

artsweek

sex deceit & sin

the sherwood players bring depravity to center stage, p.4A



SOUND- SOUNDSTYLE*



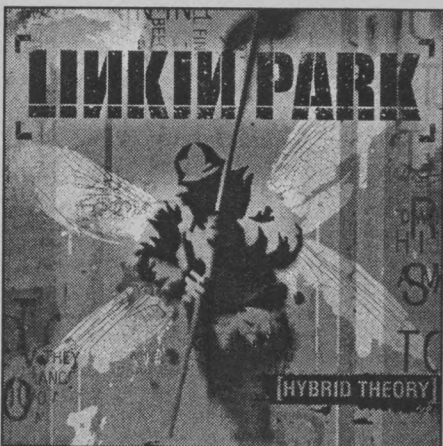
Wu-Tang Clan | *The W* | Loud

"We're baaack!" sings Method Man just as Raekwon busts into the first verse of "Chamber Music." And despite failing to put out a dope album, group or solo, since '97, Method Man speaks the truth. The Wu is back and determined to make up for wasted time.

First off, and most importantly, RZA produced each song and produced them well. His best work usually occurs with slow, eerie beats like those found on "Hollow Bones" and "Careful (Click, Click)." After the beats, you have to give credit to the Wu lyricists for bringing the heat. Absent are the silly references to Italian and Cuban gangster-isms, replaced instead with the *Enter the Wu-Tang*-type verbiage that blew the Wu up in the first place. That's not to say that *The W* is a complete warp back to '93. "I Can't Go to Sleep" freaks a totally ganked Isaac Hayes record, meaning that they didn't even sample it; they just played the record and rhymed over it. Ghostface Killah and RZA rap as if they were crying, lamenting about how the injustices of the world won't allow them to sleep. It's totally different than anything you've

heard from them or anyone else, and it's good.

With only one obvious stumble on "Conditioner," the Wu-Tang Clan has returned from the realm of monotony and matched the heights it reached early in its career. Time to jump back on the bandwagon. [Trey Clark]



Linkin Park | *Hybrid Theory* | Warner Bros.

A decent description of Linkin Park is 21st century band, but that's not in the good sense of the term. Linkin Park brilliantly fused turntables, rap and guitars about three years behind Korn and Papa Roach and immersed itself in its own self-pity for twelve songs. The group consists of 21st century music posterboys: It is mainstream, unthreatening and extremely marketable. In fact, the album's liner notes list their equipment and favorite clothing brands, and we couldn't care less.

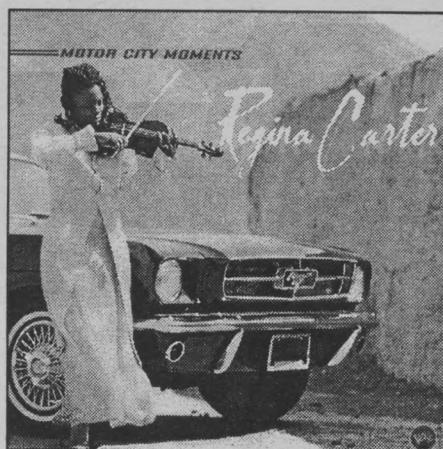
Every song is the same. Every lyric, idea, chord progression, turntable fill, electronic blip and song-length is uniform. How the band differentiates between each track is probably its greatest

asset. Chester Bennington's bland, impersonal and ambiguous lyrics are the biggest culprit in turning this record into one mess of a song. He's bitter and resentful about the cruel hand God has dealt him, but he fails to direct any of this anguish on anybody or anything. Songs are meant to form a purpose, perhaps even come to a conclusion, but unfortunately we are left hanging. What's even worse, we don't want any more. The electronic intros and background noise simply fill space and serve no other purpose than to move with the evolving trends in "alt" rock.

There isn't much else to say except that *Hybrid Theory* is boring and disappointing. At one point, Bennington wails, "no more lies, no more lies!" Yes, please don't tell us that this is rock. [Collin Mitchell]

too steady — like Carter found her niche and didn't want to venture into the beyond. After a while all the songs sound the same, which is pleasant and fine for five minutes with your feet kicked up on the coffee table, but relaxation soon gives way to boredom.

On one or two tracks, something out of the ordinary happens, like a long and dangerous solo, and then it gets good and wild, and let's bring down the speakers for one more prayerful stomp. ... Only wait, it's gone, and Carter has wiped the sweat off of her brow. By focusing too much on a particular sound, this album is less than it appears to be at first, sort of like watching the same movie twice at a double feature. [MohahnGM]



Regina Carter | *Motor City Moments* | Verve

Here's a scene I like to relax to: easy times cooling out to jazz with the ever-present violin reminding me of something more. With Regina Carter I waited and waited for that little something more, but it never came. The violin is wonderful, but



Jody Whitesides | *Energy Audio Revolution* | 2000 On

When I was a kid, every kind of music was new; hell, I had a hundred years to catch up on. As I got older, fewer and fewer things seemed original. Same riffs, different words; same beats, different instruments. Jody Whitesides actually

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SOUND- SOUNDSTYLE*

sounded new to me, and this made me happy. There are good, fun beats and even some interesting lyrics, but, unfortunately, the vocals are not terribly good. Whitesides' voice is kind of flat and uninspiring. I still think this is a better buy than most of the crap out there; at least it has some character. He is not some cheap-looking man-whore who may as well be in a Vegas strip club as an overzealous lounge singer. As the kids say, "Keep it real." [Ben Ebyam]



The Color Red | *Below the Under* | Orchard

Who likes the color red? I did, until I heard it sing. With its debut release *Below the Under*, The Color Red shoots yet another dead arrow at the punk rock genre. To be exact, its music can be described as hard rock with an almost metal edge — like there aren't enough of these rock band types already.

The songs are redundant. Lead vocalist Jon Zamora starts each song off with a soft, melodic tune, then clenches the mood with a wild, loud rambling, a method once used by Nirvana. However, a

few songs should be considered. "The Greatest Hits," along with "Tiny Places," are soft rock melodies that upset the mood of the album. My recommendation for The Color Red is to change its music style and become an alternative band. I'm sure whoever brings that back is bound to be noticed. [Antonio Coelho]



Blue States | *Nothing Changes Under the Sun* | ESL

One of the biggest complaints about electronica is that it is too superficial. Its thick wall of sound hides emotion behind bleeps and knob-twiddling. Perhaps this is why so much of it is relegated to the role of pleasant, inconsequential background music.

All these stereotypes can be thrown out the window after one listen to the Blue States' first full-length release. British-based Andy Dragazis handles his many instruments skillfully and soulfully as he incorporates many different musical approaches to making a very engrossing and sensual album. True, there are a few aimless cocktail lounge numbers on

Nothing Changes Under the Sun, but overall the album soars with relaxation and release.

What is most particularly appealing about the album is the depth and diversity of the sound. "Your Girl" features a tender female voice with an ambiguous voice over a simple organ line while "Golden Touch" hits home with a deep bass groove. The chill-out numbers, "The Trainer Shuffle" and "Theme From Within," are perfectly seductive with their aural complexity and interweaving of poppy guitars, pianos and drum machines.

Nay-sayers of electronica's insignificance will have to swallow their words after listening to the immensely satisfying *Nothing Changes Under the Sun*. Another great release from Eighteenth Street Lounge. [Andy Sywak]

Bratmobile | *Ladies, Women and Girls* | Lookout!

Once upon a time, before baby-doll tee-shirts with "Sweetie" written in rhinestones were fed to girls as empowering, before Courtney love won her right to cleavage by punching out Kathleen Hannah, there was a band called Bratmobile. They were all female, unabashedly confrontational, and aurally painful.

Bratmobile reunited a couple years ago, but this is their first new release in over seven years. *Ladies, Women and Girls* is full of hook-laden, jangly punk-pop tunes (of the style appropriated by Sonic Youth with "Goo"). The simple melodies are still there, only Allison Wolfe has learned to sing. Molly Neuman, during her interval in the much-missed Peechees, became one of the best straight-ahead rock 'n' roll drummers in the biz. Most

shockingly, Bratmobile smoothed out their sound by adding a (boy!) bassist.

LW&G is well-written. The songs are catchy and backed by some kick-ass riot grrrl spit. But is this truly a Bratmobile album? 1992's *Pottymouth* was one of the most abrasive albums ever given mass distribution. This was its appeal. Sure, the lineup for *LW&G* is original, but every band member has become so much more talented that the band is indistinguishable from any of Wolfe's later groups.

Everyone grows up. Hell, once upon a time, I was convinced that the riot grrrl movement has some use for the support of us nrrrd boys. It doesn't. I doubt that it needs our music reviews, either. [DJ Fatkid]

Beat Poem of the Week

What means the world to you
my money, my doe, my hoes, my clothes
What means the world to you
my money, my doe, my hair, my nails
What means the world to you
some sex, some mex, and a little bit of head rah
What means the world to you
to sex is sweet wit a cat who eat
What means the world to you
of cheese shopping sprees
What means the world to you
diamond rings shinin things
What means the world to you ladies
(oh) fellas (oh)
oh, ah, oh, ah, oh, ah

— Cam'Ron, "What Means the World to You"



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TRUC BUI / DAILY NEXUS

ROLE-PLAYING

DARK RAPTURE, THE LATEST FROM SHERWOOD PLAYERS, GETS WICKED

i stand here ironing_trey clark

Matt Weinglass is a busy man these days. As the founder of Sherwood Players, he has produced every play that the group has performed and directed two of them. "Dark Rapture" will be his third shot at directing the Sherwood Players. Weinglass took a break from rehearsals to give *Artsweek* the inside dirt on "Dark Rapture."

Artsweek: Tell me what "Dark Rapture" is all about.

Matt Weinglass: "Dark Rapture" is a contemporary detective mystery story that follows several different characters around the globe in a search for a lot of money, about \$7 million. People are lying, they're bluffing each other, they're killing each other all over this money. Yeah, that's pretty much the story.

What is your purpose as a director in a production like this?

My purpose is to bring theater people together: actors, designers, directors, everyone who has an interest. I want to bring them together to be part of something different. When I say bring them together, I also mean the audience. The audience gets the chance to come into another world that they otherwise don't get a chance to see. So that's important to us, especially me as a director. They're the people we are playing to, and they are the people who are going to respond to us. That's the point of it all.

How many plays have you directed before "Dark Rapture"?

This is probably my sixth or seventh play. With Sherwood Players, this is my third big play that I've directed. I've produced every piece from here, and there have been other directors.

Can you tell me a little about what Sherwood Players are

about and who they're comprised of?

They're comprised of students, in drama and out of drama, on this campus and out of this campus, Santa Barbara and L.A. All sorts of people come through here, they weave in and out through the years. (*laughs*) I say we've been around a while. We're fairly new, but as each quarter goes by we tend to grow. People hear about us and they sign up. They're considered part of the group regardless of whether they're actually performing in the current production. We try to do one project a quarter. As far as being part of the group, that means that you're

The manipulation of time and space right in your face, as opposed to film. I mean I love film, I like to incorporate cinematic aspects and put them in theater. We're talking quick scene changes, fast-paced action, moving plot and music is important to me, just like in movies. Theater gives the audience the show right in their face and says, 'I am right here, two feet from you. And I'm performing for you. Anything goes, anything can happen. You're getting a once only show, and that's tonight. Tomorrow night it might be different.' That's what I like about theater.

You mentioned music. What kind of music do you utilize?

We utilize all sorts of music. I'm open for whatever is going to help the scene. I'm talking about how music sets an emotional component subconsciously to the audience. And whether they know it or not, it suggests a state of mind that the story line is following. We use it in intimate moments, in fast-paced moments to drive through the scenes. Sometimes there is dialogue over music. That's not a common theatrical convention, but we tend to do that a lot because that's a cinematic trick that we're doing live. It seems to go over pretty well so I keep doing it. This show, "Dark Rapture," is loaded with musical elements and surprises that may or may not have been intended by the playwright.

Are there any original compositions?

Not in this piece. The movie we did last year has original music underscoring that. We're actually debuting that finally. It's been a long wait. It's called "Into the Void" and we're going to try to show that in spring.

"Dark Rapture" runs December 1 - 2, at Girvetz 1004, at 8:30 p.m.

“ WE'RE TALKING QUICK SCENE CHANGES, FAST-PACED ACTION ”

an advocate of ... anything goes. It's independent theater, and it gives us a chance as artists to be open to anything.

What do you like about theater as a medium?

thingstodo >> calendar

today | **thursday**



Now's not the time to go changing your Thursday routine. Check out the film at Campbell Hall ("Ran," a Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare's "King Lear") at 7:30 p.m. for a meager \$5, and then hop Bill's Bus for downtown. Your best bet is, as usual, The Zoo, the big fun night of glow-sticks and baggy pants galore. With DJ Jasen and Pat on the decks inside, and a variety of deejays outside, you'll be having the time of your life. 630 State Street. 18+

tomorrow | **friday**

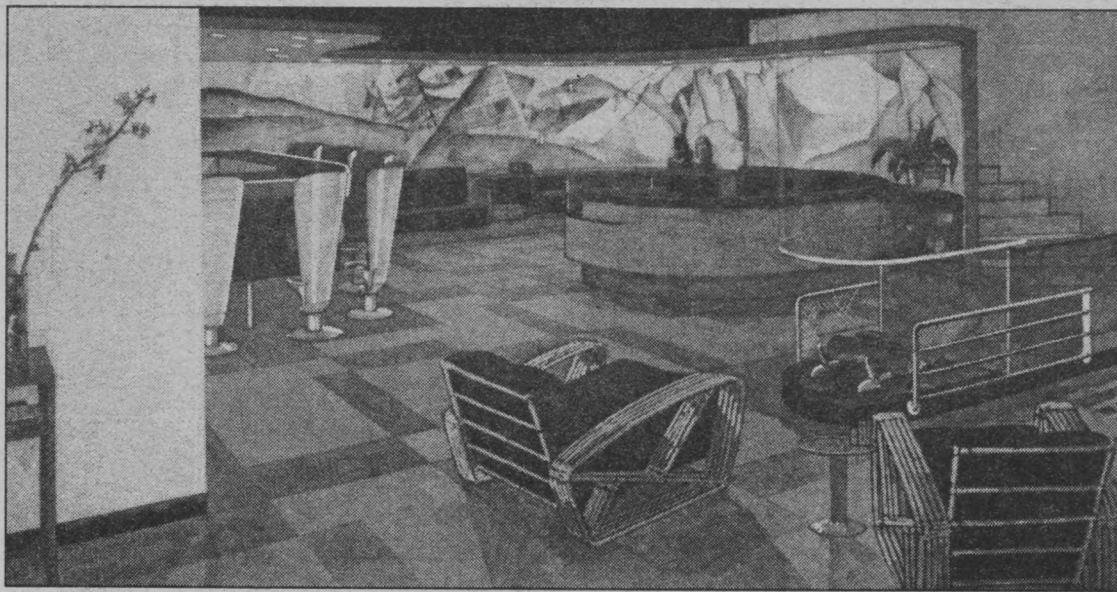


Under the artistic direction of Tonia Shimin, Theatre UCSB presents three performances of its annual fall dance event tonight. "Echoes: A Dance Concert" features the choreography of advanced UCSB dance students along with dance faculty members' contributions. The themes range from the serious to lighthearted, but the result just might be an exciting display of choreographic excellence. Or gals in leotards. Hatlen Theatre, 8 p.m. \$12 students.

weekend | **saturday**



The Sherwood Players have graced the theater community of Santa Barbara for a few years now, bringing all sorts of decadent depictions of depravity to the student body for a low, low price. Play a role in history-in-the-making (well, maybe not) by attending "Dark Rapture." At the very least, you'll get to see nudity, violence, adult language and adult situations. It's like Skin-a-Max, but live! Girvetz 1004, 8:30 and midnight. \$5 students; \$7 general.



SLEEK SOPHISTICATION

KEM WEBER'S BIXBY HOUSE DESIGNS SHOWCASE 1930s ARCHITECTURE

criticism_katherine spiers

Does the sight of a sleek, shiny bar cause an intense, internal pleasure within you ... and not just because it's holding liquor?

While you might not be aware of it, you have the work of Santa Barbara area architect and designer Kem Weber to thank. He wasn't the only architect to create the Streamline Moderne ideal of the 1930s, but he was among many whose ideas of design have infiltrated a true 20th-century aesthetic.

The University Art Museum is currently exhibiting the work of Weber in a show called "Designing the Moderne: Kem Weber's Bixby House," showcasing the spare, Art Deco style that Weber used for designing appliances, furniture and storefronts in the first half of this century. Weber eventually extended his repertoire to buildings, and his designs for a house in Kansas City, the Bixby residence, show the first time these concepts were applied to a private residence. To this day, the Bixby House remains the epitome of 1930s architecture.

The show contains blueprints, drawings and photographs of the Bixby House as well as other works by Weber, plus actual examples of his furniture and appliances. He was both an architect and an interior designer, and his watercolor renditions of his work are also on display. Weber was an artist in all regards, and he rarely did a project in which he only completed one aspect of the project. Although he was hired as an interior designer for the Bixby House, his "inner architect" is apparent

throughout the designs.

The intersections of curves and sharp angles that characterize Weber's work can be seen in everything from the alarm clocks he designed to his drawings for airline cabins. The house designs are all beautiful, but the "Interior of Rumpus Room" is especially well done.

Some of the geometrical patterns of Weber's earlier work are apparent in this piece, such as in the design for the floor.

furniture within the house. This use of unusual materials is symbolic of the rampant invention of the 1930s. The drawings of the interiors and the blueprints for the house show innovative uses of space, helped by unusual angles and curved walls.

When Weber started working in the 1920s, he used archetypal flapper-era concepts such as geometrical designs and decorative objects. With the beginning of the Depression, however, this style was replaced by the more basic Streamline Moderne style. A more efficient school of design that reflected the serious attitude of the era replaced the fluffy, whimsical designs of the '20s. Decorative touches were not abandoned, but within the Streamline school these appear elegant and simple, even necessary to complete the overall atmosphere. Simple statues and painted walls were used for decorative effect more often than paintings and bouquets.

Weber's design for an airplane seat is a great reminder of the comfortable designs of Streamline Moderne. Although viewers cannot actually sit in the chair, the curved wood and angled seat is simply styled in a way that looks purely comfortable, hard to fathom for modern travelers but indicative of the simplicity for which Weber strove.

"Designing the Moderne: Kem Weber's Bixby House" runs through Feb. 11, at the University Art Museum.

“THE HOUSE DESIGNS ARE ALL BEAUTIFUL, BUT THE 'INTERIOR OF RUMPUS ROOM' IS ESPECIALLY WELL DONE”

But a sense of simplicity pervades, with neutral tones set off by primary colors, and the use of materials such as glass and metal.

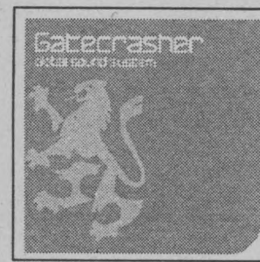
Weber uses bold colors and unusual materials such as aluminum, glass and linoleum for the actual structure and the

RAVING AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE

ARTSWEEK'S SHOPPING GUIDE FOR TECHNOPHILES

sunday shoutin'_jenne raub

Ah, the season of merriment is once again upon us, and that means shopping for gifts for your loved ones. A tie for Dad, perfume for Mom, of course, but what to get for the most important person in your life, the club-goer? We all have one in our family, even if Mom and Dad refuse to admit that their beloved son dropped off the high school football team to don gigantic pants and twirl glowsticks around every weekend to techno. What better for your favorite club kid, then, than one of the latest albums from the world's most famous clubs, parties or deejays? *Artsweek* takes a look at four recent releases and judges what Santa should bring so that your favorite club-goer can live out every day as though they're at the largest events in the world.



Gatecrasher | Global Sound System | Epic

If you haven't heard of the Gatecrasher phenomenon, you've been living in a cave. Perhaps the first group to truly take club fashion to new heights, it's a UK club whose attendants appear in fluorescent colors, wearing the club's lion logo in as many new creative ways as possible. Gatecrasher is among other British clubs to take the show on the road, if you will, touring the world spreading the joy of trance to all of the world's cheery electronica lovers.

The sound: Captures the decadence of trance, for better or worse. Nothing particularly new here, but it's got all the classics any trance aficionado has come to know and love.

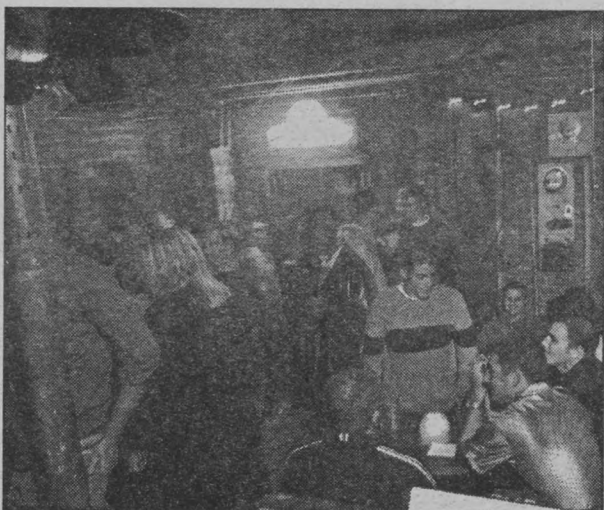
Why don't you wrap it with: Gatecrasher glowsticks, Gatecrasher ecstasy and a Gatecrasher tee?

But does the packaging serve as a gift in and of itself? From the logo-embellished cover to the artsy inside spread, it's wicked fly, eh!

please see **GIFTGUIDE**, p. 7A

thingstodo >> calendar

weekend | **monday**



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS

next week | **tuesday**



JASON SCHOCK / DAILY NEXUS

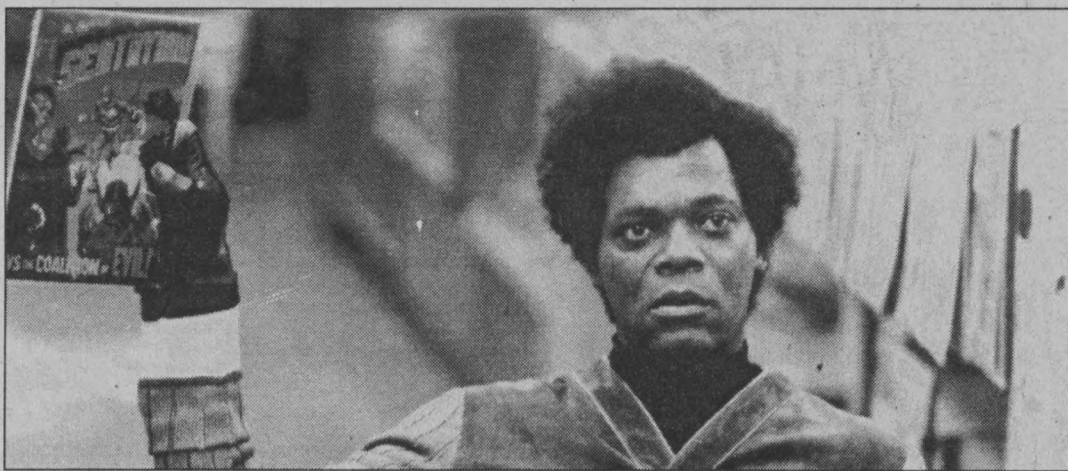
next week | **wednesday**



You will be pleased to know that during the last three months *Artsweek* has been conducting extremely rigorous and lengthy field research in order to bring you, the reader, the very best in entertainment. Our results are the results of arduous, non-stop participation in what the local vernacular dubs "nightlife." For Sunday, our research has shown that Madhouse is a good bet, as they boast a hip hop lounge with 5 deejays. Dig. 434 State Street.

If you think you can't have fun on Mondays, think again. Chances are you've been in the dark about Brazilian nights, a weekly party that takes place at Q's Sushi A Go Go. Even if you hail from the Northern most part of America, it doesn't matter. Everything from bossanova to disco is blasted through the soundsystem to an always fun-loving crowd. And if you get bored, there's always the upstairs pool loft. 409 State Street.

So, you have a final on Thursday. So what? *Artsweek* manages to party every night of the week, surely you can, too. Prepare the onslaught of studying by having fun on Wednesday at all the bars in downtown Santa Barbara. If you're dying to hear some live music, why don't you check out the Debra Farris Band? They'll be playing original, danceable rock and blues at SOhO, 1221 State Street, 8 p.m. For information, call 962-7776.



ACHY-BREAKY HEART

SOME PEOPLE ARE BRITTLE, BUT OTHERS UNBREAKABLE

new and improved_andy sywak

Slow movies seem to be a rarity these days. Studios are churning out increasingly fast-paced films that assume all viewers suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder.

Enter M. Night Shyamalan, the celebrated writer/director of "The Sixth Sense," the 10th highest grossing film of all time. Brisk plots and camera work are not things he caters to in his work, and "Unbreakable" is no different. Does slowness work again for him?

Well, sort of. "Unbreakable" is a very imaginative and well-made film, yet ultimately fails to deliver due to a plot that is disjointed and rarely gripping. Even a bottle of Ritalin will fail to prevent a yawn or a rubbing of the eyes for this one.

However, Shyamalan has a very precise and deliberate style that is refreshing in its attention to detail and intense focus on the characters. This slow purposefulness was very effective in examining the precocious little boy in "The Sixth Sense," but it is less effective in dealing with the obtuse, often unclear and occasionally laughable subject matter of "Unbreakable."

The movie chronicles the toils of David Dunn (Bruce Willis), a Philadelphia security guard who is, miraculously, the only survivor on a commuter train crash. Plagued by the guilt of being the only survivor, Dunn wonders what to make of his life and of his estranged wife (an underused Robin Penn Wright) and admiring

son (Spencer Treat Clark). Soon he meets Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson), a sickly comic-art dealer who is convinced that Dunn is "unbreakable." Impressed by this, Dunn starts to wonder if he indeed has a gift and starts to explore this in his daily life.

If the plot does not sound entirely absorbing, that's because it isn't. The central question of the film, whether or not Dunn is "unbreakable," does not carry the same immensity or profundity of "I see dead people." The somber and incredibly serious tone of the story lacks

the viewer who is taking the film too seriously.

Like "The Sixth Sense," Shyamalan is concerned with the larger idea of human purpose. How will Dunn utilize his gift? What will he do with his life? As Price says at one point, "There's nothing worse than not knowing what you are here for." At least on this point, the film has a firm resolution.

"Unbreakable" has so many echoes of "The Sixth Sense," at times it seems like Shyamalan used the same storyboards and just transferred the new characters. There's a little boy who provides Dunn with insight, a very serious and troubled Willis, and a kinetic last five minutes that suddenly makes sense of the whole movie. Once again, the story is set in Philadelphia, and Shyamalan shoots his hometown of Brotherly Love as the most lonely place in America.

At only 30 years old, Shyamalan is already an original and talented filmmaker. Although "Unbreakable" may lack tangibility, it is still an impressive piece of cinema. The director likes to keep the camera in one place and let the actors move the story along with unforced dialogue. The intelligent acting, thoughtful cinematography and innovative vantage points make watching "Unbreakable" itself a stimulating experience. Shyamalan may have gotten a little ahead of himself on this one, but his cinematic vision has only strengthened and grown that much greater.

“THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN NOT KNOWING WHAT YOU ARE HERE FOR”

much comic relief, and seems always a good step beyond the audience's involvement in Dunn's journey. Price's silly and pretentious ramblings about the mythic and deep qualities of comic books are another major detractor to

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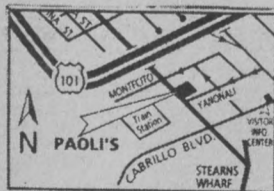
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TRUE LOVE AND TRUE HIP HOP IN VALEDICTIONS



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Let me be perfectly glib when it comes to my life I am completely inured and genuinely enervated from my attempts to find even the slightest solace in everyday activities. Even if listening to Freddie Hubbard's 12:08-long masterpiece *Red Clay* always cheers me up, shouldn't I understand by now that I'm trapped in a world that will only let me find happiness when I'm beating off to a picture of Halle Berry or playing with my Neo and Morpheus karate-garb action figures? By the end of that day I was on my hand and knees, not sure if the case of the dry heaves I had was due to extreme physical activity or the knowledge that the girl of my dreams not only *didn't* have a boyfriend, but also that I had missed any chance whatsoever with her since one of my friends had taken the initiative I lack and talked to her. How can I compete with the finest specimen of a man from Oregon that I have ever met? Not that I consider myself a "cheese-eatin' surrender monkey," but the truth is that I can't, and therefore won't, humiliate myself by trying. And then, to top it all off, Sailor Jupiter has stopped e-mailing me because she thinks Sailor Mars and I have something going on. This is all just one gigantic nightmare.

Still, life goes on. I listen to the latest freshy fresh CD

released as a DJ kicks from England's Studio K7, *Nightmares on Wax*, and tell myself that I have changed. Maybelline images of beauty and brains neatly wrapped up in a package to make me feel weak in the knees is no longer my type of girl. I have decided that I now like my

between Kenny Dope's "Get on Down," Freddy Fresh's "It's a Latin Thing" and Syrup's "Chocolate" and more the hip hop, in the form of D.I.T.C.'s "Thick," A Tribe Called Quest's "Award Tour" and Blackalicious' "Alphabet Aerobics."

Need a mix that'll pep up your life when you think it's beginning to look like mine? *Nightmares on Wax's* DJ kicks just may be the thing for you. *Solesides' Greatest Bumps* is another one that's spot on (if you're in need of something specifically hip hop). Not really any new tracks, rather oldies but goodies like Lateef the Truth Speaker's "The Quickening" and Blackalicious' "Swan Lake" are the name of the game here. If you've slept on these folks, please do not any longer, because although "quiet is kept," it doesn't always have to be.

If you like hip hop and need a change, then maybe, just maybe, these'll provide it for you — they have for me. And it's a good thing too; this way I have something to keep my mind distracted (and therefore not fried) as I take my GRE exams and my finals in the ten-day span that would have otherwise forced my resignation from the superscholar club.

Robotsex is a dance contest winner

“THIS IS ALL JUST ONE GIGANTIC NIGHTMARE”

women a little fascist, a bit grand, slightly camp and full of airs and graces. All of which make listening to *Nightmares on Wax* even more appropriate. Hip hop, funk and breaks DJ E.A.S.E. style, termed on the album as "a journey into hip hop chill-out, calling at funk, soul, soundtrack and classic groove," permeate through the album's wonderful architecture. It is laced terrifically

GIFT GUIDE

CONT. FROM P.5A

Junior Vasquez | *Twilo: Volume One* | Virgin



Twilo, as many of our hip readers surely know, is the infamous New York club that opened its doors five years ago, taking over the space of the now-legendary Paradise Garage. The club is one of many American clubs to follow the UK trend of marketing club life as something more than just a Saturday night spent downing endless

drinks. Twilo has recently launched a magazine and a series of albums featuring the club's own regular deejays.

The sound: Two CDs worth of vicious, harsh, at times brilliant house; it's the perfect combination of supposed spirituality and straight-up hedonism. The first CD is much better than the second, which is just Junior Vasquez's remixes, some of them painfully cheesy.

Why don't you wrap it with: Three red bulls and vodka, two lines of speed and a blow job in a men's lavatory?

But does the packaging serve as a gift in and of itself? A glorious cut-out with the Twilo logo wraps the jewel case, but aside from history about the club and deejay, it's not that exciting.

Dave Ralph | *Love Parade Berlin* | Kinetic



Love Parade has gained national attention as one of the world's largest and most peaceful raves, uniting several million people every summer in the heart of Berlin for one big dance-off. This, I must admit, was among my favorites, for it's a solid set by Dave Ralph that captures an event's energy with enough skill to make listening to

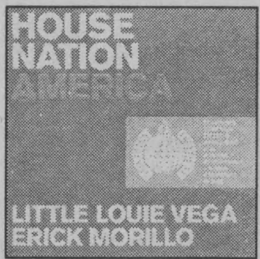
it on a boombox still enjoyable.

The sound: Peace, love, and house happiness, European-style.

Why don't you wrap it with: A set of butterfly wings, a bottle of glitter and a big, big smile!

But does the packaging serve as a gift in and of itself? What the packaging lacks in innovation, *Love Parade Berlin* comes with a sweet liner notes from Ralph himself and CD-ROM features, including a movie.

Little Louie Vega and Erick Morillo | *House Nation America* | Ultra



In another installation of Ministry of Sound's deejay mix albums, two U.S. deejays step to the decks and weave a soundscape that captures the sounds of tribal, house, disco and more on two CDs. While the other albums are mostly loud, aggressive and wild, *House Nation America* is, by contrast, quite mellow, opting for

more interesting melodies and compositions rather than simplistic (yet hearty!) breakdowns. Both discs feature plenty of recognizable party favorites. Perfect for those digging the discofied sounds of house.

The sound: Glitzy, low-key house music perfect for chic chilling out.

Why don't you wrap it with: Chloé shades, real gold hoops and a gift certificate to Urban Outfitters?

But does the packaging serve as a gift in and of itself? While the design doesn't break from Ministry of Sound's other albums, it's a testament to the lush beauty of minimalism. Better get that gift certificate.

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