

accidentally making references to really, really bad things ...

artsweek

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film | west Beirut theater | how i learned to drive + man of la mancha calendar | stuff to do!



POUTING LIKE A CHAMP!

TITANIC'S BIG STAR BRINGS NEW MEANING TO THE TERM "WASHED-UP" IN THE BEACH

LOVING LEO | JOHN FISKE

Billed as a *Paradise Lost* allegory but more resembling the Garden of Eden, "The Beach" follows Richard (Leonardo DiCaprio) as he and a French couple find themselves on an unknown island. While vacationing in Bangkok, Richard runs into the psychotic Daffy (Robert Carlyle), who tells him of a mysterious beach unsoiled by tourists.

Grabbing his two neighbors, Etienne (Guillaume Canet) and Francoise (Virginie Ledoyen), Richard begins a long trip to find this supposed paradise on Earth.

When they arrive, they find two things. The first are armed Thai farmers growing fields of marijuana. They move on to discover a colony of tourists who

have made a home on the other half of the island. Led by Sal (Tilda Swinton), they lead a hippie utopia, with a healthy balance of nature and technology.

Of course, things go wrong, but not as the trailers would have you believe. According to the trailers, it seems as though it's probably those greedy Thai farmers that screw everything up. In fact, Richard's the culprit. He eventually gets to have sex with Francoise, leaving Etienne to be forgotten. And in a blunder that the film never really recovers from, he sleeps with Sal while on a supply run in Bangkok.

Making Richard so unlikable is the death of "The Beach." Having flawed characters works

well, but when he's the only bad person, it makes the whole project uneven. We're supposedly going someplace where the good and bad sides of humanity will come to a

head, but what we really get is just the bad side of Richard.

Were the screenplay not so hellbent on showing what a shallow and weak-willed punk Richard is, the film may have worked. But in the end, not only do we find that he is unlikable, callow and

self-serving, but he's also unrepentant. The end of the film discusses sin, but it seems no one really cares. Though it doesn't reveal the conclusion of the film, the end has Richard essentially forgiven by everyone; meanwhile, I am ready to scream, "Why didn't they just put one into that little bastard?"

The real weakness comes from Boyle's inability to control the pacing of the film. From the script level, the exposition is both long and unlikely. Richard's slow descent into madness becomes an uneventful subplot that acts as an excuse for Boyle to direct and DiCaprio to prove he can act.

In the big finale, the community comes head-to-head with the farmers who are upset that Richard gave out a copy of the map to some brain-dead stoners. The conclusion to this is so unsatisfying and stupid that what was otherwise a good film became a bad one.

Bizarrely enough, "The Beach" comes off a bit like "Fight Club." It's a well-made film that poses some deep questions, but doesn't have the guts to explore them. For that, go see "American Beauty" again.

“IT’S A WELL-MADE FILM THAT
POSES SOME DEEP QUESTIONS
BUT DOESN’T HAVE
THE GUTS TO
EXPLORE THEM

THEATER : A REVIEW



OUTSIDE THE LINES

ROMANCE AND INCEST IN **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE**

DIPLOMATIC | LINDSAY FARMER

The underside of society is often closer than we care to admit. But Ensemble Theatre Company's production of "How I Learned to Drive" addresses the taboo topic of love outside the accepted structure of age and family.

In a nameless backroad town that could be almost anywhere in New England, dissatisfied Uncle Peck (Christopher Armbrister) finds relief from his wife and drinking in the physical form of his niece-by-marriage, Li'l Bit (Dena Mills). Li'l Bit, nicknamed by her family from birth for, unlike a boy, having just a li'l bit between the legs, opens with memories and commentaries on her experiences growing up in an abusive home. Over the course of the play, the audience follows Li'l Bit back through her childhood with visits to Christmas, birthdays, everyday talks around the kitchen table with Grandma and mother, and of course, driving lessons with Uncle Peck. It is on these driving lessons that the audience finds Uncle Peck's passion for Li'l Bit and his obsession on having her and loving her, even though he is married to her aunt and she is barely an adolescent, much less a consensual adult. "How I Learned to Drive" questions the boundaries and expressions of love and what it truly takes to be accepted in a world with so many rules for going down the road of life.

The show itself is amazing, both in the writing and visual expression, but especially in the acting. Author

Paula Vogel carefully crafts the childhood of Li'l Bit around the metaphor of learning to drive. She contrasts an everyday activity and a rite of passage in Western society with a taboo love remnant of primitive societies left behind with the modernization of society. Vogel's vision is brought to life onstage with the simplistic setting of mobile chairs, tables, stools and permanent road signs reminding the audience of the accepted structure looming over the characters as the break convention and standards.

**"MANIPULATES UNCLE PECK INTO
THE MAN YOU LOVE
TO HATE WITH HIS
TWISTED
VIEW OF REALITY"**

The intricacy of the characters leaves quite a task for the actors, but Armbrister and Mills both meet the challenge with tenacity and frightening truthfulness. Mills brings authenticity to Li'l Bit and meets the challenge of having an established actress playing a girl ranging from

11 to 18 years of age. The childish smiles and reactions remind the audience that they are seeing a child while looking at an adult. In addition, Mills pulls sympathy from her audience at the same time she demands anger. The conflicting emotions generated by Mills force the audience to decide for itself whether she has self-control, or if she is truly a lost child being manipulated by an older man.

In contrast to the sweet-yet-confused Li'l Bit, Armbrister manipulates Uncle Peck into the man you love to hate with his twisted view of reality and love. Armbrister demands disgust and repulsion through the majority of the play. Even Li'l Bit observes the turmoil within him, wondering, "Who did it to you Uncle Peck, who did it to you?" The audience is left with the conflicting image of a man breaking convention by loving, physically and seemingly emotionally, a child. Do you hate him for loving? Can you hate someone for falling in love with a beautiful female and doing everything in his power to get her to love him back? "How I Learned to Drive" asks just these questions and asks them well.

"How I Learned to Drive" runs Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m. through March 5. Albacama Theatre, 914 State Street, \$20 to \$28. Call 962-8606 for information and tickets.

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ROBOTICS

SERVING UP INSANITY, ONE COLUMN AT A TIME

GETTING PAID | **ROBOTSEX**

Yesterday I may have as well been covered in Mandalorian battle armor (like Bobafett) since the realization that the life of an astronaut's daughter cannot be an easy one just bounced right off me. To begin with, there's always a chance your parent could get lost in space and presumed dead, sending your life into a downward spiral of despair. Or, worse yet, your parent could return really horny and with a space shuttle full of violent aliens open to "new sexual experiences." *Why?* This is why, so let me tell you straight off: *Om Lounge 3* — give the CD to kids from ages 8 to 80. The third installment of groovy tunes from the harbinger of the "stereophonic parlour of global rhythms and high performance atmospheres." Yes, it's fresh, but even though I continually bump J Boogie's Dubtronic Science's *La Sangre* back to back in order to make myself feel better, I still feel that UCSB, for all intents and purposes, exists solely to make me suffer. I just don't think that I'm getting the full experience crying myself to sleep every other night, cradling my stuffed Charmander, alternately begging God to have mercy on my sanity and promising the devil my soul if the tall, luscious, exotic, lingerie model in my Native American literature class would just agree to see "Scream 3" with me.

That's why I've decided on a new reason for living that's in accordance to one of those liberal universal truths. Nothing

is more fun than digging up dirt on friends. And I do not mean to insinuate that I am honestly interested in that kind of thing, often I just want to know what makes my pals tick. Of course, I'm dreading the day that I find someone with all the answers. Then I'll be forced to ask myself, "Do I really want to know?" What's more it may be, "Do I really want to know about myself? Can I handle the truth?" Whether or not I can, I don't know, but I do know that what I can handle is the "dopeness" present in *Summer Night Sessions*, compiled and mixed by Michael Dog. Sexyrubbersole, Future Loop Foundation and Banco de Gaia show up continuing to march down the

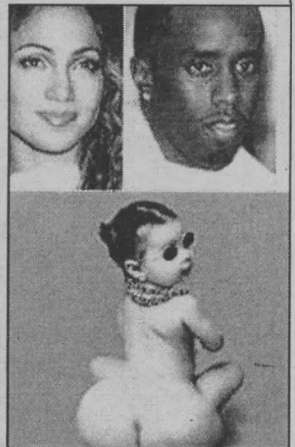
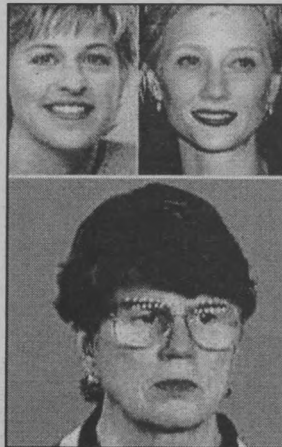
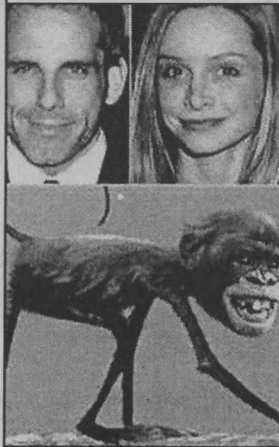
“UCSB, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, EXISTS TO MAKE ME SUFFER”

path demonstrated by Electra on "Solar Reaction."

It was not too long ago when I realized there's nothing like making a midnight run to the local liquor joint. You know, when the night is young, when that 87-year-old chick begins to look better and better as the good times continue. That is when I can truly, honestly, say that I am on my way to numbing the pain. At last, no more angst and inner turmoil.

Robotsex, a dog named Matilda and assorted underwater hijinks.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF CELEBRITIES STARTED TAPPIN' DAT ASS? HERE'S SOME GUESSES AS TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.



Images courtesy of "Late Night With Conan O'Brien," <http://www.nbc.com/NBCconan/index.asp?section=mated>

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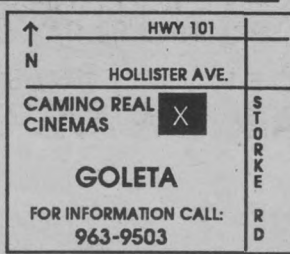
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GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

LOCAL TALENT SHOWCASED IN DRAMATIC WOMEN'S LASTEST PRODUCTION

PICKING UP THE SLACK | ADAM ABRAMS

Since 1994, UCSB organization Dramatic Women has been presenting plays in the Santa Barbara area. The group specializes in original works by local writers, some written expressly for Dramatic Women. Although the group consists of a diverse body of both sexes, the name reflects Dramatic Women's original focus — encouraging the participation of women in all areas of theater production.

"Santa Barbara Confidential," the new production by Dramatic Women, opens Friday. The show consists of nine short plays by Santa Barbara writers, and the only common bond is the Santa Barbara setting. In addition to a number of cast and crew, six of the production's nine directors are UCSB students. One of the six is Donna Stone, who also acts as production coordinator.

Artsweek: What's Dramatic Women all about? What's its purpose?

Donna Stone: To encourage and support female involvement in all theater and artistic endeavors. I've been a recipient of that support and encouragement. For

instance, I'm learning how a theater company operates, which is really helpful because one of my goals is to run my own theater company. Theatre is collaborative. Dramatic Women truly celebrates collaboration. They don't exclude men — we have a lot of men involved in the production — but the focus is on creating opportunities for female artists.

How did "Santa Barbara Confidential" come about?

["Santa Barbara Confidential" producer] Bob Porter put out a call for local playwrights to come out with plays with a Santa Barbara theme. Whether that be people, place, time, they're all dependent on the Santa Barbara location.

And what about your play, "Bedtime in Montecito?"

Ellen K. Anderson, a fabulous playwright who teaches playwriting at UCSB, has had her plays produced many times before — this is not her first production. For me, it's a great opportunity to work

"DRAMATIC WOMEN TRULY CELEBRATES COLLABORATION. THEY DON'T EXCLUDE MEN, BUT THE FOCUS IS ON CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE ARTISTS"

“

with a great playwright and a great script. I don't want to give too much away, but it's a poignant look at the idiosyncrasies we all indulge in, and about intimacy.

What's it like working with so many different people with different creative voices? Any ego battles?

The production has actually been a lot smoother than people anticipated. When you have nine essen-

tial creative entities collaborating, that could potentially be a nightmare. Dramatic Women really encourages cooperation.

Why should people care about the show? Why should they show up?

Well, first, it's nine shows and one low-ticket price. All original shows. Dramatic Women, by keeping their ticket prices low, is making community theater accessible to the community, to the whole community. And also to support and encourage artistic endeavors in Santa Barbara.

Why is going to "Santa Barbara Confidential" better than going to DP on Saturday night?

A. It's entertaining. B. You'll remember it the next day. C. You might even find yourself profoundly moved. And D. You won't have that nasty hang-over.

What didn't I ask that I should have?

When will the next Dramatic Women production be?

When will it be?

Soon. Watch for it.

"Santa Barbara Confidential" opens Feb. 18. It runs Feb. 19, and Thursday, Feb. 24 through Saturday, Feb. 26. Center Stage Theater (located in Paseo Nuevo), 8 p.m. For ticket information, call 963-0408 or visit <www.centerstagetheater.org>.



YES, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO DO IN SANTA BARBARA

today thursday



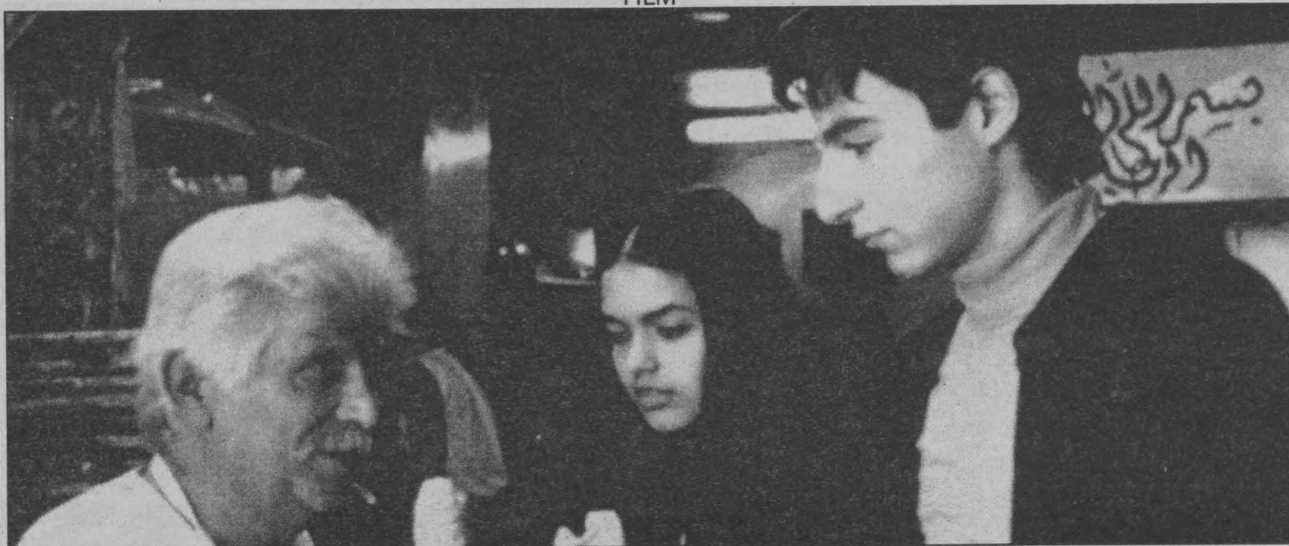
Has the rain and gloom begun to get you down yet? Artsweek prescribes a stroll in the rain over to Campbell Hall tonight at 7:30 where you can see, for a meager \$5, the Lebanese film "West Beirut." In this clever and engaging film, a Lebanese teenager comes of age in the mid-1970s, where he must cope with the civil war that ravages his homeland. It should lift your spirits and make you grateful all you have to deal with is a bit of rain. Perhaps after a cup of hot cocoa at Java Jones will cheer you up, no?

today thursday



Apollo Four Forty — you've probably never heard of them. Q's — you've probably forgotten about it (now spending your Thursday nights waiting in line at Madison's so you can dance on their bar in your new Bebe tube top. Well, you can still wear Bebe to Q's, and tonight there's an album release party with tons of free prizes, deejays spinning house music and drink specials. True, you can't dance on the bar, but do you really like showing off your "li'l bit" that much anyway? 409 State St., 10 p.m. 966-9177

FILM



WAR AND PEACE

AND MUSIC FROM THE POLICE IN WEST BEIRUT

SMOKING CIGARETTES | DOLLFACE

Watching a film about Lebanon in the '70s can be a trying experience, emotionally exhaustive and overwhelmingly intense. Scenes of bloody, brutal political struggle and religious ferocity are not exactly ideal issues for a leisurely Sunday afternoon matinee. Debut filmmaker Ziad Doueiri brings us a happier picture, complete with cigarettes and rock 'n' roll, in the coming-of-age tale "West Beirut." This emotionally poignant and comedic memoir is anything but a chore, perhaps even touching upon your own personal adolescent memories, in a world far from Beirut.

The city is divided into two violently warring factions, with the Christians in the forbidden East Beirut and the Muslims in the West. Fire bombs, called Molotov cocktails, fill the streets as villagers desperately fight for bread and safety from soldiers. But underneath the façade of war and destitution, many Lebanese revel in simple joys, burgeoning modernization and, of course, rock 'n' roll.

Tracing the experiences of Tarek Noueiri, played by the filmmaker's younger brother Rami Doueiri, "West Beirut" offers a glimpse into both the tragedy and hidden enjoyment of life during the first stages of war in Beirut in 1975. Tarek is overjoyed at the fact that school is

closed due to bombings and takes every opportunity to goof off and make Super-8 films with his best friend Omar (Mohammad Chamas). Seemingly unscathed by the brutal killings constantly surrounding them, the boys adventure around the city on bikes, smoking cigarettes, joining in political marches, and filming large-breasted women. They befriend May, played by the intriguingly beautiful Rola Al Amin, though she is a Christian. Together, the three youths frolic throughout the city, having fun and falling in love.

“SMOKING CIGARETTES, JOINING POLITICAL MARCHES + FILMING LARGE-BREASTED WOMEN”

Tarek's parents, Hala and Riad, also play prominent roles in the film, adding to the spirit of triumph and hope in an otherwise bleak situation. Though Hala (Carmen Lebbos) wants to leave Beirut and escape to safety, Riad (Joseph Bou Nassar) refuses to let her "sell out" to the Christians. Both incredibly loving and caring, they are also incredibly complex characters, unable to keep their

hands off each other between arguments.

Vivid colors and picturesque shots of historic architecture fill each scene, creating a vision of Beirut that rivals most preconceptions of destitution and despair. Before "West Beirut," Doueiri worked on nearly every Tarantino flick as cameraman and now enters the directing arena. His experience is obvious, for this is no work of an amateur.

Did I forget to mention the hip soundtrack? The score for the film was done by Stewart Copeland, former drummer of the Police. Incorporating music from all over the world, as well as some mod rock songs and artsy '70s pop. The skillful layering of musical textures over such lucid imagery and emotionally intense scenes only adds to the overall beauty of the film.

Though based largely on Doueiri's personal experiences growing up in the amid religious war and separatism in 1975 Beirut, the story is a universal one of adolescent optimism and struggle. As they say, I laughed, I cried, I danced and I loved it. Or as others say, "Mess with the bull, you'll get the horns." Just go see it.

"West Beirut" plays tonight at Campbell Hall, 7:30 p.m. \$5 students.

DROPPING SOAP

MAN OF LA MANCHA IS ABOUT LOVE IN PRISON

OLE! | LINDSAY FARMER

Santa Barbara Civic Light Opera strikes again with "Man of La Mancha." Miguel de Cervantes (George McDaniel) becomes imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition for foreclosing on a monastery. But before the questioning by the inquisitors, Cervantes must prove his worth to the other prisoners. As his defense to the jury of his "peers," Cervantes draws his listeners into the classical tale of Don Quixote, an 'adman' who chooses to bring his remising of the days of knighthood and chivalry to life with the help of the other prisoners, a few stage props and a score of outstanding songs.

"Man of La Mancha" gathers a group of extremely talented actors and gives them songs and a message to entice anyone to the theater. The uplifting story draws adults, but some of the scenes, especially those with Aldonza (Valerie Perri) and the men at the inn, may be too sexually explicit for children. But for the adults in the audience, come ready to see fabulous acting and powerfully sung songs, along with some comical scenes with Don Quixote. Ideals such as seeing who a person truly is instead of judging them by their actions and dress come through strong in the actions of Don Quixote. His audience, both those in the prison and those in the house, learn the benefits of idealism and learn to dream the impossible dream even in the face of certain danger and,

for the prisoners, certain torture and possible death.

The key to the production is the songs. A strong variety of songs captures the essence of the play, from the love ballad "Dulcinea," to the capturing "Man of La Mancha," to the powerful and well-known "The Impossible Dream." The rich voice of Cervantes/Don Quixote brings the story to life amidst the tortured set of the prison, which provides the stage and background to the story within the story. The set itself is a marvel, with beds and tables pulled from the floor and wells and firepits that people seem to continually appear from. But the most impressive is the only way in and out of the prison: the stairway reaching to the top of the stage that slowly descends to the floor to bring the inquisitors to the prisoners. The simplistic appearance lets the audience imagine what is happening, both with Cervantes and with Don Quixote. In this way, the true talent of the show, the actors, shines through the smoke and tattered clothes to every eye in the audience, leaving a powerful mark.

"Man of La Mancha" runs Feb. 2 - 27. Weds - Sat at 8 p.m., Sat at 2, Sun at 2 and 7 p.m. Granada Theater, 1216 State St. \$10-\$39.50 general. Call (805) 966-2324 for tickets and information.



BUT THEY MAY NOT BE ANY FUN.

weekend saturday



For all of you folks out there under the ripe age of 21 with a car, drive down to Los Angeles for a live show. The eclectic band Flogging Molly celebrates the release of their 7" single at Fais Do-Do with special guests The Scotch Greens and Furious IV. If you've been kicking it all day at, say, the B-Boy Summit (also in L.A. this weekend), this probably won't be up your alley. But if you're ready for some crazy music, you should make the trip. 5257 West Adams Blvd., 7:30. For information, call (323) 954-8080.

next week tuesday



For the 14th Annual Abrams Lecture on Women and the Visual Arts, photographer and installation artist Lorna Simpson will be speaking at Isla Vista Theater. Ms. Simpson approaches photography in many ways (documentary, experiment, social and political commentary), and her work has been exhibited all around the world. In 1990, at the age of 30, she was the first African-American woman to have a solo exhibit in the "Projects" series of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. 5 p.m., free.

* beats, rhymes and life

* music reviews

SOUND- SOUNDSTYLE*

DJ Me DJ You | Rainbows and Robots |
Emperor Norton

Are you ready for a funkified journey through outer space, vintage Italian films and Saturday morning cartoons? DJ Me DJ You is ready to take that plunge and does it with skill and extreme wackiness on the aptly-titled *Rainbow and Robots*. It's a poptronic explosion of eclectic samples, catchy loops, and infectious breaks. With a vast collection of endearingly cheesy LPs available at every turn, *Rainbows and Robots* is a virtual cornucopia of upbeat insanity layered over space-fantastic reverie. Think "The Jetsons" meets "The Mod Squad."

Each track boasts originality and travels through soundscapes of past, present and future. The album starts off on a blaring high note in "Set the Control," with quirky listening instructions sampled over guitar riffs, big beat percussion and alien melodies. This sets the stage for trip hop-esque "Video City Boy," and whimsically catchy title track, "Rainbow and Robots." I can almost see the androids wildly dancing to a Fellini cinematic soundtrack, while driving a red Porsche, of course.

Ross Harris and Craig Borrell joined forces in L.A. to create DJ Me DJ You as a side project to Sukia. With similar interests in film, art and wacky music, the boys have collaborated on several projects, including production for Takako Minekawa and Titan, and remixes for Beth Orton, Beck and Fantastic Plastic machine. And now here they are in the wonderfully acid-like psychedelic funk from the future; the folks at Emperor Norton put it best in describing "a fluorescent-lit, 24-hour delhi rare groove with subterranean sitars, stinky skanky cinematic flourishes and eclectic breakbeats."

How's that for a rare treat?! [DollFace was not
Vicky on "Small Wonder," contrary to popular belief]

The Cure | Bloodflowers | Elektra

Was it the lipstick? The hair? The white sneakers? The sniveling voice of a grown man? The distinct sound of music? Whatever it was, it initiated an ongoing love affair I have with the British band known as The Cure. Beneath the "Goth" label and the morose undertones lies the dazzling song writing and tragic spectacle that is Robert Smith.

After over a dozen albums, The Cure has finally released the long overdue *Bloodflowers*. This album is the final installment in what should be called The Cure Love Trilogy. The first installment, *Pornography*, is the dating stage of a relationship. *Disintegration*, the second installment, is the mature stage of a relationship. Finally, *Bloodflowers* is the breakup, the goodbye, the end. Very much like the other two albums, *Bloodflowers* is heart-shattering and well written. The exceptional thing about this album is that it is their last one. I know, I know, as glum as it sounds, Robert is letting his fans know that he has aged and the travesty

that has been going on for over 20 years must end.

My mouth dropped in disbelief when I first heard this album. It is good. It's damn good. In "Out of This World," Robert laments, "And we always have to go, I realize we always have to say goodbye/ Always have to go back to real lives." Now, if that doesn't sound like "I've aged, I'm 40 years old for fuck's sake, I have to stop putting on makeup and I have to cut my hair," I don't know what does. The album has brilliant music arrangements, but the repetition of the lyrics is a bit annoying. The Polish judge gives The Cure a "10" for the songs and a "4" for the poorly executed Adobe Photoshop cover and inlay. [Kasia Biernacki is not biased, however she has been listening to The Cure ever since she was in diapers]



Various Artists | Brassic Beats USA | Skint

Remember a year or two ago when all the major music magazines heralded the arrival of a sound they dubbed "big beat?" For those in need of a crash course in electronica, big beat is the sound of artists like Fatboy Slim. If you still don't know who Fatboy Slim is, you're lucky — you obvi-

ously missed the overplayed hit "Rockafella Skank." Fortunately, that track is missing from this album, which is a compilation of the catalogue of artists represented by Skint Records.

Skint Records' only guideline is, in fact, to not release tracks with a 4/4 kick drum. Judging from the happy, simplistic music on *Brassic Beats USA*, however, guidelines toward relevance, sophistication or production are scarce. There's the awful Fatboy Slim track, "Sho Nuff," the elementary beats of Indian Ropeman's "66 Meters," and Lo-Fidelity Allstars' trite "Puppy Phat Number One." Lest I remind you all that the Lo-Fidelity Allstars consists of at least four members? What do the other three do? Making electronica is easy, and making big beat is even easier. Even the more fun, disco tracks by Super Collider and Space Raiders aren't enough to save this terrible testament to the simplicity of creating house or techno music. This album begs to be played for a bunch of 15-year-olds wearing big pants and taking illegal pharmaceutically derived pills. But then again, what is it you nouveau-ravers want anyway besides a speaker big, loud and booming enough to put your head into? This should provide enough big redundant beats for at least 70 minutes of the trip. [Jenne Raub knows what "brassic" is slang for]

Crooked Fingers | Crooked Fingers | Warm

Inside the insert that comes with this CD is a washed out, sepia-toned photograph of a hand; cigarette between the first two fingers, the rest curled underneath, smoke wafting across the page. These are the sort of "crooked fingers" the band name refers to. Holding a pint glass, clutching at something steady for balance,

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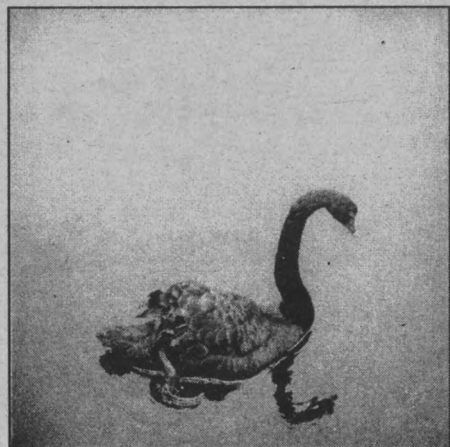
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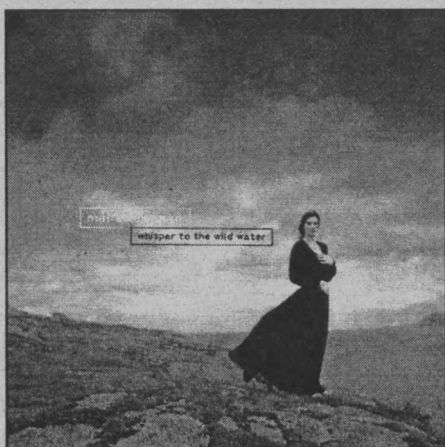
SOUND- SOUNDSTYLE*

or massaging one's aching head would probably have also worked. The man behind this band is Eric Bachman, better known as one of the men behind the Archers of Loaf. The Archers broke up last year after having gone as far as they possibly could with their unusually (for an indie-rock band) distinctive brand of messily quirky guitar-pop. What the Archers had in their favor — Bachman's raspy voice and sophisticated sense of melody — also works for Crooked Fingers, even though the two bands sound absolutely nothing alike.



Having honed his arranging skills with his mostly instrumental side project Barry Black, Bachman's made a pretty beautiful album (is that redundant?), full of strings, chimes, lap steel and sentimental melodies, that bears more of a resemblance to the Pogues than Sonic Youth. His vocals are raspier than ever, and occasionally I got the impression that he's been listening to too much Tom Waits. Luckily, though, he almost entirely avoids the falsetto that made a large chunk of the last Archers album nearly unlistenable (almost). These songs are for the end of the night, mostly, when everyone else has

already gone to bed, and the place is a mess; drinking songs for after you've already drunk too much. I doubt that anybody listening to this album will be this down-and-out, but luckily it's got more going for it musically than just romanticizing about being a loser (like they haven't been romanticized enough). [Josh Miller writes yet another positive review]



Marie Brennan | *Whisper to the Wild Water* | Word

Hi, I'm Enya. I'm a famous recording artist who has sold millions of records.

Hi, I'm not.

With her album *Whisper to the Wild Water*, Marie Brennan tries her best to mooch off Enya's popularity and success by emulating her sound. OK, I know. Plenty of groups have become successful by copying other groups' sounds. A prime example can be seen in the case of Another Bad Creation and Kriss Kross, two stellar youth rap bands of the '90s.

Aside from her unoriginal sound, there are many features of this album that I found to be quite irritating. 1.) Brennan appears to be in an Irish Spring commercial on her album cover. 2.) In every photograph, she is touching her breast, like

she is being moved by the power of Irish Spring. 3.) The beginning of track 6 features an annoying child with a lisp speaking gibberish. Need I go on?

I have to be honest. To me, Brennan is as talented as Enya. But that's not saying much. The problem is, the music industry is barely big enough for one Enya. I'm afraid Ms. Brennan will be left to drown in the wild water that she whispers about.

Brennan is like the Select brand of cola available at many grocery stores. Sure, it's cheaper and it tastes the same as the name brands, but there's just something about it that is not quite right. [Jerry Beers is touching his breast in every photo]

Glucifer | *Get the Horn EP* | Sub Pop

Hailing from Oslo, Glucifer is a band taking rock music back to where it left off before "Smells Like Teen Spirit." What a damn fine job they're doing.

Recently signed by Sub Pop, Glucifer is currently undergoing its invasion of the states with its six-song EP. Although the songs are old recordings from past albums, this is a breath of fresh air in America, where these self-proclaimed "kings of rock" have recently been touring with Motorhead on the "Nashville Pussy Tour." And what an appropriate title for this band to be traveling under. From the first track, it screams '80s rock, but something about the upbeat and complex guitar riffs and pseudo-punk singing makes it so much more. In fact, it contains the anger rock 'n' roll used to so persistently promote.

If this EP is a statement from the band directly to the citizens of the U.S., then it has proved its point. It's fast-paced and abrasive, exactly what we need to start expecting from a rock 'n' roll band. Until

then, however, we can indulge in the music that was so suddenly halted by a little thing called grunge. [Collin Mitchell]



Various Artists | *Fire & Skill: The Songs of The Jam* | Epic

Fire & Skill is a number of covers of classic Jam songs covered by present-day bands. The most notable of these covers is its second smash hit, "Start!" Done by the mighty Beastie Boys, we have another classic instrumental reminiscent of their own rather funky "Son of Neckbone." Though the Beasties take away most of the vocals, they make up for it with an organ that is quite funky, and if that wasn't enough, we're given some cute vocals by Miho Hatori of Cibo Matto fame (Does this combo sound familiar to anyone? Hint: "Metaphysical"). Other worthwhile songs are those where Reef, Garbage and Ben Harper (respectively) see how they can intertwine their styles with that of The Jam.

If you enjoy the sounds of this old British invasion band and want to hear it in a way it never intended, then you should pick up this disk. [Seth "don't feed the" Siegel]

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