some like it hot...

artsweek

15 minutes of fame ...

burning one second at a time

the mercury is on the rise ...

but artsweek keeps the temperature balmy

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First, a word of warning to all of those who refuse to own a stereo the Macintosh CD audio player will not play this album. If you don’t remedy the situation you’ll be missing out on the best thing to happen to dark, debauched rock since Nick Cave let his triscopic prescription lapse.

I’m reviewing this album from memory but that’s easy to do – it hasn’t left my CD player all week. Please Forever came highly recommended: formerly called Slaves, the group’s seedy mix of no-wave and new-wave nurtured me through senior year in high school. Slaves slacked off on the aggression and their songs were murky and bland. Pleasure Forever cleans up, pares down and vastly improves on Slaves’ sound. Keyboardist/bassist/lead singer Andy Rothbard, now behind a piano, mutated his coked-out means into ’60s garage-style screaming. Drummer David Clifford plays with both the volume and the rhythm — conveying plodding, menace and anger via a trap set. Guitarist Joshua Hughes plays lead to Rothbard’s rhythmic keying. The mix is at its best, subtly gorgeous and deceptively mean.

Please Forever is not always at its best. I get the feeling the band is still struggling to go from its sound and a couple of the songs drag, or else work the eros/thanatos theme to a comic extreme. Still, cum like “Meet Me in Eternity” and “You and I Were Meant to Drown” are both stylistically inventive and beautifully crafted — part cabaret and part Rolling Stones. The album’s one glorious moment occurs during the coda of “Curtain Call for a Whispering Ghost” where Rothbard’s voice peaks and distorts. The music reaches a frenzy and I wish I could have another senior year for Pleasure Forever to nurture me through. [DJ Farkid will settle for a second senior year in college]

Travis | The Invisible Band | Epic/Independent

With just a touch of banjo, British band Travis has released its third album hot on the heels of Radiohead’s Amnesiac. But while Fleet Heat’s vocals, at times, could pass for Radiohead – minus the science fiction and, perhaps, the ego – Travis is unashamedly modest about its sentimentality, boy-next-door ballads. This album shows little departure from last year’s The Man Who and remains steadfast in its commitment to British Trad Rock style, with obvious influences from Oasis, Jeff Buckley and The Smiths.

At the heart of it, these are four Scottish lads who love to strip out folly, sincere melodies and remain unapologetic about their feel-good sound.

The first single, “Sing,” is bouncier than any of the tunes on Travis’ previous album. The lyrics are less sophisticated and, more accessible to a pop audience. The release of “Sing,” which coincides with the start of a U.S. tour and a one-hour VH1 special, demonstrates Travis’ desire to crack the American market. While The Man Who went platinum six times in the UK, its 2000 release on this side of the Atlantic was met with a lukewarm response.

Healy is less concerned in this album with why the rain falls, but remains true to his old stuff is better.”

Fans might be drawn in by the first track, “Dumb Love.” Teaming with crunchy distortion effects, the edgiest song on the album is reminiscent of that core single “Sex Type Thing.” A word of caution: Although STP continue to mine their past – several other tracks repackagae factory-direct Southern California alt-rock – exponential decay is taking its toll.

Sound like a Lenny Kravitz ballad, “Wonderful” is sung in hushed tones with clean, echoing guitar. Weiland’s Perry Farrell impersonation in “Regeneration” fits in nicely with a stolen Jane’s Addiction arrangement.

On the whole, lyrics are pervasively without substance and tend towards the repetitive “I’m okay, you’re okay” message. Instrumentation features plastic studio cohesiveness, but does accomplish admirable versatility in a rotating instrument work schedule.

Written primarily by Weiland and the Brothers DeLeo, the liner notes report they were inspired by a stolen Jane’s Addiction arrangement. Written primarily by Weiland and the brothers DeLeo, the liner note thank-yous go out to wives and children. The dark clouds hovering over previous albums seem to be clearing for the band, the result of which could only be a fall off this wagon of cute, and a return to those heavy slumps are discouragingly common. Not only have they been adopted by the Werped Tour crew, but they’ve signed to Epitaph. In spite of that label’s staid, conservative attempt to diversify, the stigma of a formulate ska-punk heyday remains. And so it was that this pessimist was pleasantly surprised to find that Flight is excellent, perhaps not better than Fuel, but different enough to make such comparisons irrelevant.

A Flight and a Crash is a much harder recording: faster and less melodic. The archetypal thick Epitaph mastering style is there, but for a band as musically complex as Hot Water Music, the aesthetic is complementary. The vocals are much better than before, but I could do without the gang vocals that back some tracks. I should find a new trainer, perhaps, but trainers have a propensity for proving false. [DJ Farkid wants to write a review with gang vocals]

The release of “Sing,” which coinddes with why the rain falls, but remains true to their past – several other tracks repackage the Hate Game

Pleasure Forever | Please Forever | Sub Pop

July 14th The Santa Barbara Museum of Art will hold “Every Picture Tells a Story,” a look at American Illustration. The Main Gallery and Thayer Project Gallery at UCSB feature “Looking Tradition: The Revitalization of Bogolan in Mali and Abroad,” a historiographical look at that artform. For photography enthusiasts, the Moir Gallery dives into its own archives to showcase an eclectic selection of works titled “The Viewfrom Here,” both open July 12th

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Holy Crapppie! They just pulled a "Matrix" move! A full five minutes into "Swordfish" and the movie blows its wad with a 360 degree slow motion pan of an explosion in the middle of a city street. From there, an onslaught of poorly written Hollywood crap attempts to separate itself from poorly written Hollywood crap by introducing the film with a monologue denouncing poorly written Hollywood crap — using "Dog Day Afternoon" as an example.

Borrowing directly from the few other hacker plots in existence, Stanley Jobson (Hugh Jackman), an ex-con and one of the world's most brilliant computer minds, is recruited to crack into a secret Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) slush fund by black ops specialist Gabriel Shear (John Travolta). Gabriel needs the $9 billion to fund an illegal, yet government sanctioned, war against terrorism. Stanley needs the $10 million commission for hacking into the account to save his innocent child, currently in the clutches of his pill-popping, alcoholic, porn-queen ex-wife. If this string of adjectives sounds a bit cartoonish, there's a reason.

At Gabriel's side is the femme fatale Ginger (Halle Berry) who serves as eye candy and the bouncing off point for a "Gilligan's Island" joke. Other than the fact two tickets expensive at half the price _ p a trick  w righ t that Berry goes topless in the film — and though by mentioning that fact I play into the whole bru-ha-ha marketing scheme nature of the beast — her presence onscreen is entirely unnecessary. Director Dominic Sena might just as well have edited the character entirely out of the film, save for the tit shot — the tactless display having no other reason than to sell tickets.

Like "A Few Good Men," "Swordfish" enters into a philosophical discussion about the means by which the American government will protect the freedom it provides for its citizens. Gabriel sees his anti-terrorism campaign as a noble pursuit: human loss being an acceptable opportunity cost. Some innocents must die, whether it be Gabriel himself, Jobson's daughter or any other bystander. We get about four minutes of dialogue examining this theme and then the subject is dropped.

There is nothing in the way of the Triscuit-stale acting that could even deign to save the story (penned by "Thursday" screenwriter Skip Woods.) Each scene progresses as it must, with the characters all too willing to say that particular thing that is going to drive the next two or three scenes. At all the wrong moments, the film drops the predictability bomb. Sexual tension goes limp. Plot devices are left hanging. Characters are not what they seem, but they tell you that outright, leaving no real mysteries to solve. Intersections with characters are inconsequential and attempts at midadventure leave you scratching your head rather than marveling at the clever use of suspense. It is downright confusing to the point of the mundane. But then, there is nothing of real interest going on to begin with.

With cliché dialogue and holes in the plot you could fly a bus through, I cannot even venture to guess why millions of dollars were wasted on this B-movie script. If it had been a little more tongue-in-cheek about the action genre, taken itself far less seriously and added a hint of self-deprecation, this may have been a watchable, if not good, film. As it stands, "Swordfish" has the grace of a fish out of water that is beginning to smell.
CARMEN
From Spain
Tuesday, June 26
"The story of an obsession—of a devouring passion."
Filmmaker Carlos Saura’s Flamenco version of George Bizet’s popular opera resets the story in a contemporary rehearsal hall and melds romance with fiery dance.

WHEN THE CAT’S AWAY
From France
Sunday, July 15
"Wonderfully funny, touching and unforgettable" - Salt Lake Journal
Vivid hypnosis and abtumt风味 of place suffuse this lovely film in which a young woman searching a Paris neighborhood for her lost cat finds romance in her own back yard.

POWAQATSII
Thursday, June 28
"A mind-expanding experience" - L.A. Weekly
POWAQATSII (Life in Transformation) weaves together richly peopled landscapes from India, Egypt, Kenya, Nepal and Brazil with Philip Glass mesmerizing score.

POWAQATSII
Thursday, July 19
"Neo-bête-noire comedy, part nightmare and part fairy tale" - Los Angeles Times
Jim Jarmusch directs John Lurie, Tom Waits and a very funny Roberto Benigni in a prison breakout film as poignant and strange as a Louisiana bayou myth.

WEST SIDE STORY
40th Anniversary Screening
Sunday, July 1
“A cinema masterpiece” - The New York Times
Using the great Bernstein score, Sondheim lyrics and Robbins choreography, director Robert Wise turns the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet into one of the most musical films ever made.

CINEMA PARADISO
From Italy
Thursday, July 26
"Movie lovers will lose their hearts" - The New Yorker
Movie projectionist Alfredo (Philippe Noiret) befriends a young filmgoer and together they explore the life-changing magic of cinema in a quaint village rattling toward modernity.

WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN
From Spain
Friday, July 5
"One of the jauntiest of all war-of-the-sexes comedies" - The New Yorker
Director Pedro Almodóvar chronicles the madcap disintegration of an actress in pursuit of the lover who jilted her. With Antonio Banderas and Carmen Maura.

THE DINNER GAME
From France
Sunday, July 8
"An enjoyable forehead smacker of a French farce" - Entertainment Weekly
A "game" in which Parisian sophisticates invite unsuspecting "jerks" to dinner for cruel amusement backfires when a pretentious editor meets an eccentric tax man. Hilarious.

THE APU TRILOGY
From India
Sunday, July 29
1 pm Pather Panchali
4:15 pm Aparajito
7:30 pm The World of Apu
One of the supreme masters of humanist cinema, Satyajit Ray traces the life of Apu from birth to early manhood. Brilliantly scored by Ravi Shankar.

SOME LIKE IT HOT
Thursday, July 12
"One of the enduring treasures of the movies" - The Chicago Sun Times
In Billy Wilder’s inimitable comedy Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon witness the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre and hide out in drag, sharing beds with Marilyn Monroe and her all-girl band.

HORSE THIEF
From China
Thursday, August 2
"The best film of the decade" - Martin Scorsese
Visually stunning and spiritually resonant, Horse Thief tells of a Tibetan man found to steal to survive. His evocative portrayal of the ceremonies of a culturally unscarred people inspired Scorsese’s Kundun.

All films screen at 7:30 pm in UCSB Campbell Hall (except as noted)

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