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artsweek

The Weekly Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus

Also Inside:
Movie and
Music Reviews!

The Bluetones are a band from Hounslow, England, which, in case your English geography is not up to par, is near Heathrow Airport in London. This fine quartet, comprised of singer/lyricist Mark Morriss, bassist Scott Morriss, drummer Eds Chesters and guitarist Adam Devlin, gets my vote for the best new pop band out of Britain. They've honed their skills on tour with the likes of Supergrass, while the less talented scruffs got all the attention.

However, in January, the hounds were released in the form of the Bluetones' first single, "Slight Return," which sent the band out of the peewee league and into the majors. They followed their success up with a second single, "Are You Blue or Are You Blind?", and just released their debut album, *Expecting to Fly*, stateside. It's slammin'.

Artsweek, in our quest to bring good stuff to your attention, managed to chat with three of the four 'tones (all but Devlin). The following is a quite bluetonious story.

Could you give us a little of the band's background?

Scott Morriss: It was a slow process. We didn't just go and play, we didn't even know what we were going to sound like. Me and Mark have known each other since I was born. Adam lived in the same town and we've known him for a long time, too. He'd been in jazz bands and stuff. We bumped into him by chance one day and we started the band.

So, you've got your own record label?

SM: Yeah, because people kept asking us for demo tapes and we didn't have enough. So many people were asking us for them, we thought we'd press up 2,000 records or so. Our manager paid for it and we ended up selling them all.

You're on A&M now. Do you like having a major label behind you?

SM: Yeah, they're fine.

Eds Chesters: They just let us get on with what we're doing. They don't really interfere. They just give us money.

Are you worried at all about coming to America to try and find success?

SM: I think if you go anywhere, you go open-minded just to see what the people are like. You don't go with preconceptions. I think we're just waiting. We're waiting for when there's a demand and when people do actually want to go and see us. I'm talking about the fans.

How would you describe your music to someone from California?

EC: It's rock 'n' roll, really.

SM: Melodic guitar rock. Pop music. We're influenced by a lot of West Coast American stuff from the '60s — Crosby, Stills & Nash, Buffet, The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield.

Do you see yourself as a primarily English band?

SM: We don't like flying flags in foreign countries or anything. That's a load of rubbish. The thing that's happening is that they're trying to promote "Britpop" in America right now.

EC: It's bollocks.

Mark Morriss: And Bush.

EC: Have you heard of Bush?

Uh, yeah.

EC: It's a disgrace! I think American people should know that they're not a British band. They're an American band.

What do your mothers think of their sons being in rock bands?

SM: They think it's good. My mom comes down to the front and starts moshing.

EC: My mom and dad have always come to see me play. They're very supportive

HEY AMERICA: MEET THE BLUETONES!

by jolie lash



parents.

Have you guys always wanted to be in bands?

SM: No, I didn't ever think that when I got older I'd be in bands. But the last thing I ever wanted to do when I was in school was get a job. I never wanted to work.

EC: I've been in bands for years. I played drums in different bands since I was 13. Just shit bands, local bands.

Why do you make music?

SM: Because we can. You know, some people make music and it's crap. But we do it because we can. It never seemed like it was that difficult of a thing to do. It seemed to come quite easily.

So what do your song titles have to do with your songs?

MM: They've always got to do with the songs, but not necessarily directly. They sum up the feeling of the song more than anything. Like "bluetonic." We were on telly the other night on this video panel and they totally slagged our video. A guest host was on and she goes, "The song's called 'bluetonic,' but I don't hear it once in the song." That's because I don't say it once. I just thought, "You stupid bitch! Just pay attention!" The titles are more just to give a feeling. I don't think it's important to put it in the lyrics, I don't know why. It takes on different dimensions, I suppose.

The word "blue" can have so many different meanings and you use it in your name and your song titles....

MM: Right. Well, we sort of make it our own. We're taking it for ourselves rather than using it in any other cliché way. We make it *blue* to us, rather than lonely or sad or whatever.

Are you happy with *Expecting to Fly*?

MM: It's exactly how I pictured it in my head, really. You go into the studio to try and recreate what you heard, you know? And we've only started to realize our potential. We're already good, but nowhere near as good as we're gonna get.

How are writing duties shared?

MM: It's a pretty even split. The music comes from one person, a germ or seed of an idea and they write it down. Maybe it's just a little line or whatever and we try as a band and see where it's going and we all work on it. Sometimes it comes from the bassline. There's no Noel Gallaghers. Actually, there's four Noel Gallaghers in the band.

Blowin' Up

I saw two very different movies recently. One, the Iranian film *The White Balloon*, is an example of subtle, artful expression, the other, *Kingpin*, is immature and intentionally pointless. As different as these two films are, I enjoyed them on a very similar level.

The White Balloon is the story of a little girl named Razieh who loses her money on the way to the store. Razieh and her brother Ali try to get the money back and have several amusing and touching encounters with various people along the way. It is the innocence of the children

be 22 or so. That's good moviemaking. It's all about perspectives.

There's just something funny about a group of people in elaborate costumes throwing bags of garbage at the Amish. I will also admit to finding humor in the nipple erection that Randy Quaid gets when he steps into a walk-in freezer.

Most of *The White Balloon* is spent with exclusively children on the screen. The kids' limited world view doesn't cloud the overall significance. Aside from the great performances by Aida Moham-madkhani (Razieh) and Mohsen Kalifi



and the harshness of their environment that make their perspectives so interesting.

The plot of *Kingpin* revolves around the quest of a down and out ex-bowling champ (Woody Harrelson) and an Amish bowling prospect (Randy Quaid) to win a million dollars at a tournament. It's the idiotic and largely unconnected sequence of jokes that I found pleasing. The two bowlers' limited mental faculties and propensity to make poor decisions give viewers the precious opportunity to see the world through the eyes of people that be should avoided at all costs.

Randy Quaid, who is probably 50 years old, plays a character that is supposed to

(Ali), the direction of Jafar Panahi stands out as the film's greatest asset. Panahi manages to create a deeper level of meaning within the story of the lost money, carefully emphasizing the community's general goodness as it helps the distressed children.

Both of these films are worthy of your time, but somehow I think you'd find *The White Balloon* of more lasting worth. Who's to say that you'd agree? After all, it's all about perspectives.

Campbell Hall plays host to *The White Balloon* tomorrow at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$4 for students and \$5 general. Don't worry too much about when and where *Kingpin* is playing.

—Noah Blumberg

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A Tribe Called Quest / *Beats, Rhymes and Life* / Jive

Who would have thought that A Tribe Called Quest, the group that brought you "Bonita Applebum" back in the day, would still be bringing hip-hop to our ears three albums later? Well, the group that was setting trends then is still a step ahead with their latest album *Beats, Rhymes and Life*. Quest is, of course, made up of emcees Q-Tip and Phife with DJ Ali Shaheed Muhammad. Production with the exception of one song is handled by the three-man team of Q-Tip, Ali and Jay-Dee (The Pharcyde's former producer), who are collectively known as The Ummah. The Ummah's flavor consists of tight, precise drum tracks complemented by loops of all varieties.

The rhymes don't disappoint. Q-Tip and Phife flow effortlessly on every track and still find time to remain extremely creative. The content is relevant, with topics ranging from the East Coast/West Coast beef to fake emcees that always want to battle. I already see people sleeping on the first single off the album, "Ince Again." Don't fall victim to the sleepy eyes, this album is classic Tribe. I usually pick out my favorite songs to mention, but this is a complete package and should be taken as a whole.

—Todd One

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds / *Murder Ballads* / Reprise

Why they don't put the Nick Caves of the world out of their misery, I'll never know. Instead they decide to let him revamp and revitalize his fading career by climbing upon the backs of PJ Harvey and Kylie Minogue (of "Do the Locomotion" fame ... or is it infamy?).

Sad and sobby Cave uses the blessing of a record deal to whine and moan and groan and cry and bitch and whine and moan and ... y'know. Not that solemnity is always a curse — many English bands do it just fine on their records — but what the hell do they have to complain about in Australia anyway? They've got all the good comedic actors like Yahoo Serious!

OK, I'm just kidding, I'm sure there's a lot of stuff that sucks over there, but it *couldn't* be as bad as Cave makes it sound, for cryin' out loud. Worse than bad actors who form bands is Cave's attempt at being a "Western Cowboy." Wack, wack, wack, wack, wack, wack, wack.

—Keni-J & Jolie Lash

Various Artists / *Evolution: 1986-1996* / Higher Octave

This is a two-disc compilation of songs by 20 New Age artists. There's a significant amount of slow, sappy American instrumental music, but some songs do have an up tempo and it would be wrong not to say that a lot of this qualifies as world music.

I'm not particularly a fan of New Age — I find a lot of it lamely bland and too whitebread to even cope with — but I *am* a fan of any type of music that strikes a chord and expresses the simple truth that music is beautiful. Fortunately, the latter is more the type of material you'll find here — you'll definitely need to have an open mind, but you may just find *Evolution* worthwhile. It's perfect to relax to and, interestingly, some of the musicians on it have come into the genre from groovy rock bands like Santana, Jefferson Airplane and Journey. Definitely a reasonable starter kit, to say the least.

—Connie Maher



hayden / *everything i long for* / outpost

Although hayden's *everything i long for* has been out for a few months, it's been in my head a lot this week. This record is simply awesome.

From start to finish, the debut disc by this Canadian hunk (damn, he's fine!) oozes sweetness and (what's better yet) sincerity. My fave track, "in september," has one of the many memorable hooky choruses on the record, but means so much more because of its lyrics: "I don't need to take this shit from you / I don't want you calling me up at 2:00 / Just to tell me about some guy you met who / while at a party told you that he loved you." My friend Salter told me that those lyrics reminded him of how he felt when he first came to college and his girlfriend would call him. I felt so bad when he told me that.

The rest of the album shows that hayden's soul is that of a sweet, innocent romantic. You almost feel bad for him after listening to *everything i long for*, not because he's a complainer, but because he's so beautifully expressive that you just get this terrible feeling that there's no way the woman he sings to could ever love him as much as he loves her.

Anyway, I give *everything i long for* my highest recommendation. It's a true nerd-rock classic.

—Marcia Braddock

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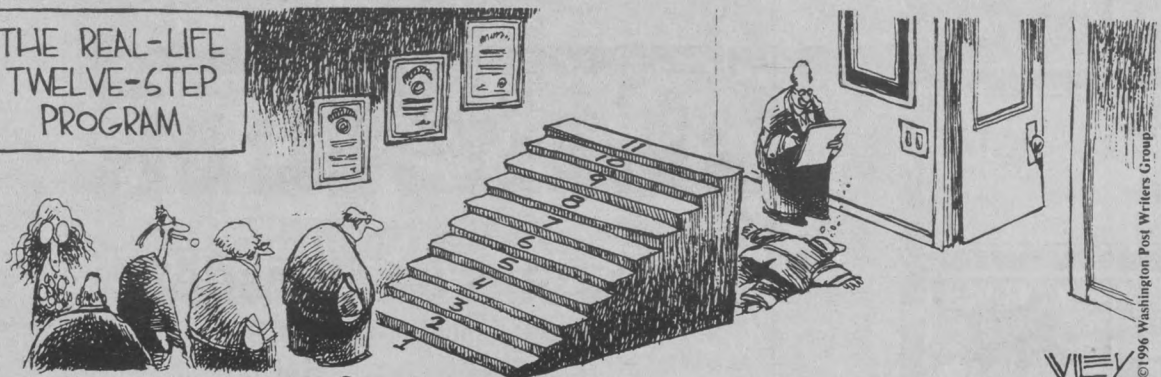
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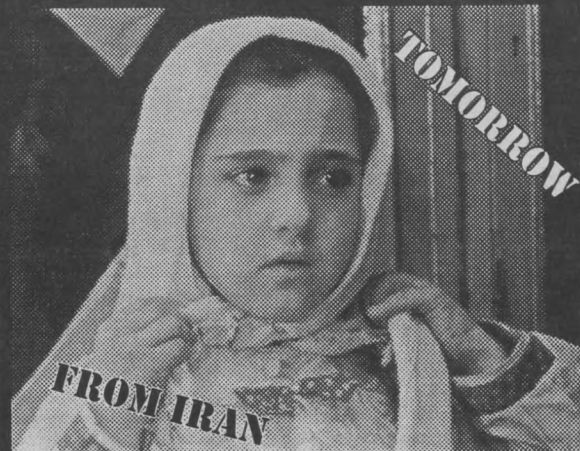
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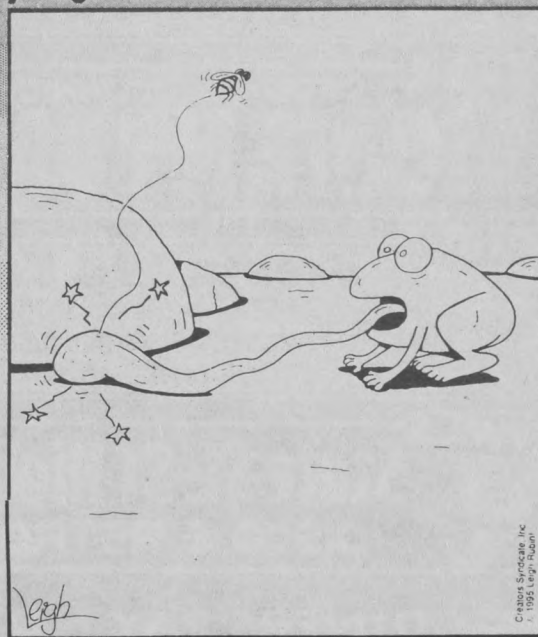
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