Before they fire, they receive a disjointed message that might cancel the previous order.

This sets the stage for a standoff between the battle-hardened Ramsey, who wants to attack the base, and the cautious Hunter, who wants to wait until they can figure out the second message. The men get into a battle of will as they present doomsday scenarios: If the rebels have been beaten, then attack would result in nuclear war, and if the rebels launch the missiles, then the West Coast of the U.S. will be glowing in the dark. They relieve each other of command.

Despite the war, submarine and crew, *Crimson Tide* is really a battle of



will between two people as they determine the life and death of the world in the confines of the ocean. Isolation, the unknown and the specter of nuclear war fuel the actions of each man. Denzel Washington, as the thoughtful but com-

petent Hunter, and Gene Hackman, as the battle-worn Ramsey with an annoying dog named Bear, bring great acting to the movie and really make it work.

This is definitely one of the best movies of the sum-

mer. Produced by Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, the team that made *Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Bad Boys* and other testosterone-pumped films, it leaves *Die Hard* in its spray.

—Michael Lin



NAHID KHAKI

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M Kilty Pleasures

Braveheart goes beyond the drama of a typical war movie and reaches the core of the conflict in its characters. William Wallace (Mel Gibson) understands the meaning of freedom because he watched his father and brother die trying to attain it.

The breathtaking Scottish countryside contradicted the disillusionment suffered by its inhabitants under English rule. Blood seeps into the soil while warriors forfeit their lives to further their dreams. Wallace uses his knowledge of the land to his advantage and demonstrates brilliant war tactics when fighting the English.

Meanwhile, on English soil, the castle becomes a prison for a French princess trapped in a loveless marriage and her English

prince who suffers physical and mental abuse under the tyrannical reign of his father, the king.

Braveheart captures the changing emotions of its characters while emphasizing their relationships. Father-and-son relations motivate many actions within the film. William Wallace's father teaches him to think, while his close friend Hamish (Brendan Gleeson) is taught to fight. The nobles lead their sons to corruption while the cold-hearted king abuses his prince. These conflicts create men facing each other on the battlefield and fighting with uncertainty for their parents' ideals.

Women play a key role in Wallace's life. The wo-



men he loves are not stereotypical, weak playthings. Instead, they are smart and strong, using their wit to conquer and their strength to survive.

This film spins a complete circle, leaving no

loose ends at its completion. I found it engrossing, entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable. I loved the uniqueness of the characters — at no point did they become boring or predictable.

Braveheart returns the art of the epic film to the contemporary screen. It was wonderful to watch. Stop reading this review and go see it!

—Monica Morrissey



It's Party Time

It's Weekend Connection time.

In Friday's Daily Nexus.

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THURSDAY NIGHTS ARE IN EFFECT

BOOGIE KNIGHTS
BY GROOUELINE

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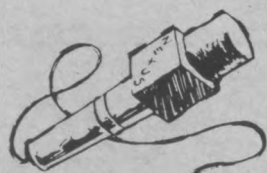
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Ben Lee

Interviewed
By
Andy Fraire

After the making of Noise Addict's first record, many awaited the further works of singer/songwriter Ben Lee. He then released his solo album *Grandpaw Would*, which included songs with Rebecca Gates of the Spinanes and Liz Phair, to name a few. In support of the new record, 16-year-old Australian Lee went on a mini-tour, where he was joined by Gates and Brad Wood, producer for Liz Phair. I got a chance to meet with Mr. Lee after a show he did at Jabberjaw in L.A....

Artsweek: First of all, I'd like to say that it was a great show.

Ben Lee: Thanks a lot.

AW: How was the whole tour?

BL: Well, it was excellent, I guess. It wasn't really very long. We only did seven shows, but I just thought it was really fun. I really like the people I'm playing with, and I had a chance to see some people who helped us out in the very beginning of Noise Addict, and I just saw them again for the first time since then in New York. It was really cool. It was excellent. I think people responded pretty well.

AW: Would you have wanted to go on a longer tour?

BL: Yeah, I could have done a couple of weeks, but not much longer than that. I couldn't have done one of those 10-month tours. It's kinda nuts.

AW: How did you get started?

BL: Basically, like any band, we just made demo tapes and sent them off to record companies and stuff and they found their way into the right hands, I guess.

AW: Did you try harder because you were from Australia?

BL: No, because we didn't send any tapes over

here. We just dealt with Australia, and from there it made its way here. So we're just like any other band.

AW: This was a year, two years ago?

BL: It was just under three years ago.

AW: The new record, *Grandpaw Would*, how is it different from the *Noise Addict* stuff?

BL: Well, with the exception of that *Young and Jaded* record, which is what everyone around here has heard, it's just demos. Noise Addict is like a rock band. We play loud, we play hard, we're all feedbacky and that kinda stuff. This is just mellow stuff. This is a chance to do other stuff. I just think it's got a different vibe. It's a bit more laid back. We didn't use any acoustic guitar in Noise Addict or play any mellow songs.

AW: Except for the last track, "I Wish I Was Him."

BL: Well, that confused a lot of people, I think.

AW: There's some peo-

ple, however, that really liked that song the most off the record, which is why I think this new record is appreciated.

BL: Yeah, people kinda like acoustic music.

AW: Do you like playing the acoustic stuff better than playing with the other members?

BL: It's more scary because you're just up there, totally there, anything could happen. Someone could throw a beer bottle at you and it would be you.

AW: ... and you wouldn't be able to throw it back because you got to keep going.

BL: Yeah, it's kinda scary, but when it works, it's even better. Sometimes I'll just get to a really quiet part and I'll be playing, and you get to that point if you can hear this silence — it feels like something. It's like, people are listening.

AW: It's like you got everyone in a trance.

BL: It's weird. It just caught people's attention.

AW: How would you

describe your music?

BL: Um ... an energy-charged, jam-packed, short-attention-span-targeted-audience pop music.

AW: One would think

AW: I like it because many people can relate to this record.

BL: Well, maybe. I've noticed mainly a lot of girls like the record. I guess it's better than jocks.



by listening to your songs that you seem to have had luck with women. Is it from experience?

BL: Anytime you have good luck, it's worth the bad luck for the good luck. So the smallest part of good makes bad fade away. It's easy to write about the bad parts, but there's a certain amount of songs that are whatever I chose to put on the record. It just happens some of them are kind of sad, you know. Sometimes I exaggerate or de-exaggerate or twist things into things that didn't happen. I just do whatever. I'm insane! I'm a wild man!

AW: It's kinda like you're mocking the whole love thing.

BL: Well, there's so many clichés. You got to use them in the right way or manipulate them.

AW: How did you get together with Rebecca Gates and Liz Phair?

BL: Mainly, they knew Brad Wood and were hanging around in Chicago when I was making the record and were in the studio, and they asked me, "Hey, you want to sing with me?" and I go, "Yeah!"

AW: What was your feeling about working with them?

BL: It's, like, an honor. It's really nice to have people whose work you like to be involved in your record.

AW: Are you still doing stuff with Thurston Moore?

BL: No, we mainly just put one record out on his label, like the first demos, and I saw him before, but we're not really business-involved.

AW: Do you have any

favorite songs on this new record or any you like to play live?

BL: I like ... I don't know. To me, when I listen to it, I become nit-picky, like, to me, every song is out of tune. Some songs I don't like to play live because they were hard enough to record and I can't really pull it off live, so I just play a lot of new songs.

AW: What are you listening to lately?

BL: I knew when I was coming here that I'd buy lots of records so I haven't listened to anything I bought. I bought the new Stereolab, Royal Trux and other stuff I couldn't find in Australia.

AW: So you're going crazy.

BL: I'm going mad, insane. I'm a fruitcake. You never know what I'm gonna do next.

AW: What else are you working on?

BL: Noise Addict is going to make a record, a full album with Brad Wood, and then we're going to come over here and tour at the end of the year — our summer — and then I'll tell you what happens.

AW: Is it going to be a short tour?

BL: It'll be a long one for us. Like, a month.

AW: Are there bands you'd like to tour with?

BL: There's bands that we played one show with that I'd really like to see more, like Pavement, but I don't think that will happen. We'll play with anyone.

AW: What's it like being on *Grand Royal* with the roster they have?

BL: It's fun, it's good because they help a lot. This tour was their idea and they organized it, and there's not a lot of indie labels that would do that.

AW: Any last words you'd like to say to everyone?

BL: Enjoy the majesty of rock.

KCSB TOP 30

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ladybug Transistor | 11. Flinch | 21. sleeper |
| 2. Sincola | 12. Papas Fritas | 22. Jamiroquai |
| 3. the 6ths | 13. Gaunt | 23. Man or Astroman |
| 4. the Cherries | 14. Archers of Loaf | 24. Amateur Sndtrk. |
| 5. Spiritualized | 15. Ben Lee | 25. Planet Dog comp. |
| 6. R.A.F.R. comp. | 16. Foetus | 26. Steel Pole Bathtub |
| 7. Prototype 909 | 17. August Sons | 27. Argyle Park |
| 8. Drugstore | 18. Hagfish | 28. Research vol 2 comp. |
| 9. Pooh Sticks | 19. Ascension Ch 1 comp. | 29. Magnetic Fields |
| 10. Salad | 20. Sugar Plant | 30. SNFU |



Ace is Sure a Bit Defective

Masta Ace Inc.
Sittin' on Chrome
Delicious Vinyl/Capitol

"Who am I?" That's what Masta Ace needs to be asking himself right about now, cuz if his new album is any indication, one of New York's finest seems to be searching for a lost sense of self. I do feel for the guy. Ace spent years as a struggling, unappreciated leader of the East Coast rap scene, making records loved by the die-hards, but overlooked by the masses. And then, the second he restructured and recorded 1994's left coast-flavored "Born to Roll," his shit finally blew up big time. That decidedly basic, bass-booming cut gained him more recognition than all of his complex underground classics combined. He had to be asking himself if all the street credibility in the world was worth having empty pockets.

So, 1995 brings us Ace in interviews, vowing to stop making "good music that nobody listens to." The result is an album-length response to his frustrations: the uneven *Sittin' on Chrome*. At times, the album is an unrivaled melding of West and East Coast sensibilities. At

other times, it disappoints with its lack of substance.

Chrome has Ace and his peoples (Lord Digga, Paula Perry and Leschea) picking up where they left off with their excellent *Slaughterhouse* album. On that 1993 effort, Ace and the crew took major steps to criticize rap music for the unbearably violent mess it had become, and proved that an emcee's skill needn't be measured on a scale of cap peeling and blunt smoking. Together, they created an album that truly took rap in a new direction. *The Source* even called their efforts "the moral core of hip-hop."

Some of the same themes that made *Slaughterhouse* such a groundbreaking album appear on *Sittin' on Chrome* as well, but unfortunately, in weaker, more diluted versions. Regrettably, there isn't a lot of analysis or discussion to be found on *Chrome*, as Ace has opted to create more of a party-flavored atmosphere this time out. The crew's current single, "The I.N.C. Ride," is a perfect example of Ace's new attitude towards hip-hop; the track is light and bouncy, using a funky, if played-out, Isley Brothers sample



to back rhymes about ... well, not really about much of anything at all. Sample lyrics: "I'll get in that ass like a G-string / And that you don't need / We'll be blowin' up like that movie Speed / Indeed, you're on a ride." Kinda clever? Yes. But not too unprecedented (especially for someone as innovative and intelligent as Ace.)

But, wait! Don't get me wrong! Masta Ace is a champion rapper, and although the lyrics on *Chrome* are less than imaginative, his ill rhyme

styles do not disappoint. The scheme Ace perfected on last year's single "Crooklyn" is taken to the next level as he sets a rough standard for emcees to live up to. Likewise for the production — it is generally very crisp and appealing. In fact, if this had been Ace's first album, I might actually consider it one of the year's brightest debuts. As it stands, though, knowing already just how capable Ace is, the lack of subject matter uncovered on *Sittin' on Chrome* makes the album a bit disappointing.

—Eric C. Steurer

SUB-URBAN

Jason Sattler

Heard the Style? Missed the Point?

No question, the music that we listen to influences us. The only question is, which songs make up the soundtrack to your life? I'm from the San Fernando Valley. Only three different musicians ever altered my perspective of existence: George Michael, The Beatles and "the Beatles of Rap", the world's most dangerous group, N.W.A.

Of course, it is much easier to like Public Enemy, and I did. I still listen to *Fear of a Black Planet* in regular rotation with my current favorites. That album consistently reminds me that if the modern civil rights movement prospers in pop culture, it is mostly in music. Chuck D.'s confused, articulate political commentary definitely inspired a fascination with African-American history. But anyone forced to spend a lot of time with Flavor Flav will suffer the consequences. P.E.'s recent albums are simple, contrived attempts for controversy, without a serious musical progression. It is essential for any serious hip-hop artist to change up their styles to stay ahead of the game (e.g. Beastie Boys, Hammer, etc.).

But, if Public Enemy is a tool for a political message, N.W.A. takes relevance to a whole other level. If you listen to some N.W.A. and any of the last album, you will clearly see that they were challenging the limits with their lyrics. 2 Live Crew's always articulate frontman, Luther "Luke Skywalker" Campbell, said in defense of his weak, blatantly sexist music, "We are not talking about violence here, it's just sex." N.W.A., on the other hand, graphically explained the murder and rape of several females. There are not only hints at sexist behavior, there is actual explanation of the nature of "bitches."

Whether or not the music of N.W.A. was purely a money-making scam profiting off suburban white boys is irrelevant. (Profiting scams involving white suburban boys include the acne-prevention industry, MTV and cigarettes.) The message got out there. I remember one time on the way to Palm Springs, with a good friend known as Bad-Ass James, I listened to *EPILAZAGGIN*, N.W.A.'s last album, and Black Sheep's first album four times in their entirety. And I believe that I have intercepted the exact political message that underlies N.W.A.'s music: *How far do we have to go until you will leave us the fuck alone? How dangerous do I have to be so you will not call me a nigger to my face? How many times do I have to tell you that I have no respect for women until you will take your families away and stop the oppression that caused this people's plight?*

What symbol of racist hatred causes more anger than the image of a white woman violated by a Black man? N.W.A. tested the limits on everything. Jim Morrison was an indulgent incarnation of Dionysus. Eazy-E was a sick little dirty bastard.

You cannot ignore the music N.W.A. produced. In the '50s, a Black artist recorded a song and watched as three years later, white men would cover the same songs and become kings. In the '70s, P-Funk and others (such as Kool and the Gang) expanded jazz to include a new branch called funk. Dr. Dre brought that funk into white America's CD players in the '90s.

Kurt Cobain and Nirvana created interest in a genre of a genre. N.W.A. defined a genre: gangsta rap music. I cannot, with a conscience, forget the word "music." I do not want to discount Kurt Cobain. I loved Cobain's music and irreverent beauty.

Recently, my friend Shane told me a story about Lollapalooza last year. During a set break, the Nirvana song "Something in the Way" was played.

The entire crowd united and swayed. Cobain would have laughed or cried. Shane turned to his companion and said, "Bring out George Clinton."

His friend replied, "Is he that guy who dresses like a girl?"

Lyric of the Week:
**I WISH I WAS A LITTLE
BIT TALLER.
I WISH I WAS A
BALL'ER.
I WISH I HAD A GIRL
AND A PHONE,
SO I COULD CALL HER.
-SKEE-LO**



Join the Club

Teenage Fanclub
Grand Prix
DGC

Adolescence is weird. During those brief six or so teen years when you're a mix of raging hormones and flying emotions, you go through a number of phases. There's that initial phase where you try desperately to hold on to your youth, doing your best to play up the innocent angle to your parents so they'll forgive you for breaking all four of their dining room chairs. There's the phase where you're an awkward mix of lanky legs and endless arms, where you trip over everything, including that invisible pebble lodged in the crevices of the cement. And then, there's the maturity, the "I'm cool, everything is cool, it's all OK" phase. This is the level Scotland's Teenage Fanclub has reached with their June 6 release, *Grand Prix*.

Back with a new album, new facial hair and collared shirts, the Fannies have come up with some "maturer"-sounding music while retaining their original sound that made them an indie hit in the States.

The 13 songs on *Grand Prix* have a sort of innocent charm that promotes a universal relatability for the listener. Whether or not you understand the



precise message the Fannies are trying to convey with the lyrics and melodies, you can find a kind of personal relationship with nearly every track.

A memorable '80s retro-moment on the album occurs with the song "Tears," which seems to have some Elvis Costello influences on it. The song incorporates a lovely piano intro and accompaniment, as well as violins and awkward, brassy trumpets. "Tears" is a track you can picture. I see the type of kids who never touched a cigarette in their life holding up lighters while swaying back and forth to the

trumpet chorus.

"I Gotta Know" has an intro reminiscent of the time when a teenage boy reaches his poetry phase. He speaks, or in the Fannies' case sings, with a realm of shyness, yet the audience can tell that the words come from the heart. "I've got a feeling, I know what I mean... Always believing, I always believe, I gotta know..."

On *Grand Prix*, there's a sweet ballad/trekking song, called "Mellow Doubt," about being confused and trying to figure out who you are. A fun song to sing with Norman Blake, Raymond McGuin-

ley and Gerard Love, bopping your head to the beats created by drummer Paul Quinn. And the track fades out with some cool whistling.

The whole album is filled with great pop songs and inviting lyrics like "Wake up the story's over / climb aboard I'm going nowhere," from "Don't Look Back." Although the album really has nothing to do with *Grand Prix* racing, or any type of racing as far as I can tell, these Glasgow guys have definitely reached a new phase in their music which comes out winning.

—Jolie eye Lash

Having a pimple on your nipple is weird, but fun to say!



Burnin' Down the House

Suspend disbelief and suppose, for a moment, two weird fellows knock on your front door, one of them Schmitz, a former wrestler in a circus sideshow, the other Eisenring, a jobless waiter. They invite themselves in, appealing to your sense of charity, clean out your refrigerator, chat up your wife and maid and, before you know it, begin stacking gasoline barrels in your attic, rigging all with fuses and detonator caps, making no attempt to conceal the fact that they're here to burn your house to the ground (if you'd be kind enough to supply the matches). What would you do? Knock their wooden heads off and kick them out?

Not so Gottlieb Biedermann, prota-

gonist of Swiss dramatist Max Frisch's play *The Firebugs* (1958), now at UCSB's Hatlen Theater. What happens instead is this: Biedermann (Bryce Lenon), the well-to-do owner of a hair- tonic factory, succumbs to his unacknowledged guilty feelings for being a corporate raider and exploiter of the underclass, and invites his two arsonists (Sean Powell and Greg Kistler) in. He wines them, dines them, gives them a place to sleep and convinces himself that they're just kidding when they tell him flat-out what they're up to. "The best camouflage," Eisenring says, "is always the naked truth. Strangely enough. Nobody believes it."



Enter the Firebrigade, seven platinum blondes in yellow Wellingtons, garter belts, black shorts and red rubber bustiers. This is your chorus, modeled on ancient Greek tragedy (in function, if not costume). They're here to warn, scare you

out of denial. But they're powerless if you don't act yourself. And that's exactly what Biedermann does — nothing. Over the protests of his wife (Ivy Cates), his maid (Krista Swager) and the chorus, he slides into a disastrous complicity with two pyromaniacs who came to set his house on fire — not for political or personal reasons, but simply because they like to watch buildings burn. At one point, Biedermann even goes so far as to turn away a policeman who stops by on a routine checkup, as there have been incidents of arson all over town, and tells him there is only hair tonic in the barrels.

Max Frisch's play isn't difficult to read; the people who blow up your world don't come in the disguise of some monstrous conspiracy — they'll do so right under your nose, while taking advantage of your blindness and denial. During the Cold War, the arsonists were seen as those people who we all knew and could never hold responsible, those who were threatening to throw us into the "unquenchable fire" of nuclear war...

Theatre UCSB, under the direction of Tom Whitaker, does a solid job of bringing all this to the stage. The play is well-cast, and all take their performances to the farcical extreme. Michael Mortilla provides live musical support, a haunting soundtrack with Kurt Weillian overtones. And the chorus? They'll bring the house down for you, even if there's only fire retardant in those barrels.

Firebugs plays through June 3 at Hatlen Theater, next to Snidecor Hall.

—Matthias Rosenthal

Droppin' Da ROM

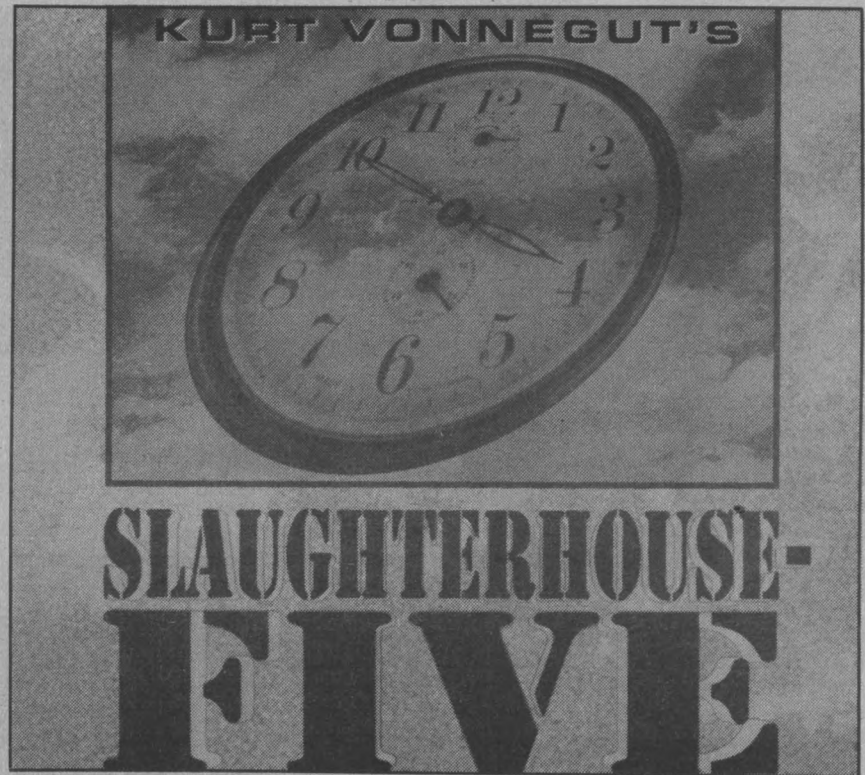
Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* — *The Multimedia Experience* (Byron Press Multimedia, \$59.99), is not the first CD-ROM on the market that features the work of a modern literary superstar. Software featuring Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is also available, but Vonnegut's acceptance of the multimedia platform is the most re-

freshing and promising movement I've seen in the blossoming multimedia market.

freshing and promising movement I've seen in the blossoming multimedia market. Unfortunately, Vonnegut's first multimedia venture, currently available only for the IBM, wastes most of its potential and settles with simply presenting one of the most amazing pieces of litera-

historical events included in the novel, e.g. the fire-bombing of Dresden and John Wayne movies.

Another amazing victory for those people who have already stepped into the realm of home multimedia is Bob Dylan's CD-ROM package entitled *Highway 61 Revisited*. This item is also described as a "multimedia experience" by its publishers.



ture modern America has ever latched on to. The text of the novel is presented in two ways. If you choose linear, the novel reads from page one straight through. But if you prefer to read in a schizophrenic-type manner, you can choose "random." The random option simply chooses random parts of the story in a random order for no apparent reason. Strangely to most, but not to anyone familiar with Vonnegut's enlightening tale of Billy Pilgrim, a man lost in time, the novel is just as enjoyable either way. A third option offers the chance to view live video clips of Vonnegut speaking on such weighty subjects as innocence and serial numbers. Also included: a full history of many of the real

only justification for such a presumptuous description has to be the lack of any other feasible advertising hook. These new-generation CD-ROMs, in their truest form, are neither games nor reference materials. But how could you describe any collection that features the entire Dylan catalog (all songs, all lyrics and even Dylan's epic poem "Tarantula"), and never have seen interviews as anything but an experience? That's the one I've been anxiously awaiting since *Slaughterhouse-Five*, in the typical "we love that iconoclast" fashion, that sells almost as soon as it is put on the shelves. Strangely, most stores refuse to stock more than one. —Jason Sattler

freshing and promising movement I've seen in the blossoming multimedia market.

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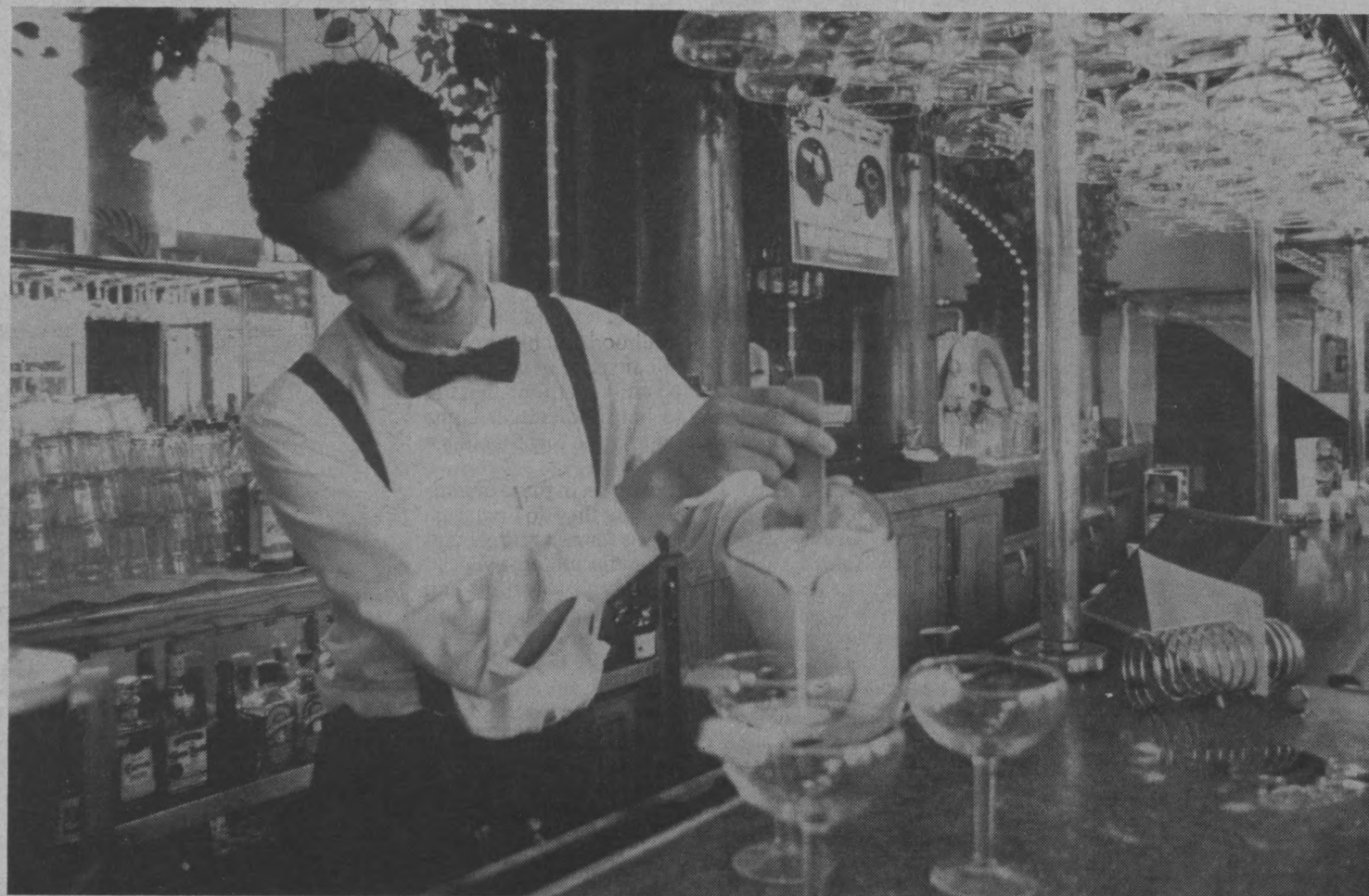
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