

okay computer ...

artswEEK



“ ... it's six
pounds of
breast! ”

bursting with more than **31 new flavors**, p.4A

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ALL THAT GLITTERS MOULIN ROUGE AN EXTRAVAGANT CABARET

hard to impress_ **andy sywak**

Watching "Moulin Rouge" is similar to attending one of those enormously ostentatious dot-com kickoff parties that have only lately become unfashionable. A massive affair that asserts itself through overconfidence, luxury and lots of panache, it is still not able to overcome the emptiness of its idea with production strength. Though it may be dazzling and entertaining, the night still ends, the dot-com folds and you wonder what a colossal waste of time and money it all was.

Such immense fanfare is what Australian director Baz Luhrmann has created with this period piece about the supremacy of art and love in turn-of-the-century Paris. Luhrmann, who directed the overwhelming "Romeo and Juliet," is back with a picture that is just as glamorous, materialistic and in your face as his showy Shakespeare adaptation. While the trailers have deluded people into thinking of "Moulin Rouge" as a historical drama, the film is actually 100 percent a musical with only token overtures given to developing a unique plot.

Like "Romeo and Juliet," "Moulin Rouge" is wonderfully entertaining and imaginative. The film often exhibits a contagious bohemian energy with its lively numbers and lavish set designs. Yet despite Nicole Kidman's coquettish charm and Luhrmann's creative shots, there is something undeniably hollow and annoyingly garish about the film. A good 10-20 percent of the audience walked out during the show. This is testament to the fact that, try as Luhrmann may, there is still no

way to hide the inherent emptiness in the film.

Ewan McGregor plays Christian, a preening, heart-on-the-sleeve writer who arrives in Paris to be a part of "truth, beauty, freedom but above all ... love." Falling in with a group of thespians, he gets into the raucous club du jour Moulin Rouge (like Q's with a bigger dance floor) where he meets the lovely singer and courtesan Satine (Nicole Kidman). Intertwining with a case of mis-

“**LUHRMAN HAS AN UNMITIGATED TASTE FOR DECADENCE AND ALL THINGS THAT REEK OF SPECTACLE**”

taken identity, Christian falls hopelessly in love with her despite the fact that repressed English Duke of Worcester (a great Richard Roxburgh) has also developed an infatuation with her. Christian and his gang now must put on a show to save Moulin Rouge and win the heart of Satine.

As a musical, "Moulin Rouge" is quite successful. Despite some painfully cheesy numbers, there is some-

thing invigorating and entirely winning about all the constant dancing, singing and exuberance going on. Luhrmann found some superb dancers and choreographers for his film and his glitzy camera work allows them to shine. Not aiming too closely for historical accuracy, Luhrmann has his Parisian dancers carouse through "Smells Like Teen Spirit," "Roxanne" and most amusingly, "Like A Virgin" in bombastic style.

Luhrmann has an unmitigated taste for decadence and all things that reek of spectacle. There is not one shot or scene in "Moulin Rouge" which is not well thought out aesthetically. Production Designer Catherine Martin fully brings out the hedonistic abandon and sensuality of Paris nightlife in her opulent sets and costumes. These ornate touches make watching "Moulin Rouge" somewhat overwhelming at times, but it is this decadence which constitutes a main strength of the film.

The main standout in the film is Kidman. In every scene her makeup and costume render her a work of art in itself, allowing her drool-inducing beauty to flow into her role as the great seductress. With its incredible production value and constant entertainment, "Moulin Rouge" will either make you want to throw up or go out on the town. Glitzy and hopelessly ostentatious he may be, but Luhrmann still has a great ability to wow an audience to its feet, no matter what the parameters of the plot.

← thingstodo >> calendar

today | **thursday**

The University Art Museum rolls out the red carpet for the Undergraduate Art Exhibition — "Fresh New Flavors." Take in some culture and come support your fellow classmates for their first show in the new museum. At noon on Friday, June 8, student artist Michael Dawson will be conducting an artist walk through tour of the exhibit. The show will run until June 17. Check it out. (Ok, we know this is not Friday, but we had to make room for the movies!)

tomorrow | **friday**

Many people might not know this, but *Artsweek* grew up in the Ozarks. Back then, we beat the heat by taking a dip in the old fishing hole, wrastlin' and cursin' 'bout tadpoles. These days we seek refuge from the blaring heat by joining other city mice in the cools of the movie-house. The premieres of Disney's "Atlantis," "Tomb Raider" and "Evolution" hit the big screen. We kind of miss those tadpoles, but we'd rather play with Angelina Jolie.

weekend | **saturday**

Djoon djoon. While the words may cause a giggle, the real thing makes a boom. The Boxtales Theatre Company present *Jambo Watoto: Tales and Rhythms of Africa*. It features the traditional African djoon djoon drum, music is just one element of the show that combines the sounds, dance and art from many countries on the continent. A collection of stories provides a backbone for the production. At the Lobero, 7pm. Tickets: \$13 for Adults, \$9 for Children.

theater | review



UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY

AMUSIA PLAYS IT BY EAR

two tickets to paradise_lindsay farmer

Hell takes many forms. Although one might imagine a Dante-like inferno — trapped for eternity in a burning wasteland — for a musician, unbearable torment can take a more earthly pretense. Imagine losing the ability to write down music, even though you can hear the music in your head. This specific loss of ability is known to the medical world as “amusia” and is the center focus of Theatre UCSB’s latest production, “Amusia”.

“Amusia” is a fantasy interpretation of the tragic life of Maurice Ravel (Lucas Near-Verbrugge), the celebrated French composer best known for his work “Bolero.” Within a few years of completing “Bolero,” Ravel was the victim of a taxi accident that damaged his brain in just the right places to trap his musical creativity inside, causing severe difficulty recognizing musical notes or playing unfamiliar musical pieces. He was able to play the first few measures of his own work, but only with prompting. For the composer, the loss of musical ability destroyed the man long before his body gave out in 1937.

UCSB Professor Robert Potter researched the life of Maurice Ravel and brought the fascinating story to the

stage in a fantasy-like way. The characters remain the same throughout the duration of the play, even though it spans over 50 years.

The play opens with Ravel searching for himself in the hospital and seeing what is left of his body on the operating table. In an effort to discover how he got there, Ravel explores turning points in his life. Accompanying him is his muse, simply known as She (Chelsea Cutler). From their first meeting to the time she is taken away in the taxi accident, she helps Ravel discover his music and gives him advice concerning the other characters he meets. These characters include Lisette (Sara Buffamanti), the streetwalker who inspires the sexual passion that he puts into his ballets, and Collette (Beverly Hynds), the novelist with whom he collaborates to write “L’Enfant et les Sortilèges.” Together, Ravel and his muse create ballets, operas and concertos. But after the accident, the muse leaves and Ravel never creates another musical piece.

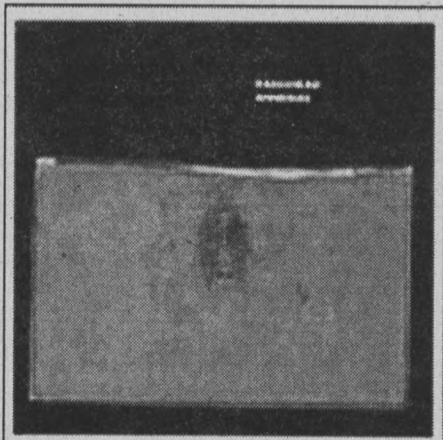
To enhance the fantasy aura of the play, costume

designers Dianne J. Holly and Kelly Larkin create a larger-than-life interpretation of Ravel’s mother. The headless creation stands over 10 feet tall. She draws both laughter and suspicion from the audience, especially with two women melding together to create her single voice. In addition to the mother and the muse, who herself mysteriously appears in various forms throughout Ravel’s life, there is Scarbo (Chad Amsel), the demon who tortures Ravel as he rediscovers himself; and who ultimately destroys Ravel by driving the taxi that steals his muse away. Scarbo also mysteriously appears when Ravel least needs him. Dressed in gray and black, he is the perfect counterpart to the ephemeral, white muse.

“Amusia” is an interesting combination of fantasy, history and music. Even the human characters seemed slightly unrealistic in keeping with the fantasy theme. This work is challenging to both actors and audience — a creative adventure for the playwright/director to attempt and an impressive tribute to Potter, who is retiring at the end of this quarter.

SOUND- SOUNDSTYLE*

Radiohead | Amnesiac | Capitol



Following their most inaccessible and challenging album to date, Radiohead’s new album *Amnesiac* fills in some of the blanks created by *Kid A* while creating others in its place. More fully realized and executed than its predecessor, *Amnesiac* is a further foray into the British fivesome’s challenging explorations with electronica and space rock. Continuing a trend of technological embrace, the group still seems embarrassed and reluctant to give their guitars a prominent role in their songs, choosing instead to twist studio knobs or laptop keys to achieve their sound.

There are a good number of tracks on

Amnesiac where the new formula is perfectly realized. The haunting, off-tempo piano ballad “Pyramid Song” is a beautifully eerie number that still manages to retain a pop structure despite its unusual presentation.

The real eye-popper on the album is the luscious, spaced-out bliss of “Dollars & Cents.” As close to a heroin song as the group has ever produced, the song skillfully melds synths, guitars and studio techniques together without letting one get too far ahead of the other. It is a masterful incorporation of sonic technology; Yorke’s voice and tension-release shows Radiohead at its very best.

After about song five, however, the album becomes more focused on making interesting sounds than songs and slides into self-indulgent drivel. The Trickys-esque trip hop of “Pulk/Pull Revolving Doors” starts and ends nowhere.

Reeking of oblivion and contemporary alienation, there is a visionary and daring quality to *Amnesiac* that makes Radiohead seem light years ahead of the pack. Still, the group’s preoccupation with their own seriousness keeps the album in check. Like HBO, Radiohead is still more interesting than anything you’ll see on network TV, but that doesn’t mean you’ll like everything you see or hear. [Andy Sywak]

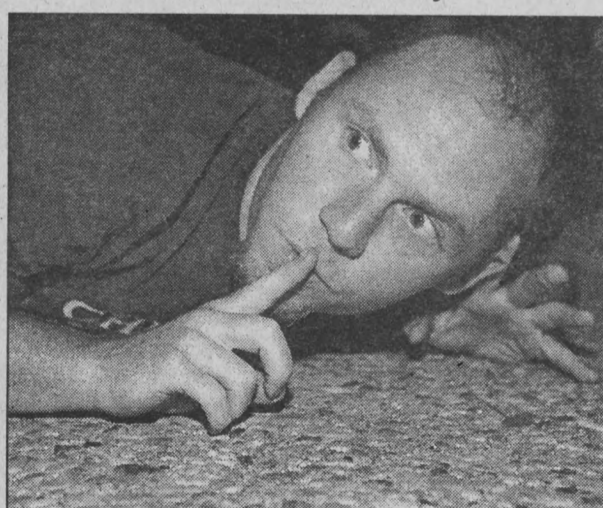
thingstodo >> calendar

weekend | **sunday**

Spend the morning at church and your night getting hot and bothered at Madhouse. Hip-hop night pumps out the tasty nastiness for the bold and beautiful of SB. *Artsweek* will be there, bumpin’ grindin’ and cramin’ for a final. We’ll order white russians (Kahlua has caffeine in it, right?), and try to get a booth in back with internet access. (Your mom told us to put in that bit about going to church... its just that she gets so worried about her little baby.)

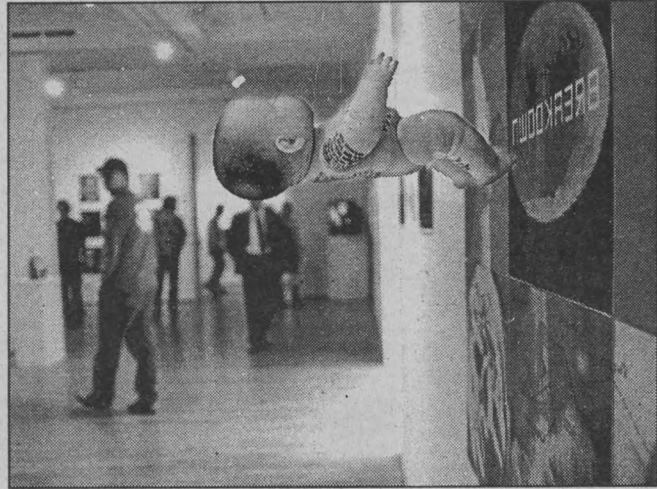
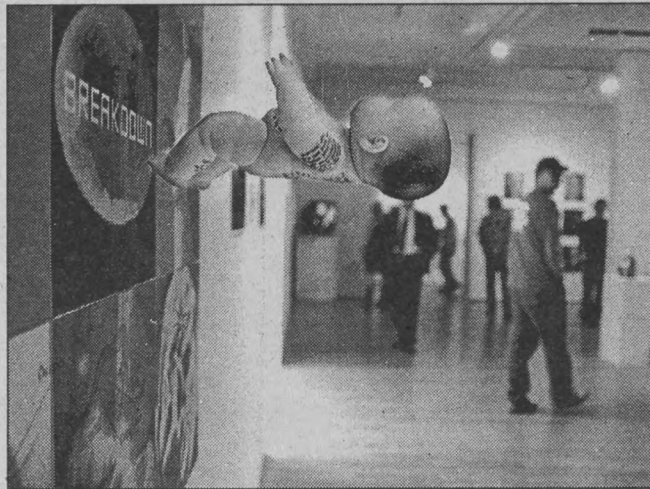
next week | **monday**

Artsweek lost track, but somewhere around the third anecdote, we wanted to punch Wynton Marsalis in the nose. For those other suckers who watched hour upon hour of Ken Burn’s “Jazz,” we feel your pain ... and suggest you catch a live act to sooth the vengeful beast within you. Jeff Elliot hosts the Jazz Jam at Soho, a way to celebrate America’s greatest contribution to the world of music. From jump to bebop, free to fusion, aficionados can get their fix. Groovy.

next week | **tuesday**

We’ve seen your work. It’s no good. Give up. Get a business degree and a real job. If you are an art student on the brink of seppuku, put down the katana and get over to The Frameworks & Caruso/Woods Fine Art. An opening for photographer Robert Stivers’ new show entitled “Listening to Cement” might fix that desire for self-expression firmly in place. The show is open Tuesday thru Friday, 10am to 5pm and Saturday from 11am to 3pm.

art | review



ART COME UNDONE

FRESH NEW FLAVORS A RECIPE FOR STUDENT EXPRESSION

oops i did it again_katherine spiers

UCSB students are displaying themselves as hedonistic, deeply philosophical, sexy creatures who like to keep on the cutting edge of media. An art show exhibiting their work has been mounted at the University Art Museum, and it is the single most exciting show the museum has put on all year.

This show represents the most exceptional works the students created this year. Not limited to just painting or sculpture, an eclectic mix of materials was utilized, from dental wax to yarn. Other works consisted of video and software. Much like the art world at large, student art at UCSB is taking off in new directions and broadening definitions of what makes art.

Student Jocelyn Nguyen presented her fashion-design final at the show's opening night. She wore a dress made of yarn, and attached the end to a hook on the wall. As she walked around the show, her dress unwound, provoking the endless excitement of the middle-aged men in attendance, many of whom found it amusing to step on the unwound yarn. Unfortunately for them, she did not plan on disrobing much above knee level.

"It's a comment on fashion and society," said Nguyen, who added that women work very hard at outward appearance, which just comes off at the end of the day. "High fashion is high-maintenance."

Jacqueline Thomsen's self-portraits also considered the fashion genre, placing her in the role of a fashion model wearing couture. These sexy, slick paintings reflected the sexual nature of many pieces in the show.

Ralph Baudo's "Immaculate E" is a series of photographs that look like they were taken in an Isla Vista

bathroom on a particularly rowdy Saturday night. People passing by the decadent "Untitled," Jean Lin's painting of a woman masturbating, pretended not to see the selection that appears to be inspired by pornos set in motel rooms.

At issue as well was the idea of body image. Broday Loring's "Self," an open box lined with pink, resembles an opened being. Jenny Day's "Retaliation" portrays images of pieces of bodies and a bed. Sometimes aggres-

“ A FORMAL SPACE ADDS A SENSE OF 'COMPLETENESS' AND CLOSURE TO A PIECE ”

sive and angry, most of the pieces dealing with sexuality show its darker side. Given the demographic, it would not be surprising if all the pieces dealt with sexuality and social conventions of attractiveness.

Michelle Mauk's "Alice in Japan" shows the blending of media and styles gaining popularity among artists. It begins with traditional images of Lewis Carroll's Alice, segues into a Japanese print style and ends with the last panel in full anime mode. Experimenting with style is a theme in this show, from the electronics and software to

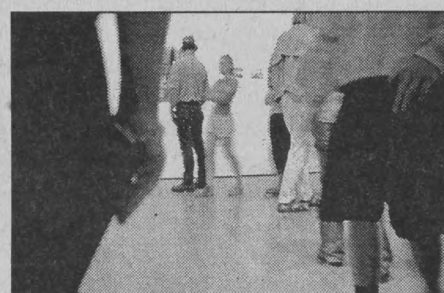
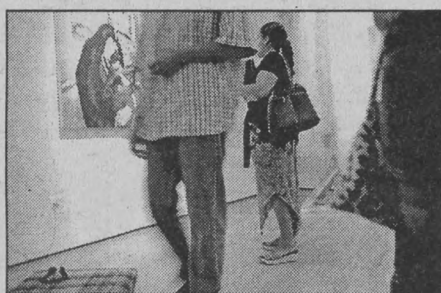
the computer-generated images, such as Miwa Matreyek's engaging digital prints, called "boy & girl."

"My piece is about simplification and translation of reality when translated into the computer," said Matreyek. "The figures are reduced to two dimensions: blocks and shapes of color, male and female. They were actually stills from an animation I'm working on, enlarged and printed." The junior College of Creative Studies student went on to describe her work as being "about the reduction of reality... fashion, stereotypes and the representation of a group of people through a 'symbol' in the way that a computer communicates."

When asked about the exhibition as a whole, Matreyek said, "It's very exciting and inspiring to see what other students have been working on for the last couple months — to see it displayed in a formal, well-lit space like the museum. A formal space adds a sense of 'completeness' and closure to a piece — it's presented and ready to be appreciated and critiqued."

Amid all the rampant creativity, Erinn J. Hale stood out in her bustier of raw chicken parts. "It's six pounds of breast!" she exclaimed to those who asked. Hale also displayed work on the wall, in her photo series "Insomnia." Hale used both eight and twelve minute exposures to capture full-light photographs in the middle of the night. Originally intended as an experiment, the piece became a study in, as she said, "what we think about at night...fading into the subconscious."

The true spirit of UCSB's undergrads seems to be found, until June 17 anyway, at the art museum.



PHOTOS BY ALEX WARD / DAILY NEXUS

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sight



The Santa Barbara Museum of Art runs "Photographic Odysseys" through mid-August. Works by such notable artists as Arnold Newman, Ruth Bernhard and Andre Kertesz provide solid credibility to the museum as an emerging institution of 20th century works. Created largely in part through gifts from Bruce and Nancy Berman, as well as from Arthur Steinman, the collection has grown in recent years. Local residents would be remiss to miss this.

sound



Arguably the greatest singer/songwriter of his generation, Paul Simon graces our land with his sweetly sorrowful lyrical skill. He's hosted Saturday Night Live so many times, you might think he's an ex-cast member. Simon shares the stage with Brian Wilson, the original misunderstood genius of rock. There is a reason these guys continue to be a part of our pop-cultural heritage: they're damn good. At the Santa Barbara Bowl, Friday, June 15th at 6pm.

motion



A benefit for the Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County, The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History dusts off a plaster cast of a funny bone and plays host to "La Verbena De La Poloma." A Marette Production of a Thomas Breton work, the performance is a musical comedy in one act, and features an orchestra, vocalists and flamenco dancers. Saturday, June 16th. Also playing at the Center Stage Theater, Sunday, June 17th.