

ARTS WEEK

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus, For the Week of February 3-9, 1994.

Bristol's Blissful See Page 4A

BOYRACER
I've Got It And It's Not Worth Having
Jesus Suzanne Christ
Black Fantastic Splitting
Beautiful Lines



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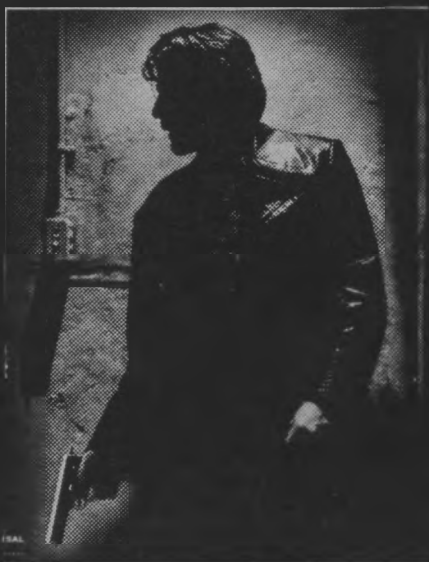
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7 & 10 PMand on TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 8th

MENACE II SOCIETY

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ALL MOVIES ARE \$3 FOR STUDENTS
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Looking for a new films coordinator to take over for our friend cathy (sniff) who's going bye-bye. so if you live and die for movies and want to see your favorite ones in i.v. theater, call us or stop by at the 3rd floor of the ucn.

Q: How many surrealists does it take to screw in a light bulb?
A: a fish!

If you understood that one, then you are a prime candidate for submitting a design for this year's EXTRAVAGANZA. Chosen artwork will be displayed on all posters and t-shirts for the event.

Do you know these guys?



First person to give me the names of these two will win a free CD! Please remember to give your answers in the form of a question, peace and god bless- 893-3536

good luck on saturday. Becca! - luv Dave & the rest of us



Michael Manring
Thonk
High Street Records

My friend Doot and I were doing a little sport fishing up in Ontario the other week when our guide, Hank (three-time Northern Bass champion) leaned over and said, "Listen here, fellers, I've been guidin' this here lake fer 42 years last April, and I never saw two guys catch as much of the mighty fish as you two city slickers."

Well, we liked old Hank, even though he smelled like an old sock wrapped in fruit roll-ups and left in the corner of the bread closet for a week. So Doot told him our secret.

"You gotta think like a bass. Every morning when I wake up, I think about old Bassie. I smell bass, I eat bass, I talk bass. I wear what they wear, comb my hair like they do, and talk like they do. I put power bait on my waffles, eat turbo lures for lunch, and grill jigs and spinners for a snack. I even brush my teeth with fish hooks and swamp mud. I live bass!"

REELIN BASS



yelled Doot with fire in his eyes.

"Don't forget," I said.

"Oh and also, I listen to a lot of Michael Manring's Thonk," advised Doot.

"Oh yeah?" Hank said with childlike curiosity. "I heard that Michael Manring has got some heavy bass."

In fact, Hank was correct. Thonk is an instrumental masterpiece, which explains why there aren't any words in the song. The blending of per-

cussion, guitar, keyboard, tambourine, bass and the majestic hyperbass is like a half-price smorgasbord for the eardrum.

"Golly," Hank said humbly as we were leaving Canada the next day. "You guys have done more for my angling than seven issues of Bass Guru magazine."

And all we could do was say "Thanks," while trying to hide the tears in our eyes.

—David Potter



PUNK DYNAMO

The Offspring is an exciting L.A. hard-core band which both complements and expands Epitaph's unique sound. In contrast to Bad Religion's last CD, this music is how hard-core is supposed to be: explosive, exultant, and liberating. As a punk rock quartet, they are tight, dynamic, and as fast as almost anyone.

The bass and drums of Greg K. and Ron Welty give a solid and vibrant rhythmic base for incisive bursts of guitar by Noodles, a man whose name is deviously close to Super Chicken's arch-rival, the Noodle. In fact, listening to the music, it is not a drastic imaginative leap to see his brain boiling over with plans for the perfect crime.

Although there is a lot of reason to praise this band — "Kick Him When He's Down," "Hypodermic" and "Burn it Up" are all excellent — there are still some problems to be worked out. Dexter Holland has a decent enough voice and occasionally succeeds in a Greg Graffin-influenced style, but the lyrics are often irrelevant and sometimes positively stupid. The first song, "Session," serves as a case in point:

"I don't know when it got this way. I don't know how long she's gonna stay. Every week it's the same, in her room — that's why I came. Here I go, I go again, our rendezvous never seem to end. I know where I'll be, I'll make this confession — back in her bed

for another goddamn session."

"I'll never learn, God knows I try. Keep coming back for sessions and I don't know why. I'll never learn, I'll never see, just tell me why these sessions got a hold on me."

It is a good thing that this is hard-core because these lyrics often get buried under the music. If you are not convinced, here is a section from "Get it Right":

"Like Holden Caulfield, I tell myself there's got to be a better way. Then I lay in bed and stare at the ceiling, dream of brighter days."

No punk band should ever mention Holden Caulfield. Listen to the music. Forget the lyrics.

—Chris Dunlap

KCSB 91.9 FM

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|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Del | 11. De La Soul | 21. Green Day |
| 2. Pitch Shifter | 12. A Tribe Called Quest | 22. KRS One |
| 3. Souls of Mischief | 13. Shaggy | 23. Meathook Seed |
| 4. Royal Trux | 14. Wu Tang | 24. Sepultura |
| 5. L. O. N. S. | 15. Spit Muffins | 25. Voodoo Glow Skulls |
| 6. Gangstarr | 16. Kurious | 26. Spoonfed Hybrid |
| 7. Bikini Kill | 17. Carcass | 27. Terminator X |
| 8. Humpers | 18. Chew Toy | 28. Red Aunts |
| 9. Pegboy | 19. Boo Radleys | 29. Prong |
| 10. Queen Latifah | 20. Die Krupps | 30. Shadz of Lingo |

What it would take for five Daily Nexus editors to trade their plush office spaces for team artsweek's hackneyed - but decorative - desks:

william / opinions - One keg and a hundred compact discs of my choice.

sonja/opinions - \$1000.

kim / news - If Artsweek checks my oil once a month for the rest of my life.

anita / editor-in-chief - The chancellor's office with a new sky light and room for topsoil and heating lamps.

brian / sports - A good used car.



BRENT MEESKE/Daily Nexus

in the name of the father

In this dramatic, highly charged Irish film, Daniel Day-Lewis plays a man wrongly convicted of the murder of five people, who spends 15 years in prison before winning his freedom.

The story is strongest when tracing Gerald Conlon (Day-Lewis), a Belfast Catholic and petty thief, and is weakest when dealing with the larger political issues, where it is sometimes clumsy and confusing and noticeably fails to shed light. Based on true events but playing free and easy with some of the details, the background to the case needs to be understood before making sense of the movie.

In the early and mid-1970s, the IRA (Irish Republican Army) began planting bombs in bars and discos in English cities and detonating them without warning, thus killing and maiming many dozens of people. This was part of the larger, demented strategy of coercing the one million Protestant majority of Northern Ireland into an all-Ireland Catholic state. The vestiges of this campaign continue today, though they are largely irrelevant. Here, as in so many other treatments of the "troubles," the Protestant majority is unheard and invisible.

The main result of the terror bombing, in the almost hysterical aftermath, was to unleash the beast of unreasonableness that lies hidden in the collective psyche. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (1974) was brought forward as a "temporary" measure (it's still in place today), which allowed the police to detain a terrorist suspect for up to seven days without charging them. Even with non-terrorist crimes, there was a sequence of cases in the 1970s in which cynical, dim-bulb policemen, hungry for convictions, would convince themselves of the guilt of some peripheral character and then virtually frame them into prison. The judiciary, too afraid to admit a mistake had been made, would then take many years to free them, and then only under heavy pressure.

Day-Lewis is totally believable as Conlon, who, his life going nowhere in the Catholic slums of West Belfast, heads for the bright lights and cosmopolitan liberality of London, a sea-change from his close-knit and parochial home streets. There, in a hippie commune, he lays a foundation of drugs, deceit and foul language — but despite his inner poverty, you can't help liking his cheerful good na-

ture. On the night of the bombing for which he is charged, he robs a prostitute's apartment, and with the money typically splashes out on some flamboyant, contemporary clothes. (A white Afghan coat and Elton John platform shoes — was there ever an era so ridiculous?)

He, along with three others from the commune (two Irish, one English) are guilty of nothing other than leading an alternative though incoherent existence, but nevertheless the police, under heavy pressure to find the bombers, pin their hopes on convicting them and virtually beat them into singing confessions (one tactic was to show them photographs of the maimed and dead from the atrocity). Conlon's father travels to London to help his son, and to make matters worse, he is charged, along with some of his family, with keeping explosives (the main evidence being later-discredited forensic). The defendants still hoped that the charges would be laughed out of court, but apparently the jury, in its horror at the bombings, believed the risk was too great to let them go even on such shaky evidence. The courtroom scenes, though good cinema, are simplistic and confusing, and are perhaps the weakest part of the movie.

The story really finds its feet when the action moves on to prison life, where the developing relationship between Conlon and his father takes center stage. There are some deeply effective scenes between the two of them as they work out the difficulties and antagonisms that they had avoided until then. Pete Postlethwaite is wonderful as the man who, in rising above hate and nationalism, wins the respect of the prisoners and the authorities to become a beacon for his son. Some of the other character acting is very good, too: Don Baker is a fascinating study in coolly ruthless evil as the real IRA bomber, and Emma Thompson, playing a campaigning lawyer who helps win Gerry's freedom, for once loses her self-consciousness and puts in a convincing performance.

Considering its subject matter, the picture is mercifully short on overblown emotion and manipulative background music and is more resonant for this. It has its faults of omission but few recent films can have had its narrative impact.

—Martin Knight

philadelphia

If you're looking for another officious critic to force a little political correctness down your throat by saluting the talent of director Jonathan Demme in his latest offering, *Philadelphia*, well then ... you'd better stop reading now.

What I am willing to salute, however, are the fabulous performances by many actors — all led by Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington.

Philadelphia is the story of a young gay attorney, Andy Beckett (Hanks), who believes he was fired by an old prestigious Philadelphia law firm because he has AIDS. No matter how Andy tries to cover up the lesions on his face, he is found out by one of the firm's partners and is then set up so that the firm can fire him on the grounds that he is incompetent.

Joe Miller (Washington) is an ambulance-chasing hack of an attorney, whose television commercials claim "he gets no cash until you get cash." Andy and Joe face each other in the opening of the film by arguing the public effects of a Philadelphia construction project in a judge's chambers. After Andy is fired, he seeks Joe's counsel in a wrongful termination suit against his former employer. Joe, who has just become a father, hates homosexuals and fears AIDS. He first turns down Andy's request for representation but is later swayed during a touching moment in a university law library.

The performances of Hanks and Washington are highlighted by a large cast of TV and movie character actors, and the powerful work of Jason Robards as Charles Wheeler — the head of the discriminating law firm — and Mary Steenburgen as the calculating counsel for the Wheeler firm.

I know little about the effects of AIDS on the human body. But if it is actually as terrible as Hanks' role powerfully portrays, then it is a death more awful than any other.

Washington, who was powerful in his role as Malcolm X, is delightfully clever as the fast-talking attorney who defends Hanks. Unfortunately for Washington fans, the part of Joe Miller is just another role that is so suited to Denzel's personality (like *Pelican Brief* and *Ricochet*), that his acting abilities once again go untested.

My deep feelings of hostility for this film are based on the social fabric Demme

tries to weave as a public relations tool for the homosexual lifestyle. Homophobia is treated in a comical fashion, with Joe Miller grilling witnesses on their sexual preference and portraying his personal hatred for gays as a psychological anomaly. His farcical outrage when his sexuality is challenged after he is representing Beckett becomes tiring, and his amazement (when he finds out from his wife that her Aunt Theresa is a homosexual) is transparent.

"You mean that beautiful, voluptuous woman is a lesbian?" he says to his wife, and then turns to his newborn daughter and says, "you stay away from your Aunt Theresa."

Another act that filled me with utter disgust was a pre-death wake that Beckett throws for his gay friends, which Miller and his family are invited to. A get-together of people in celebration, no matter what their sexuality, is fine. But when Demme introduces the stale stereotype of four flaming queens singing the standard "Mr. Sandman," and then expects the film's audience to find it as humorous as the fictional partygoers, it just didn't work for me.

Another scene following the party is a question-and-answer session between Miller and Beckett, when the AIDS-stricken plaintiff has apparently lost control of his mental faculties. As a lover of opera, he cranks up an aria by Maria Callas so obscure I wouldn't be able to identify it even after watching hours of Jeopardy's "Audio Daily Doubles." It is so loud and ear-piercing, and has so little to do with the storyline, that it is simply infuriating.

So if you desire to see some powerful acting in a purely commercial venture, then go and see *Philadelphia*. But please don't be swayed by the political correctness freaks, and gay and lesbian rights zealots who are claiming this film as exceptional, because it is not. These groups are working to pad the box office so that other homosexual ventures, which are usually canned and never make it to the theaters, may see the cinema light of day. Personally, I'm tired of having my moviegoing choices orchestrated by others working for a political cause.

—Duke Conover

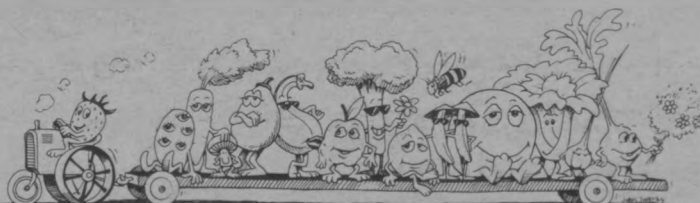
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In 1987, English fanzine writers Matt Haynes and Clare Wadd launched the engaging new label, Sarah Records. While the music was acoustically based, highly evocative and pretty, the label came with a political persona, expressed in part on an early compilation LP: *popmusic as a spontaneous, lovable thing, created and bought in an onrush of NEED without needing to SAVE UP for weeks or meekly accept sad drab stigmatising 99p Only tack.*

so it's idealism, so what, it's a good place to start. Standing up alone (much harder), DOING, just what feels right. Something to do with — oh, let's just say changing the world.

so when one dismal morning a new song turns up at our door, full of wrong notes and wrong chords but crammed with right Everything Elses, and my typical daydreamy swirl has their name at once scuffed out with reverence on each rain-splattered sandcastled beach from Chepstow to Bridgwater Bay, so at the back of my mind will lurk gorgeous machine-gun panoramas, trembling alive with incipient HOPE and I'll laugh and I'll run and I'll want to DESTROY and CREATE who knows what, I'll just want want want NEED and that's all that matters for now...

Politically, they wanted to run a label from the point of view of the record buyer rather than the record seller. Matt had been musically inspired into his fanzine days by the legendary early '80s rosters of Creation Records (originally the home of the Jesus and Mary Chain as well as Biff Bang Pow, the Jasmine Minks and the Loft, among others) and Glasgow's Postcard Records (Orange Juice, Aztec Camera, Josef K and an early Go-Betweens single). He remembered the thrill of buying the first Jesus and Mary Chain single "on spec," out of trust for Creation, before it had ever been written about, and, in part, wanting to engender such faith himself.

Roughly seven years on, the quality of what Matt and Clare decide to release has never wavered. The Field Mice, Heavenly, The Orchids, East River Pipe — virtually every Sarah release has had that *magic*. Artsweek recently spoke with Matt Haynes by phone. What follows is an edited transcript.

Artsweek: *In terms of how you started out, did you start with bands who were playing gigs in Bristol?*

Matt Haynes: None of the bands in the early stages were actually from Bristol, we've only ever actually had two Bristol bands on the label, Tramway and the Secret Shine. The label itself has a very strong Bristol identity. We began basically because we both used to write fanzines, me in Bristol and Clare used to write one in Yorkshire. Then she came to Bristol to study at university — that's how we met. We would publish flexidiscs with the fanzines, and it sort of became a natural progression from that.

AW: *Were you discovering the bands all around the country who fit with your, sort of, aesthetic?*

MH (chuckling): By the time we'd had several issues, we were getting sent demo tapes. They became basically the groups we put out flexidiscs by. The first band on Sarah was the Sea Urchins. We'd both individually had a flexi with that band, so when we went to set up Sarah, they were the obvious band to work with.

AW: *I know one of, maybe, the jokes has been that the Sarah roster could just be a bunch of people, [that the bands could have] members in common, vocalists in common. But they're really all distinct ... ?*

MH (chuckles): One of the problems they've had is that most of the bands have never been career-based, if you like. They've just been people doing it as a hobby, for fun. Which means they've never really bothered in some cases getting a proper gigging band together. A lot of the

The singles are really the heart and soul of Sarah Records, but the compilations are what gets overseas most easily. *Air Balloon Road* contains some of the best, most distinctive early tracks from the label.

The quaint, affected vocals, sung predominantly by men, are the anthem for an implicit political point. "Twee" music internalized into a philosophy gives an alternate way of thinking to the male-dominated "stadium rock" that Sarah opposes, and the aggression and misogyny that the status quo begets.

I may be extending this idea further than Matt and Clare have, but they have

distributed the music that makes it possible. The *Air Balloon Road* compilation, with its languid songs by Gentle Despite, the Orchids, 14 Iced Bears and the above, is a musically

RAINY HILL BEAUTIFUL

An in-depth interview with Matt Haynes of the
 By Kevin Carhart

bands on the label have never actually played gigs, or certainly never had by the time they actually had a record out.

... I think, for everything we release, the only criteria we have for releasing it is that Clare and I both like it, so everything is going to have something in common. I guess we tend to attract people who are in tune with our way of thinking. There's going to be that common link, bands who like the idea of Sarah, fans of the Sarah aesthetic, whatever that may be, are the bands who are going to send us demos.

AW: *So you two aren't actually "producing," acting as producer?*

MH: I mean, we do sometimes ... when a band's never been in the studio before, we've gone in and shown them how things work.

... There is a link between all the bands, I really couldn't say what it is or why it exists. I suppose it's a state of mind more than anything ...

AW: *Well, that's a fitting thing. I'm wondering if you think it's a particularly English thing ...*

MH: I like to think so, English as opposed to ... I think very un-American if you like ...

AW: *... Maybe English pop culture is more willing to accept wistful men ...*

MH: I think that's true, I think the big rock bands, big stadium bands are the opposite of what we stand for with Sarah, and in the last few years there seems to be a swing toward, even before the sort of Nirvana-type bands, a move toward bands who are loud — the noise, rather than the actual feelings behind it. We'd rather go to the quiet wistful English extreme if you like. The whole sort of rock-and-roll aesthetic isn't something we aspire to, we'd rather react against it ... stand out from that.

AW: *Yeah. As far as the ideas, that's all the bands' ideas?*

MH: We'd never interfere in the actual songs at all. The only thing we do is if we think a song could be mixed better or recorded better we'll make them go and do it again. Blueboy has a new single — they did it themselves, and we think it could use some tweaking here and there, so we're going back in the studio with them to do that. But as far as the songs go, it's all their own ideas. We wouldn't dream of interfering on that level.

AW: *How would you describe the criteria that you and Clare have had in your own heads to make this "feel?" It's obviously hard to say, because it's kind of a poetic thing.*

MH: Umm ... when we first set up Sarah, it was because we looked around at all the other labels that were around at the time and just felt that these people weren't doing it properly. My old fanzine in particular had always taken a strong stance of being anti-12-inch singles. We had always sort of had that political angle to it if you like, very much anti the music business and the way the fans were manipulated by being made to buy 12-inch singles when they didn't want to. Unnecessary marketing devices like that seemed to get in the way of the actual music.

AW: *On your old compilation album Shadow Factory, there's a little editorial on the back about how it's nice to be able to get a little item [because low prices make it possible to buy a unit without thinking it through].*

MH: This was all part of it. When we actually set up Sarah, it was very much to prove a point as to how a record label should be run and could be run, from the fan's point of view rather than the record company's point of view. That's, I suppose, the most important aspect of Sarah, that political aspect.

As for the general feel ... (chuckling) all the little notes in with the records, it's just us writing. And we've always

played up the Bristol angle, because we've always hated the idea that anything in Britain has to be based in London. All the record labels move to London and we've made a point of that, not moving to London even though I'm from London originally. We've been proud of the fact that we've stayed in Bristol, which is why all the 7-inches have a picture of a part of Bristol on the label, and subtle things, like the compilation LPs are named after Bristol bus routes.

AW: *Oh, like Glass Arcade, and Engine Common ...*

MH: Yeah, *Shadow Factory*, there's a factory on the north edge of Bristol and the bus that goes there is the 587, which is why the catalog number is Sarah 587. Little things like that.

AW: *I know I have a very unrealistic picture of Bristol, but it rhymes with crystal ...*

MH: It's a lovely city. We both came to university here and stayed on because we liked it so much.

AW: *How are you received by the students there?*

MH: We have this big Bristol image as far as the label goes. But there are just the two bands and Tramway doesn't exist anymore, so we don't really get involved with the Bristol music scene at all. We have had quite a following when we put bands on in Bristol. We seem to get a better turnout here than in other parts of the country. I think secretly there must be a lot of people who are quite proud of us, who like the idea that there's this label just working out of a house in south Bristol.

AW: *Do you think what you've been releasing has changed since you began [in 1987]? I have a recent Action Painting 7-inch, and it strikes me as very different ...*

MH: There's not been any overall plan. Right from the word go, we've just released things according to what the band was writing and what we get sent. If there's been any overall trend it's been purely coincidental. The original fans were people who liked the Sea Urchins, they were our biggest band and that's what caught the imagination at the start. And then the Field Mice came along ... and once the Field Mice split up, Heavenly became our biggest band. A lot of people think Sarah isn't what it used to be a couple of years ago, but they're basically the people who got into the label when the Field Mice were big, who really liked the Field Mice, and now they don't like Heavenly very much. Now there's younger bands like Boyracer and Action Painting! on the label, who are much louder and faster and writing shorter songs compared to the swirly things the Field Mice used to do. That's just the way it's changed.

AW: *It's funny. I have some records, they've made it into the United States, but I've read practically no information or discussion of Sarah.*

MH: We have great trouble getting the press to take us seriously. I don't know what it's like in the States. I think a few small magazines are quite keen on us, but the States are strange because they have no national weekly music press.

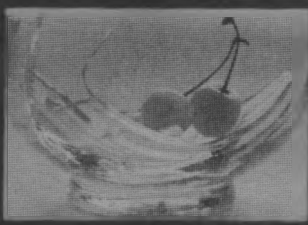
AW: *Like Melody Maker and the NME [New Musical Express]?*

MH: Yeah, it's those two, they come out every week. If you can get reviews in those, that's 90% of your publicity done over here. Obviously, in the States you've got loads of magazines and you've got college radio stations, whereas here our job is a lot simpler, if you like. Once you've got *Melody Maker*, *NME* and *Radio 1* playing your record, your job is done. But if you don't manage to get that, you're stuck, so it works both ways.

I don't know what the press has against us. Frankly, I think they don't like the sort of English, wimpy whatever image that we have. They like their rock stars to be in the traditional mold. It's still a very male-dominated scene and we don't fit in with that at all, which we're very

AIR BALLOON ROAD A SARAH COMPILATION

THE ORCHIDS
 ANOTHER SUNNY DAY
 THE SEA URCHINS
 THE FIELD MICE
 SL CHRISTOPHER
 GENTLE DESPITE
 THE GOLDEN DAWN
 THE WAKE
 BRIGHTER
 14 ICED BEARS
 THE SPRINGFIELDS
 ACTION PAINTING!
 THE POPPYHEADS



glorious overview of Sarah's earliest years. The political component is more subtle — it is contained in a cache of bands that put a premium on sensitivity.

The Sugargliders are worth all the raves. Josh and Joel Meadows, two brothers from Australia, are producing a steady stream of good music.

"I used to worry about swallowing the apple core, about that tree that grows inside of you. But I don't worry about that anymore," they sing on "Will We Ever Learn?" The backing vocals lift the track 10 feet off the ground.

And the flipside is even better. "Dolly" is an instant classic. The strum, the backbeat, the harmonies, the wordplay, and the keyboard embellishments on this and "Inventing Penicillin" are all out of pop heaven. It is also an incredibly good catalyst — when it has that ring, it might be the Sugargliders,

the sugargliders



or it could be me spinning off associations according to god-knows-what. All the things which I somehow believe are only found somewhere else — seashores, floating harbors, freeway overpasses, rain — even though I know that's an illusion. (We even have a pier!) The Sugargliders' record is the anthem for "grass is always greener" syndrome.

LLSIDES, RECORDS

of the uncompromising English record label Sarah

**locally, the best
bet for getting
ahold of stuff
from sarah is
probably deep
groove records,
downtown.**



pleased about and proud of.

It's weird because there are lots of individual journalists on both papers who like us a lot, and who in private would say how much they like us and would give individual records good reviews. But we can't get beyond that to where they're actually willing to write large articles. We just get the odd good reviews, excellent reviews sometimes, but nothing follows on from that. You get a "single of the week" one week, and with any other band, any other label you would think "right, there's been a single of the week, next week there should be a double-page feature, a month later there should be a cover feature." But with us, there's nothing to follow up on it.

I think journalists are sort of wary of becoming associated with us, because we have got this fairly strong image. And they are fairly wary of being typecast as a journalist who's into Sarah, because once that happens to them they think no one will take them seriously again, I guess. They'll be very much the Sarah person on the paper, a joke around the office. It's very frustrating for us.

AW: How about John Peel?

MH: Umm, I think he likes us more than he likes the music. He seems to sympathize with what we're trying to do with Sarah and the attitudes that we have to the music business. So he seems to like the idea more than he likes most of the bands, but he will give most of our releases at least one play, and the ones he likes he'll play a lot. He's had bands in for sessions and things. It's the sort of early evening shows on Radio 1 we need to get, because he's on so late at night that it's a much smaller audience. If you can actually get the early evening shows, they're on every night of the week, 7 o'clock to 9 o'clock, to get played there counts for far more, really.

AW: Over here, the media coverage seems to be stratified. Rolling Stone and MTV wouldn't know anything good if it bit them, and it's mostly the fanzines that write about K Records, Slumberland Records, labels like that. I suppose you have a fondness for that sort of fanzine coverage?

MH: Yes, because that's the scene we both came from. We have sympathies with that, but sadly, over the last few years most of the English fanzines have disappeared. Very few good fanzines here. It's terribly sad because five or six years ago if you went to a gig, you'd be hassled the whole time by people trying to sell you fanzines, where if you go to a gig now, even the sort of "Riot Grrrl" gig, which is supposedly very fanzine-based, there's no one trying to sell you anything at all. It's very sad — it seems the whole scene is in danger of dying. I think over here there's always been less need for it in a way, because we do have a weekly music press, which is very much in tune with changes week by week. In America, in the monthly magazines, there's just no way they're going to know what is going on. The grass roots is going to take three or four years until things actually start to filter through, whereas here a lot of people writing for the music press are fanzine writers and are very much with what's going on in the clubs and pubs and so forth, so it's quite easy for bands who never had a record deal or anything to get written about in the weekly independent press. There is less need in a way for the traditional review-type fanzine ...

AW: What do you think of the whole phasing out of records as a format, and their replacement by CDs?

MH: Originally, we wanted to press 7-inches as the opposite of 12-inches. They seemed a waste to us. If you have the idea of one song on a piece of vinyl [rather than have a 12-inch single with two songs and three remixes, or some kind of extraneous material] ... on a 7-inch, for the band to write a song, and make it the best song ever, is what we stand for, more than the fact that it happens to be seven inches across, really. I'd love to do a one-track

3-inch CD or something. It would have the same feel as a 7-inch to some extent. But it's not actually economic to do that.

We actually lose a lot of money on the singles. But now we've started doing CD singles as well. The CD singles make money, the 7-inches lose money. The two sort of balance out, so the singles all break even. Which in a way is sad, because it means we have to do the albums, the compilations and so forth to actually make any money and to keep the label going.

AW: Do you think you've spawned imitators?

MH: ... Certainly in England there are a lot of labels out there who I think we influenced, caused to start up. Sadly, a lot of small labels who did start up seem to not like us anymore because they perceive that we are now the corporate enemy, and they are the sort of young, pure label doing their first 7-inch.

AW: I notice that East River Pipe is from New York.

MH: Yeah, a one-man band from New York. He and his girlfriend released their first two singles on their own label, Hell Gate, and a friend at a record shop said they should send them to us, and they did, and we took it from there. We've probably had a better response to their LP than to almost anything we've ever done, I think. Everyone seems to love it over here. They're getting press, in Japan as well, through us, and the *NME* did a double-page article on them ... They were on their own little label in New York, and now they seem to have smashed across the whole world.

AW: They sound to me as though they are destined to be a Sarah band.

MH: I think so. It's quite weird. I mean, they were just out there in New York and they fit everyone's idea of what a Sarah band should be, and they'd never heard of us.

AW: Huggy Bear ... is that Amelia from Heavenly?

MH: No, they've got Heavenly connections. The original lineup of Huggy Bear used to feature Matthew from Heavenly playing bass, even though he was the drummer from Heavenly. They did a television show that got publicized in the States a lot, there was a sort of riot on a late night television show, and Amelia was singing with Huggy Bear when they did that.

AW: How is it that Heavenly is signed to K Records?

MH: Basically, because Amelia and Peter from Heavenly have always been big fans of K Records and Beat Happening especially, and because of that, Calvin was made aware of Heavenly, and of Talulah Gosh, which is what Heavenly were before they became Heavenly. It's a sort of mutual admiration — Calvin sang on a track on their last LP.

AW: Did the Orchids sample [4AD band] This Mortal Coil on their song "Thaumaturgy?"

MH (laughs): Umm, we'd never actually heard the This Mortal Coil track, but when we released the Orchids single, lots of people wrote to us to say, there's this This Mortal Coil sample at the end ... but then we mentioned it to the Orchids and they denied this! (laughter) They said what it actually was was a tape of a local band in Glasgow, which had been sort of lying around in the recording studio, so they admitted it was a sample that somebody else had recorded, but they denied it was This Mortal Coil. But whether this other Glasgow band had sampled This Mortal Coil in the first place, I don't know.

AW: I don't actually have a copy of Saropoly, the board game, but I've read about it.

MH: Ah, well when people say what's your proudest moment or what do you think is the best thing Sarah's done, I always say Saropoly. I think it sums us up better than anything else.

It was this board game which involved moving around the board, getting componers to make a record, going

forward four squares and it would tell you the things that were going wrong to make you go back six spaces. It was generally just to sum up the frustrations of running a record label. Every time you'd actually got your plastic bag and your sleeve and the record pressed, something else would happen and you'd have to go off and do something else. It was the fun side of the music. ... I think the music press, they like their music serious, and [they don't like] the idea that we're doing all these silly things, like putting pictures of train stations on our sleeves.

AW: What were the playing pieces in Saropoly?

MH: They were all heads of record companies. Ivo [of 4AD] was a sort of vague blur. (laughs) Alan McGee [of Creation] was a pair of shades. Then we couldn't think of [another] indie mogul type, so we made a hot air balloon for Richard Branson, who used to be the head of Virgin Records. Someone actually showed the game to Ivo, and he thought it was good.

AW: I understand the Field Mice have broken up, and turned into Northern Picture Library?

MH: Yeah. ... They are signed to Vinyl Japan now, and they sent us a demo before they were. We didn't think it was very good. It was like the Field Mice only not as good, and to put out things that were like them only not as good seemed rather sad. I'd rather have them being at their best and then stopping, rather than a watered-down version.

AW: I've got a couple of Sugargliders as well.

MH: I just think they are absolutely a stupendous band. I think everything they do is the best ever done by anybody — ever — and the press just seems to ignore them. I can't understand it at all. The press, the fanzine writers, the indie kids, whatever, they don't dislike them but they don't seem to capture anyone's imagination like they should. It's very disappointing because we think they're absolutely wonderful. They should be huge.

AW: Now, have you got a new distribution deal for the USA?

MH: Um, it's just licensing for a few individual albums. There's a company called Widely Distributed Records from Chicago, which ...

AW: Oh yeah, we have the Harvest Ministers —

MH: Yeah, they've done the Harvest Ministers, they're doing the Orchids album, and they're doing the Wake album when that comes out. And there's a label down in California which is interested in maybe doing a compilation of Blueboy singles. It will be nice to get something proper in the States because it's frustrating to have such poor distribution.

AW: Well, it adds to your mystique to be so rare.

MH (chuckles): I suppose there is this, but at the same time it would be nice to reach more people.

AW: Are there any musical movements being written about in the weekly press ... do you know of some good sounds that are just now happening?

MH: Um, the big thing now is the "new wave of new wave." I think the *NME* has invented it, it's all those bands who are supposed to take their influences from post-punk bands at the end of the '70s, the Buzzcocks and the Jam. There's all these bands coming up, heavily influenced by this, and most of the ones I've heard have been absolutely dreadful. But the bizarre thing is that the *NME* have picked up on Action Painting!, one of our bands, and decided that they're part of this as well, which is quite ridiculous because they're far too young to remember the Buzzcocks or the Jam, and they're quite oblivious to it all ...

... But there are very few bands that I actually like (laughter) ... I don't know who I've really been excited about going to see. I hope it's just a passing trend. The last band I went to see was the Tindersticks.

AW: Oh!

The "Goodbye California" 10-inch from East River Pipe is a masterpiece. Much as I associate Sarah Records with England and beyond, F. M. Cornog wrote these songs "in his flat, in Queens," New York. They give off a sadness which seems perfectly geared to the big, big city.

He is earnest, and in some cases, surreal and disturbing. "Firing Room" gives you unsettling food for thought. "I don't want to tell you right now. ... I'll go soon to your firing room. ... I think we're up for sale." Whether it is commenting on spiritual bankruptcy, commercialism or something else, the echoed voice is chilling.

The plaintive observation of a "silhouette town" reminds me of my percep-



tions of the city, although at another level I know the city has no monopoly on an empty feeling.

I have no mental picture of East River Pipe playing or recording. Their songs

are among those so celestial that it doesn't seem right that they stand in a room and play. Cornog's voice comes down from above, and the music is just there.

As Matt puts it, some of the new bands, like Action Painting! and Boyracer, are writing shorter, faster songs than a prior era of Sarah bands. These songs that embrace feedback and rope you with a pounding, storming push, are great when taken autonomously, and make for an intriguing change in terms of the label.

Action painting was one name for what the painter Jackson Pollock used to do, and while I don't know how well his chaotic color splotch paintings translate directly to music, the band Action Painting! has some of his ideas. The vocals and the hailstorm swirl around each other on the suitably nasty, incomprehensible and short "Mustard Gas," which



opens the latest single. It's a barrage of the stuff.

Who better than a "young band" who names themselves after a technique of modern art to

write a song called "Art Student." "You're an art student! On the waiting list! Look what you've missed!" That's practically an anthem for petition-happy students.

THE PLAY IS THE THING

Many years ago a drama teacher impressed upon me the notion that Shakespeare, a playwright, should be seen and not read. Today, others evidently hold that philosophy dear. Actors from the London Stage, who will be coming to Campbell Hall tomorrow night, formed their group on the basis that "Shakespeare was primarily an actor, a man of the theater, and wrote primarily to be performed on the stage."

The group was founded originally by Homer D. Swander, a literature teacher, in The Dirty Duck, a pub in Stratford-upon-Avon that sits across from the Royal Shakespeare Theater. He had overheard a group of actors discussing a scene they were in and realized that such discussions would be more profitable to students.

Actors from the London Stage is a touring company

made up of five seasoned Shakespearean actors from England. On these tours, the company members change yearly, providing a new format each time they appear. The system appears to work because on more than one tour, the shows have been sold out way in advance.

Last year, Notre Dame found students, who were left out in the cold at the box office, offering large sums of money to those who would render their tickets. In 1989, the group came to perform two showings of "The Winter's Tale" at UCSB's Campbell Hall, both of which were sold out as soon as tickets were available.

Why do they do so well? The answer lies within their presentation. Instead of giving Shakespeare that gothic appearance that people have come to associate with his work, the company doesn't allow elaborate costumes, sets or



props to get in the way of what is most important — the words.

"In larger productions, directors often attempt to make the play more accessible to audiences by using modern settings," David Howey, a member of last year's group, explained. "However, we don't have a director, and we have a responsibility to present the

play as it is written, as clearly as possible."

The extent of the prop work consists of a semicircle of chairs, demonstrated in their production of "The Tempest," and also scarves placed in various different positions, each representing separate characters.

The fact that five actors have the ability to switch

from one character to another with such ease has also drawn students. In most Shakespeare productions, the character schedule can list about 10 to 20 people. "Twelfth Night" has 16 characters in itself. The fact that these five actors can carry off portraying two to four characters, sometimes simultaneously, just proves

how outstanding these actors are.

Actors from the London Stage will perform Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" at Campbell Hall, Friday, Feb. 4, at 8 p.m. and on Saturday, Feb. 5, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

—Heather Siple

DANCING WILL ALWAYS BE VIABLE; FOR YOUNG AND OLD

On Feb. 4, a new theater company will be making their debut at the Center Stage theater on State Street. Dramatic Women will be showcasing their first work, "Barbed Wire Under Your Armpits," written by Ellen K. Anderson, a leading woman playwright in the Santa Barbara area.

The play revolves around two adult ballet

courses, in which nine women and one man come together to discover new relationships and new truths about their lives. Their thoughts about how they react to viewing themselves in full-length mirrors, and to whether they can move in bodies that have not seen 18 for a long time are comical — we, the audience, can relate to the situations they

are going through.

The idea for the play came to Anderson while she had been attending several ballet classes over the years. She described her experience to the *Santa Barbara News-Press*: "Somewhere in the wilds of Goleta, grown women are ballet dancing. They have thrown off their business suits, Birkenstocks, motorcycle jack-

ets, and other trappings which lay strewn along the one unmirrored wall. They have ditched their lives at the door... They only wonder where the music will lead them, and if their bodies — not 18 and not perfect — will follow along."

"Barbed Wire..." is also a representation of the baggage that we carry along with us throughout our lives. It is the emo-

tional problems that we don't want to face, which we tuck away, ignoring the fact that they stand in the way of our happiness. One woman's subconscious gives away the questioning of her own sexuality, while another woman who has just stepped into the class at age 65 fears that her body will not be able to keep up with those around her. All the women are real, all the situations pertain to us.

Though the majority of the play revolves around dance, the cast, vastly experienced, is able to move beyond just dancing. Victoria Finlayson danced several years for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, while Vickie Patik, an Emmy Award-winning screenwriter, performed leading roles in "My Fair Lady" and "Kismet." Among the other performers will be Delta Gordan, Sam Muir, Marion Freitag, Samantha Santana and Susan Jackson Beehler. Also present will be a trio of local Santa Barbara performers, Jessica John, Mary McGloin and Ed Meehan. The script treats all of the characters as equally important mem-

bers, so the actors group together to produce ensemble acts.

Costumes will be designed by Barbara Lackner, last year's winner of *The Santa Barbara Independent* costume design award. Lighting will be done by Tal Sanders.

This is the first major piece directed by UCSB graduate Tara Crawford, who has a degree in stage direction. She has grouped together with Ellen Anderson to help form Dramatic Women as a basis for showcasing women's work in the theater. In the future this new company would like to begin creating workshops for play readings, as well as a haven for new playwrights to display their work. The troupe hopes one day to perform in Campbell Hall as well. But with "Barbed Wire Under Your Armpits" as their prime focus, those plans will have to be put on hold.

Dramatic Women presents "Barbed Wire Under Your Armpits," Feb. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 at 8 p.m., at the Center Stage Theatre, Paseo Nuevo, Santa Barbara.

—Heather Siple



FUNNIES FOR MONEY

In the movies, when California is struck by an enormous quake, Superman simply burrows beneath the Earth's crust and shores up the fault line, or, if worse comes to worst, travels back in time and stops the earthquake before it starts. No problem.

As the last week has shown us, however, things are not solved so quickly in the real world, and staring up in the sky waiting for Superman won't accomplish anything.

However, the people behind America's favorite comics, in conjunction with the good folks at Metro Comics, have de-

vised a way in which we can all be heroes and help out with earthquake relief. On Saturday, Feb. 5, at 6 p.m., Metro Comics will be hosting "Cartoonists Who Care," an earthquake relief auction. All proceeds from the auction will be donated to the American Red Cross.

Available for bidding will be original comic art from such popular artists as Sergio Aragones, Norm Breyfogle, Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez, Steve Rude, Stan Sakai, Paul Smith and Matt Wagner, among others.

Also up for bidding will be rare premium comics

from most of the major comic publishers, including DC Comics, Defiant, Kitchen Sink, Malibu, Marvel and Valiant. In addition, Metro will be auctioning off sports cards and memorabilia donated by the sports card companies, local merchants, the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Clippers.

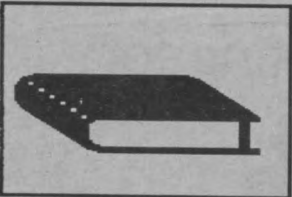
So come down to Metro Comics — 15 West Anapamu, Santa Barbara — this Saturday night and walk away with some rare collectables. You don't need a cape and tights to be a hero; just a little cash and a generous spirit.

—Scott Tipton

Into The West
Thursday, February 3
Campbell Hall, 7 PM

When a magical white horse enters the tenement house of two young Irish boys, they begin to live out their cowboy fantasies. This 1993 delightful film, is not one to be missed!





DEFACING POP CULTURE

Reading *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist* is like watching television (with your finger never leaving the channel-change button) while seated in a comfortable armchair immersed in a tepid vat of a highly viscous liquid (up to about your neck), and noticing in what is almost obscenely graphic detail a hodgepodge of the brightly colored and vainglorious refuse of the American pop culture machine, darting hither and thither in the sacrosanct and seminiferous skins of government-trained tropical fish, all the while increasing in awareness of the carefully extracted and pliantly distilled info-bytes of the day's newspaper being rapidly poured from the normative heart of a "gaunt pockmarked dissipated handsome sexy mosquito" by a translucent muscleman with a tattooed buttock, who is busy talking Gauguin to a deep sea shrimp, as the frontal lobe of your brain into which

ing and screaming in an absurd, info-rich, frenzied euphoria through a post-modern landscape soaked to the bone in the luscious and deliriously schizophrenic expansion and contraction of the American Psyche. Where eccentric and eclectic are the sacraments in the high church of the information highway, characters fragment and congeal at the same time, and the reader finds herself submerged while floating over the boundless and splintered netherworld of American pop culture.

Proper names are dropped like tabs of LSD, brand names are laid out like lines of methamphetamine and the tyrannically self-referential broadcast world of media stardom combines with the latest techno-scientific terminology to entice the reader to unabashed speed with a lure of easy digestion.

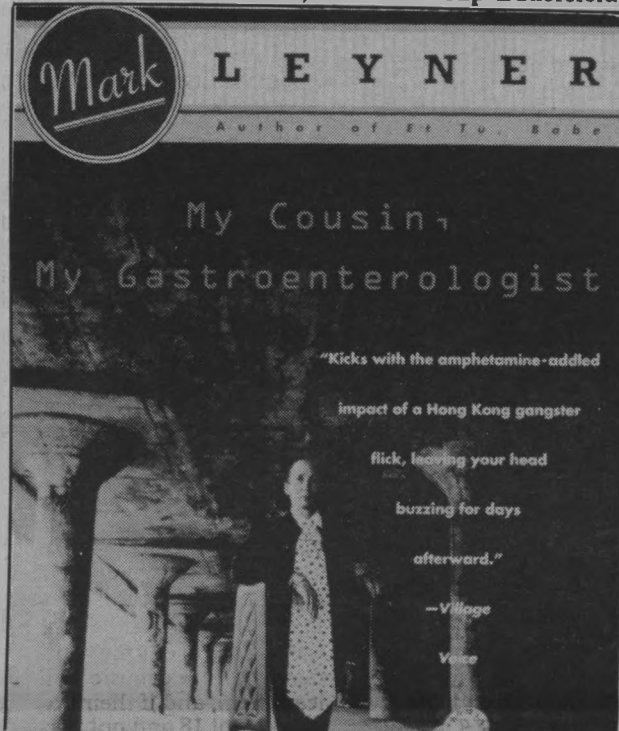
Leyner's characters are fetishized to exacerbate and explicate their unique individuality as well as

tical, tangential, a parody of easy-read popular fiction interspersed with synergistic formalisms — the brand name, the medical-technical term, the acronym — and as direct as a shotgun blast. Ever indicative of America's addiction to catch-all phraseology, easily processable sound bites and revolving doors, Mark Leyner tears off the paper walls of the prepackaged American imagination, and inserts his own ad copy. Leyner makes *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist* a must-read for those who savor every sound bite, who love television news,

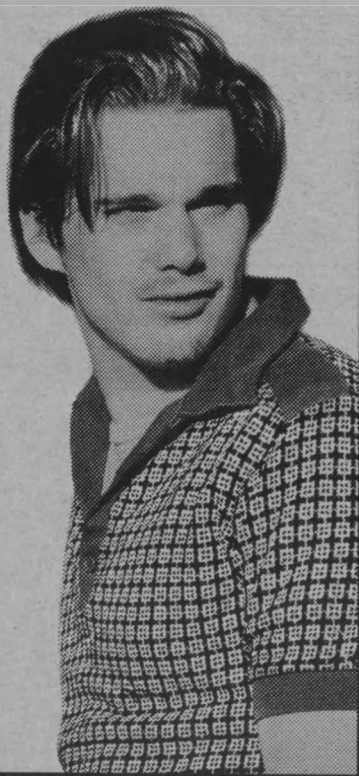
who read *Mondo 2000*, who find Bill Burroughs a little too membrane-oriented or deviant but still like the cryptic, iconographic complexity he exudes, and of course, for those who love nothing more than to be lost and speeding through the brightly colored nowhere of American pop culture, reading the signs along the way.

The writer, Mark Leyner, will be reading from both *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist* and *Et Tu, Babe* at UCSB's Campbell Hall on Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 8 p.m.

—Kip Bauersfeld



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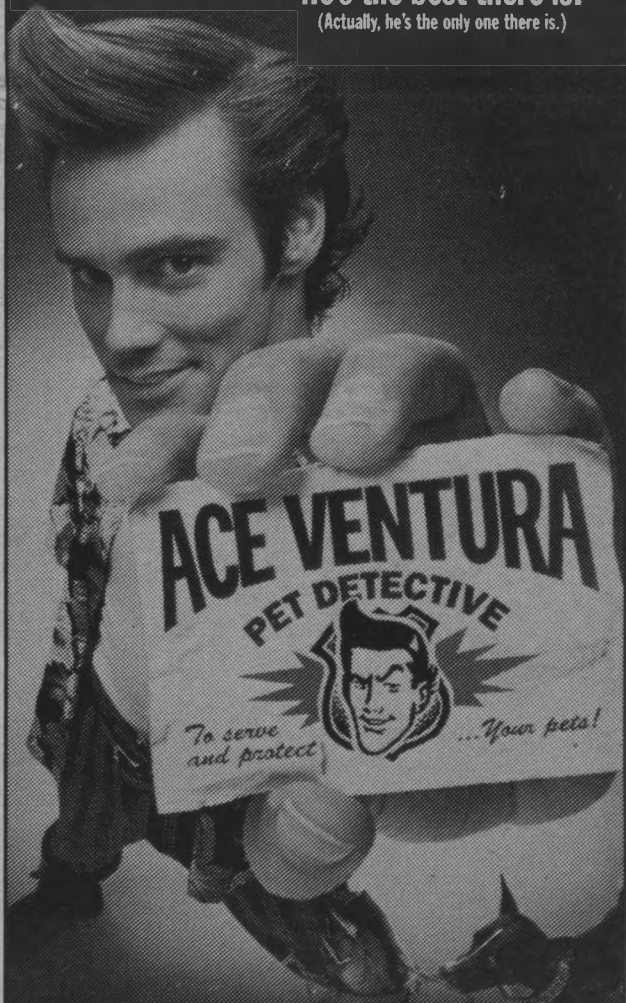
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all this is falling begins to shudder and spin, as if your masticating jaws were attempting for the third time that day to gut a box of petrified Junior Mints found on the floor of a Hoboken movie theater.

Mark Leyner is a pop culture guru, the high priest of name dropping, the swami of info-surfing. Wedged between the cultic infoism of William Gibson's science fiction and the paranoidesque overthink of Thomas Pynchon, Leyner leads the reader on a fast-paced, sprawling and at times ludicrously funny journey to the heart of nowhere. No need to worry though, Leyner does know how to use a period. His writing style is succinct, supercharged with the normative conventions of pop culture, clear and unimpeded. Leyner drags the reader kick-

their strange isolation. De sires, needs and requests roam freely inside each chapter in a disparaging search for an identity that only begins to find itself in the endless continuity of the search itself. Leyner's prose is an endless quest and discovery, seeking the flashy familiarity that perennially satiates American pop culture and intoxicates its devotees with a panoplic symphony of sign; signs that find their significance in passing, in alluding to the wonder of the next, to the momentary, Bacchanalian frenzy that comes with the sight of the words Buddy Ebsen, Pepto-Bismol, AK-47, adenine, thymine, cytosine, QE II, Bertolt Brecht/Barbra Streisand, Hyundai, Librium, the Houston Astrodome, the Hoboken Elks Club and on and on and on ...

Leyner's writing is ellip-



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Rules:

1. NO PHOTOCOPIED BALLOTS.
2. Ballots must be dropped off at the **Daily Nexus** Ad Office, underneath Storke Tower, by **Friday, February 11, at 5pm.**
3. The "Best Of" issue will be published on Friday, February 25.
4. ONE Ballot per person.
5. Ballots must be filled out with reasonable completeness. Ballots with less than half of the blanks filled will be recycled with alacrity.
6. NOTE: The Nexus' "Best of UCSB" is intended to be a good-natured contest among business groups and others in the community. In other words, this is not a cutthroat competition whose results are somehow of deep and lasting significance. Please do not take it as such.
7. Decisions of Ballot referees are final.

1. Best Thing About UCSB _____

2. Best Professor _____

3. Best Class _____

4. Best Class to Sleep Through _____

5. Best Excuse for Turning in a Paper Late _____

6. Best Excuse for not Graduating in 4 Years _____

7. Best Place to Eat on Campus _____

8. Best Bakery _____

9. Best Coffee House _____

10. Best Pizza Place _____

11. Best Place to Drink Beer _____

12. Best Mexican Restaurant _____

13. Best Barbecue Joint _____

14. Best Burrito Eatery _____

15. Best Chinese Restaurant _____

16. Best Hamburger Spot _____

17. Best Vegetarian Restaurant _____

18. Best Sandwich Shop _____

19. Best Breakfast Place _____

20. Best Place to Eat if Your Folks are Picking up the Tab _____

21. Best Way to Save Money _____

22. Best Secondhand Clothing Store _____

23. Best Hair Salon _____

24. Best Bookstore _____

25. Best Bike Shop _____

26. Best Music Store _____

27. Best Night Club _____

28. Best Place to Play Pool _____

29. Best Dive Bar _____

30. Best Beach _____

31. Best Surf Spot _____

32. Best Way to Get Tar Off Your Feet _____

33. Best Hike _____

34. Best Place to People Watch _____

35. Best Computer Game _____

36. Best Afternoon Getaway _____

37. Best Cheap Date _____

38. Best Place to Hear Live Music _____

39. Best Local Band _____

40. Best Radio Station _____

41. Best Happy Hour _____

42. Best Stupid Thrill _____

43. Best Sign of the Times _____

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