

ARTS WEEK

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the *Daily Nexus*, For the Week of October 21-27, 1993.



Rhys' Sexy Sea Reviewed, Page 3A

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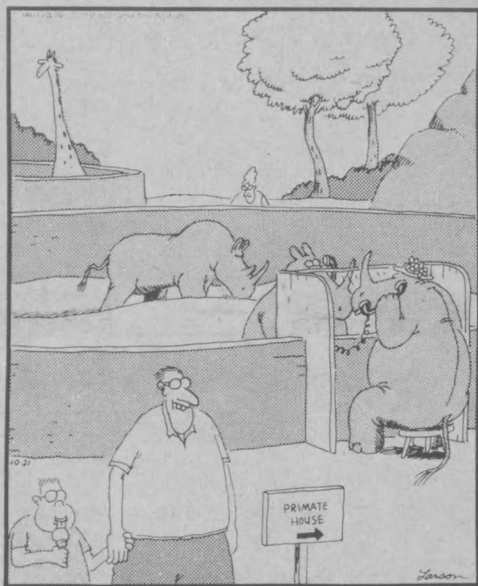
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National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week 10/17-10/23



Cross-Messing

How can a mature, sophisticated man conduct a long-term, intimate relationship with a drag queen without ever having any clues that his "girlfriend" is really a man?

This is the burning question surrounding the latest transvestite movie, *M. Butterfly*. Though it sounds like a *National Enquirer* story, the movie is based on real events, concentrating on the relationship between a French diplomatic attaché and a Chinese opera diva in 1960s China.

Director David Cronenberg fails miserably in his attempt to transform the hit Broadway play into a Hollywood romantic epic with the help of screenwriter David Henry Hwang, who wrote both the stage and screen versions. Cronenberg recruited the services of Academy Award winner Jeremy Irons (*Reversal of Fortunes*) and John Lone (*The Last Emperor*) as the doomed lovers.

In the film, Irons plays Rene Gallimard, a low-level French diplomat who unwittingly falls for opera singer Song Liling (Lone). Not only is the singer withholding his true sexual identity, he is actually a spy working for Chinese intelligence, assigned to bilk classified information out of Irons.

M. Butterfly posed a dilemma for Cronenberg and Hwang. They needed to make a viable film out of the implausible story of a man's prolonged delusion about the sex of his lover and partner in crime.

One of the problems that plagued the film is Cronenberg's photographic style. By shooting a majority of the film in close-up and under heavy lighting, he compromised Lone's portrayal of a seductress, because one cannot ignore Lone's noticeable facial stubble.

Obviously, Cronenberg was not looking for a Jaye Davidson, the actor who caused a sensation last year in the hit film *The Crying Game*. If he was, he would have

hired someone who was more in touch with their feminine qualities. Lone completely lacks the sensuality and femininity needed to portray a femme fatale. If anything, he never seems more than vaguely feminine.

Lone, though accomplished as an actor, is only mildly convincing as the seductress who lures Irons from his career and tempts him away from his gorgeous wife, played by the German star Sukowa. His broad shoulders, masculine hands and macho, heavy-footed walk — not to mention his deep, husky voice — only reinforce Cronenberg's mistake in choosing Lone to play this character.

Cronenberg has argued that this film is about the power of "fantasy in romantic love." If anything, this film is about Irons' gullibility and Lone's deviation.

Cronenberg, whose most noticeable films have been sci-fi thrillers like *The Fly* and *Dead Ringers*, tried his best to humanize a sensational story.

For those who want to see a movie about a cross-dresser with a gender identity crisis, rent *The Crying Game*. At least you'll be getting your money's worth.

—Roman David

Or, My Dinner with Ed: In the middle of a concert piano, fans began pouring their lives onto the floor, disco dancing in the here and now. Memories dislodged from a crusty lobe, of some Bay City Roller purgatory, some Sigmund the Sea Monster dream. Penguins out in the streets because of the Snow Day at school, demanding a batch of ice, demanding butter-free baked goods. Penguins do the disco with the fans. Rock and roll.



DeNiro's Bronx

It's still not too late to catch Robert De Niro's *A Bronx Tale*. In spite of its being relegated to just two showings — which had people struggling for a seat during the weekends — the movie is definitely a good value for your dollars.

No, you will not find big guns here, or larger-than-life heroes. The movie is simply not about violence. However, violence is present, and it is made of fear and intolerance — the scariest kind.

The movie is a window — or even a stoop — on a lost time and place; a theater for characters who try to sort out the moral dilemmas of a changing era in their own ways. The main character, Lillo Brancato as the 17-year-old Calogero, is the perfect De Niro son in this classic coming-of-age piece.

Chazz Palmintieri, the author of the play which was the basis for the movie, is well-cast as the local low-life boss Sonny, even if the ambiguity of his character might have been played better. (He is not, as you might expect from the preview, just the "dark" counterpart of daddy

Lorenzo.)

De Niro's direction is flawless, and not without some ingenuity. It's namely a *tale*, and the well-rounded old-style plot perfectly fits the style of the film, as do the voice-overs, which are never an intrusion.

A Bronx Tale is, above all, an act of love. The Italian-American community is more than faithfully reconstructed, from the accents to the hand gestures to the curses muttered in Italian. The evocative, never banal soundtrack is made part of the action, as seen in the hilarious use of the "Ten Commandments of Love" (by the long-forgotten Moonglows) as a counterpoint to the biker's beating.

It's a quest for a lost state of mind, for forgotten images and archetypes. Sonny's street corner bar, for instance, holds the morbid fascination of adulthood, with its implicit violence and illicit crap games in the basement.

—Paolo A. Gardinali



Eerie Leary

Chock full of testosterone, *Judgment Night* brings the phrase "male bonding" to a new level. Four buddies (played by Emilio Estevez, Stephen Dorff, Cuba Gooding Jr. and Jeremy Piven) hit the town in a souped-up Winnebago for the boxing match of the year.

In an effort to ditch traffic, the ultra-suburban four-some find themselves lost within the inner-city boundaries of Chicago. Scampering through the shambles of the ghetto, the four take a crash course in street survival as they are stalked by an insolent gang leader/mafioso (Dennis Leary) and his sidekicks throughout the night.

Kind of like an old boyfriend you can't seem to get rid of, Leary is right around the corner, no matter where they run. His silver-tongued, long-toking, bitching and moaning spiel is straight out of his MTV skits, complete with stories of people he hated — which he delivers while he kills his victims — and the same "silly" jokes told after they are dead.

The tongue-in-cheek humor seemed as though it would have been more appropriate for an Arnold Schwarzenegger or Sylvester Stallone flick. But the underlying theme of phallicism is on the same track here as it is in those stars' films, as the male-dominated cast com-

petes to see who can dodge the most bullets and who carries the largest gun.

Judgment Night is a little boy's dream, filled with blood, explosions, blood, gun wounds (that you can walk on ... imagine that), blood, and an overall down-to-earth, save your friends and family, kill the bad guys, all-American, heroic theme. God Bless America.

—Erin Wilson

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Saturday, Oct. 23

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THE WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Although there were no guns in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, I'm the first to admit that the 9.02 minutes of nudity more than made up for it. This movie, the first successful screen adaptation of Jean Rhys' novel of the same name, followed a well-spun tale of love and tragedy on the untamed island of Jamaica.

The heat of the island is repeatedly contrasted with the cold of England, as an arranged marriage is carried out between a beautiful and dangerous local girl from a wealthy family, and an English man. Soon after the marriage, the relationship

sap. Plus there were some scenes where he was a little overexposed in the skin category.

This movie was superbly filmed and edited — not a surprise with a director like John Duigan, much acclaimed for his recent movie *Flirting*, and producer Jan Sharp (producer of *The Good Wife*). My eyes were glued to the screen as my mind raced around to figure out what would happen next.

Stewart Copeland, formerly of the rock group The Police, composed the music for the movie. I was particularly im-



explodes into a story of love and loss, blackmail, adultery and insanity.

I found the movie absolutely riveting. Antoinette Cosway, the lead role and storyteller, was played by Karina Lombard. Her savage innocence and will of steel, not to mention her drinking problem, instantly made her the woman of my dreams. On the other hand, I found Edward Rochester, played by Nathaniel Parker, to be a cold, untrusting, cowardly

pressed by the bamboo flutes — they sounded as though they might have been modeled after one of the finest films of all time, *The Octagon* with Chuck Norris.

This film is the Caribbean-love-erotic-confusion-untamed — passion tragedy of the year.

Wide Sargasso Sea will be showing at Isla Vista Theater on Oct. 23 and 24 at 8 and 10 PM.

—David Potter

KCSB 91.9 FM Top Records Of The Week

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. De La Soul | 11. Muzza Chunka | 21. Germs |
| 2. Poor Righteous Teachers | 12. Didgits | 22. All |
| 3. Judgment Night Soundtrack | 13. KRS One | 23. Bean |
| 4. Digital Underground | 14. Clutch | 24. Eye Hate God |
| 5. A Tribe Called Quest | 15. Revolting Cocks | 25. Red Aunts |
| 6. Reality Control Compilation | 16. Souls of Mischief | 26. My Dolls |
| 7. Del the Funky Homosapien | 17. Tilt | 27. No Use for a Name |
| 8. Slant 6 | 18. Tit Wrench | 28. Doughboys |
| 9. Top Quality | 19. Royal Trux | 29. Entombed |
| 10. The Queers | 20. Too Short | 30. Swervedriver |

These Positions Reflect What Musicians Were Played The Most On KCSB This Past Week.

MODERATION?? This means a maximum of 2 drinks per day for men and a maximum of 1 drink per day for women. 893-2914 for info.

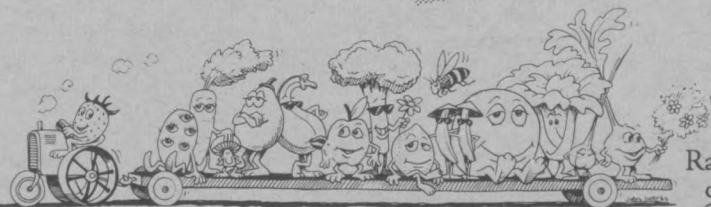
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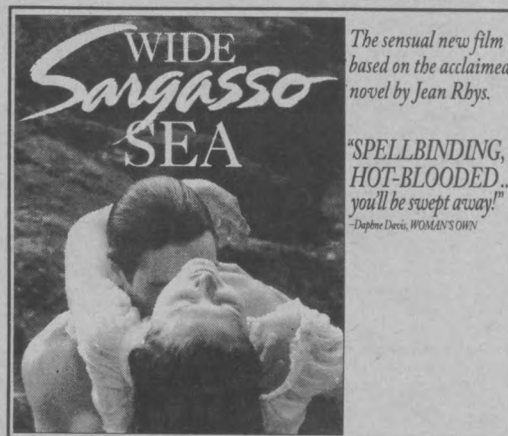
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**IV Theater
NIGHT at
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Heat up the night with



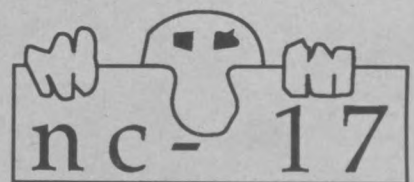
Saturday & Sunday

Oct. 23 & 24

8 & 10 pm

IV Theater

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plus Smashing Pumpkins giveaways

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Thanx for a great turnout- enjoy the show



Flip A Whig

The Afghan Whigs
Gentlemen
Elektra

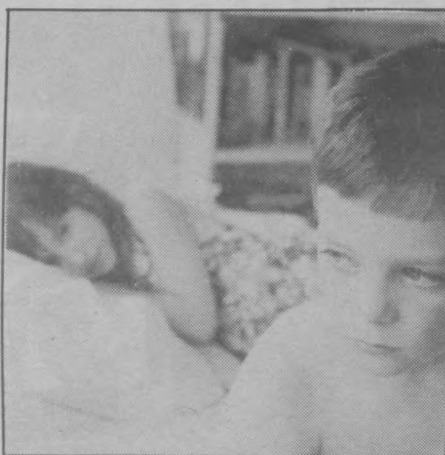
Due to Isla Vista's gift of ruining any decent band through overkill, I am quick to hold the "small" and "unknown" bands I love dear to my heart. But I think the time has come to share my secret with those of you who are unaware of the ingenuity of The Afghan Whigs. Well, they're not that small; making their major label debut on Elektra (with 2½ indie albums under their belts), The Afghan Whigs have completed yet another innovative and diverse compilation of music.

The Cincinnati foursome who met in jail will bleed emotion through every groove in your sound system. The simple yet intricate lyrics muddle through rivers of dark humor and towel off with singer Greg Dulli's rough, cynical attitude. On the track "Debonair":

"And once again the monster speaks reveals his face and searches for release

a little boy is tied to you attracted only 'til it comes unglued"

However, don't take the lyrics at face value, as one word speaks several and several words speak one, all within the frame of your imagination. Brutal hon-



esty is the key, as Dulli confesses his penis-driven instincts with no apologies attached, interfusing the strong euphonic howl of guitars, cello and piano.

I was wary that the step from indie to major label would cheapen the uniqueness of this band, but in all honesty the spontaneity and credibility is still present. Let's just hope they **don't** make it to MTV's "Alternative Nation" or "Buzz Clips" or whatever the PC term for MTV's "alternative" scene is these days. Keep your fingers crossed.

—Erin Wilson



They Suck

Best Kissers in the World
Been There
MCA Records

I think the best place to start this review is track #5 of "Been There"—a four letter name for lame!

This adjective describes everything from the name of the band, to the name of the record, to the sound and essence of the music. Maybe this isn't the perspective of the objective press (whatever that may be), but these guys wasted at least an hour of my time opening for X at the Ventura Theatre last month.

I think the CD is better than their live act, if only because the band is invisible and the smug attitude of Gerald Collier (their suspiciously Squeeze-ish vocalist) is occasionally lost in music. For any of you who may have seen the show, I'm sure you'll like the CD better because of the absence of those two Speedo-bedecked, bald oats who stood on stage in testament not only to the band, but their roadies as well.

My theory is that these guys were a cultural fetish meant to give the band an "alternative" kind of feel, sort of like the well-placed copy of Kafka's *The Trial* on their lavish CD cover.

Well ... right ... the music. Standing out



from a couple of slow sentimental numbers and a couple of equally bland upbeat pieces are "Bleeder" and "Bitch Can't Sing."

"Bleeder" is a melodic, vocal-centered piece featuring Collier's plaintive voice crooning over a standard chord progression.

"Bitch Can't Sing," if you couldn't tell by the title, is a metal, or should I say, "grungy" piece. This one musters up the most energy on the CD, even though it is a little misogynistic.

—Chris Dunlap



Joel's Jewel

Billy Joel
River of Dreams
Columbia

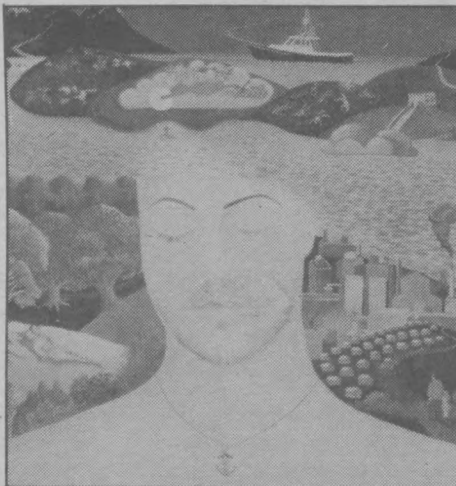
It's tough to categorize *River of Dreams*, the latest Billy Joel album. It's good, and yet it falls so far short of being great that it leaves one with a sense of mediocrity. It's worth the on-sale price, but might be one of the first CDs to go when you decide to trade in a few.

River of Dreams has an interesting history. Much of the early work on this album was done in Joel's remote Long Island studio, but as soon as producer Dan Kortchmar joined the project, the work was shifted to the big city. Kortchmar, who plays guitar on the album, also suggested that Joel make *River of Dreams* without his usual band—which he did. The changes resulted in a moderately different sound—particularly with the guitar work—but no radical departures from the kind of music Joel has been making for the last decade.

And yes, there are songs about Christie Brinkley.

The album's first song and first single, "No Man's Land," is indicative of the entire package. Much like a pair of tunes from Joel's last two albums, *The Bridge's* "Matter of Trust" and *Storm Front's* "I Go to Extremes," "No Man's Land" is good enough to crack the top 40 but not good enough to be very memorable. You may not skip over this song while playing the disc, but it won't make you forget anything from Joel's *Greatest Hits* album.

The title track from *River of Dreams* is



by far the best thing on this album. A toe-tapping, finger-snapping, catchy little tune, "River of Dreams" is destined to get lots of radio airplay and be Joel's biggest hit since "We Didn't Start the Fire" in 1989. The song is classic Joel: it's well-written, done in a style almost totally unlike any of his other hits, and gives the singer an opportunity to use his wide vocal range. "River of Dreams" is easily one of Joel's best songs in years.

The genuinely beautiful "Lullabye (Goodnight, My Angel)" is another gem from the new album. Joel has said that he wrote the song after a bedtime conversation with his young daughter, and that kind of personal touch comes through in this intimate song. The decision to record the song with just piano, French horns and a string quartet was a perfect choice.

—Scott McPherson



Sermon Solo

Erick Sermon
No Pressure
Def Jam

1992 was a very momentous year in hip-hop, as this art form of African youth in Amerikkka continued to evolve and gain popularity, despite attempts by "the powers that be" to discredit it through gross commercialization and negative propaganda.

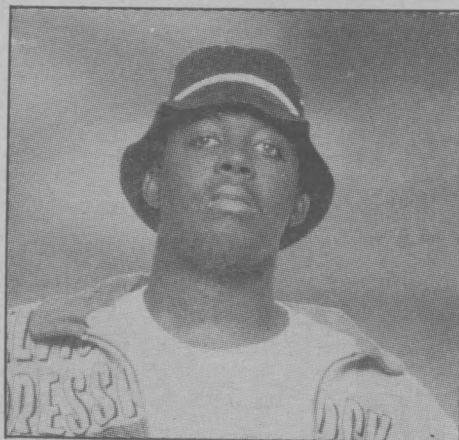
However, in this climate of vast artistic birth, there also was death, as this exciting year saw the breakup of one of hip-hop's most successful groups: EPMD.

Beginning in 1988 with their debut album, *Strictly Business*, and up until 1991 with their fourth and final album, *Business Never Personal*, Erick Sermon and Parrish Smith consistently produced very phat LPs.

With hits like "You Gots to Chill," "So What'cha Sayin'" and "Crossover," they made their trademark sound (which borrowed heavily from the Funk) into a dominant factor in the phenomenal rise of the hip-hop culture, without selling out the music or themselves.

In addition to their own artistic successes, the group also began producing and managing other artists, such as K-Solo, Das EFX and Redman, known collectively as the "Hit Squad." They also spent the majority of 1991-92 on a vast promotional tour (even making an appearance locally at the now deceased Anaconda).

It appeared to the world that the group was at their creative and economic zenith, which is why the sudden news of



their breakup shook up the hip-hop community and left millions of Funk-raised B-Boys with only fond memories.

But it's 1993, and Erick "the E-double" Sermon has returned a little older and wiser, but proving to the world that he is still the "Original Funk Overlord," and having a lot more fun doing it with his debut solo album *No Pressure*.

Make no mistakes—*No Pressure* is a dope album. The production is very tight, and the "E" has definitely not abandoned the Funk. With his trademark "laid back" lyrical flow and lisp, he fits in smoothly with every track. And as the album title suggests, it is obvious that the "E-double" is having a ball doing this album, thus allowing him the freedom to expand his lyrical content.

—Fruzz



This week, Arts and Lectures will be presenting free of charge the film *And The Band Played On*, which documents in detail the rise of the AIDS epidemic.

est groups would even recognize AIDS as an epidemic.

As a *San Francisco Chronicle* journalist, Shilts became the first full-time reporter in the world assigned to cover the AIDS epidemic. As he wrote articles, he was soon shocked to discover just how politicized the reaction to the situation had become.

Starring Matthew Modine, the movie has an impressive all-star cast that includes Alan Alda, Phil Collins, David Dukes, Richard Gere, Glenn Headley, Angelica Huston, Charles Martin Smith, Lily Tomlin and B.D. Wong.

And The Band Played On is playing Sunday, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. in Campbell Hall, free of charge.

—Martin Boer



Every year, the Graduate Students Association sponsors the journal *Thresholds: Viewing Culture*, which aims to (re)define culture by presenting topics in an interdisciplinary fashion. When it comes to "Madonna Studies," or "Sex In The Subjunctive," this journal aims to show sides of our society that high art and academia tend to

miss.

This year's cover highlights the work of New York-based art activist Jerry Kearns, who stresses the empirical and foundational in an art world sadly overrun by theory buffs. But even those who fancy theory will enjoy *Thresholds*, as it deconstructs male pornography serials from the fifties, aesthetics (always fluid) and race/ethnicity in cinema.

The writing all around is smart and concise.

Besides essays, there is an amusing review of the Richard Nixon Library, and stimulating interviews with local theory gurus Constance Penley and Laurence Rickels (though I suspect readers of *Thresholds* are already intimately familiar with their works). —Martin Boer