

# ARTS WEEK

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus, For the Week of July 20 - July 26, 1994



The Accompanist

Like a pearl in a trough of muddy pebbles, UCSB's Arts and Lectures Summer Film Series rises from the dirge of summer products that Hollywood has offered its audience since school let out and playtime began.

In a field that saw something with the word *Gump* in its title as the surprising reprieve from the tales of wolves, shadows, buses and Julia Roberts' teeth, one should feel nothing but gratitude that Arts and Lectures is currently showing films from both international and independent American filmmakers. Absolutely none of them feature runaway babies.

The Summer Series began with the emotive, autobiographical account of life on the wrong side of the besieged British government. *In the Name of the Father* portrayed the controversial imprisonment of an Irishman (Daniel Day-Lewis), accused of being a member of the IRA.

Eloquent, artfully-spun narratives from France — *Blue* — and England —

*Shadowlands* — headed the European field, while *The Scent of Green Papaya* told of life in Vietnam before the country was ravaged by war.

The American input, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*, provided the obligatory babe to the lineup, in the form of quirky Johnny "I'm more famous now because poor River Phoenix died outside my club" Depp. But even he was quite good in it.

*The Snapper*, like the other Irish offering, is a shock to the system amidst all those gently digestible stories with sweet, harmonic soundtracks. Written by Roddy Doyle, who also wrote *The Commitments*, the film takes the term "gritty realism" to a new level, unafraid to smack you in the face with close-ups of acne and childbirth, and the unbearable realness of being.

Sharon is 19 and pregnant. The father of the child is the porky, mustached father of her best friend, their encounter an unfortunate case of the beer goggles. The

tight-knit Irish neighborhood in which they live is relentless in its humiliation of Sharon, her parents and her four brothers and sisters, all living together in a tiny house.

They often simulate killing each other. But the family battles the town's prejudices together, although the father (Colm Meaney, transporter chief O'Brien from "Star Trek") spends most of his time at the pub, as does Sharon up until approximately two hours before her waters burst. The best scene is the one in which the family happily conga around the front garden at the news of the birth.

Harsh, grotty and fabulously funny, *The Snapper* exemplifies all that Hollywood shies away from, including oral sex.

The season will continue offering you an alternative to the dream machine. Coming July 21 is *The Accompanist*, set in Nazi-occupied Paris. On July 24 is *Fiorille*, described as "a lush, romantic epic" — must be Italian. The series con-

cludes with the true story of a woman in the Wild West, *The Ballad of Little Jo*, on July 28.

This is not all to suggest that the European film industry is infinitely superior to Hollywood. It is just that their differences are accentuated when Hollywood insults its audience's intelligence with the droth it serves up during the summer.

Does it not realize that just as people tend to have more sex in summer, so they spend more money? Everybody has less to do, more time to go to the movies and are filled with the joys of the summer holidays. The Arts and Lectures Summer Film Series is filling a gap that Hollywood has left wide open. Just remember to bring your own popcorn.

All Arts and Lectures' films begin at 7 p.m. in Campbell Hall. Tickets can be purchased on the door or through the box office, which can be reached at 893-3535.

—Louise Tutt



Fiorille

# FRUZZPAGE

What's up out there? I know usually you turn to this section and expect to find a bomb-ass review on one of the latest, fattest, dopest hip-hop albums around by me, the one and only cool DJ Fruzz, but no more — the format has changed. I'm strictly doing House music these days. Wait! Don't trip, I was just phuking around.

Naw, really, pick up the Nexus again, yeah that's it, right or. But seriously though, it's 1994, mad albums are coming out, fat singles are being dropped weekly, and concerts are popping out all over. Kids from the East and West Coasts are representing hip-hop culture and music. Plus, take a look around at what's going on in the world. That devil Bill Clinton threatening to send troops to Haiti to kill brothas, that devil Pete Wilson sending troops to the border and to our inner cities to kill brothas here while overpricing education at these "great" institutions. I mean, the "Juice" stands trial while Bush and Reagan run free, shit is ridiculous.

Looking at all this, I said to myself Fruzz-daddy, because I call myself that, people need to start waking up to reality especially here in Santa Barbara. So I scrapped my old format of reviewing a single LP each week and now bring you the Fruzz Page, a weekly column highlighting music, culture and politics of the hip-hop community (and unlike the Source, there is no fashion section). So Taa-Dow.



If you read my column last week, then you would know how hype I get to get records in the mail, especially from artists who I think are sick. So on Monday when I saw the new album by Coolio, *It Takes a Thief*, in my mailbox, I was hype as phuk. "County Line" was the bump, and so was "Sticky Fingers" and "Fantastic Voyage," before I heard it everywhere I went.

Plus, knowing his old shit from W.C. and The Madd Circle, I was ready for some next shit. Unfortunately, it never came. I don't know, the album just didn't move me. I mean, I liked three other cuts besides the above, especially "U Know Hool!" which features members from the Madd Circle, but other than that, I just wasn't on that vibe. Oh well.

However, all was not bleak this week as another LP came through and was fat as phuk. *The Bomb*, a compilation produced by the Bay Area magazine of the same name, offers 14 underground tracks from a diverse group of Northern California's finest unsigned MCs. Check cuts by MCs Blackalicious ("Lyric Fathom"), Homeless Derelix ("Fuck You") and Madchild with the world famous DJ Q-Bert ("Pregnant").

You know, I really should not have to be saying this, but in case you have not had access to any hip-hop magazines, radio stations, clubs or anything, please go get Nas' album *Illmatic* on Columbia. Not only is this brotha one of the best lyricists out now, but over beats by DJ Premier, Large Professor, Pete Rock and Q-Tip. Come on now!!!

### Singles: Are You Single?

I've really been vibing off of the new Alkoholiks single "Mary Jane/Relieve Yourself" on Loud Records. The shit's fat. The Liks, out of L.A., drop mad lyrics on "Mary Jane," their homage to herb, over a fly-ass beat produced by my man Can Kick from the Loot Pack Crew out of Oxnard, who should be coming out with their own single before the end of the summer. And as for the B-side cut, "Relieve Yourself," the Liks just freak the mic over a crazy deep fat beat with more bass than Nino Brown. Check it.

And last but not least there is the new single "Stress" by Organized Konfusion, out on Hollywood Basic. It's been three years too long since fools slept on their self-titled debut album. But know that Prince Poetry and Pharoahe Monche are back strong, flexing skills and dropping knowledge on the bullshit brothas have to face in this phuked-up society. Check the Large Professor Remix and the B-side cut also, both slamming. I got to check Organized in L.A. last weekend and all I got to say is don't sleep on this single and don't you dare sleep on their next album or I'll have to make you wear a "Color Me Badd" T-shirt.

Finally, I heard that Black Sheep was finally going to drop a new single before the end of this summer and a whole EP before the year is out. Puba got back with Brand Nubian and they should be dropping some knowledge on wax soon. Hammer is still wack as phuk, and Large Professor needs to come out with his own album. Yo, bring back EPMD, free Geronimo Pratt, and wake your punk ass up and get involved in making a difference in this expensive summer camp. As always, don't sleep ... peace. Fruzz.

# OMG ACTION BUT NO HEART

Action movies are a strange breed. They are meant primarily to dazzle and excite us, but since they can't get away with just showing an endless series of stunts, they also attempt to portray a passable story between the fist fights.

Some action movies really try to create a good and believable story, while others are content to make fun of that convention by serving up a subtle, or not so subtle, parody of the genre.

And then there are those action movies that attempt to satirize traditional action flicks while still playing it straight enough to pass themselves off as one of the bunch. They aren't successful as spoof, they don't have that great of a story and the viewer is never sure when and if they should take the movie seriously. The result is a confused and vaguely unsatisfied feeling on the part of the viewer, who probably won't like the film that much.

*True Lies*, the latest Arnold Schwarzenegger action/special effects movie from director James Cameron, is such a film. Its opening scenes — as well as many subsequent ones — are straight out of several James Bond movies, and certainly invite the viewer to laugh at action movie conventions. But

the film also tries to take itself seriously, giving more attention to the interpersonal relationships of Schwarzenegger's character than his trademark cheesy one-liners.

But have no fear — the cheesy one-liners are here too.

In *True Lies*, our man Arnie is a super-secret American super-spy, so good at hiding his real line of work that his wife of 15 years (Jamie Lee Curtis) thinks he's a boring computer sales rep. When she calls him at the office to see if he will be late for dinner, he's actually off saving the world from almost certain doom. It's an interesting set-up, and the way in which that story is carried out is not too bad.

You've already seen most of what is in this movie, however. As Schwarzenegger stalks around the terrorist compound, breaking necks and shooting down dozens of gun-toting bad guys without a scratch to himself, the very Arnie action flick *Commando* immediately comes to mind. And the super-secret super-spy setup has *Bond*, *James Bond*, written all over it — starring Charlton Heston as M.

All of this is done walking a line between seriousness and parody, and it is almost impossible to tell what the movie is trying to



be at any given moment.

Unfortunately, the one bit of story originality present in *True Lies* is a very wide streak of cruelty. Oh sure, we expect Arnie to kill people in brutal and disgusting ways (that is, after all, what made him a star); but what is not expected is the personal humiliation of a few characters, including Curtis. The movie is also grossly sexist.

The stunts and special effects are the good stuff in this film, including many eye-poppers. But it's also a funny movie, thanks mostly to — are you sitting down? — Tom Arnold, who plays Schwarzenegger's sidekick and super-spy partner. Arnold is a surprising bright spot in this movie, as he is able to be both a wisecracking

joker and down-to-business spy guy at the same time — walking that line of satire and seriousness better than the film itself does.

Ultimately, this movie will be compared to previous Cameron films such as *Aliens*, *The Terminator* and *T2*, and although the action and special effects of *True Lies* measure up to its predecessors, the movie itself does not. Great stunts, some funny material and a few good ideas, but after the first two hours many viewers will be left wondering, "Isn't this over yet?" When an action flick gets slow and starts to bore its audience, it's in trouble.

—Scott McPherson

## Pros and Cons of Some Big Action Films

<b>Alien</b> ▶ scared everyone, set the standard for years  ♥ made it hard to walk in dark places alone for a couple of weeks	<b>Terminator 2</b> ▶ The special effects on the silver guy were great  ♥ You should see the amazing footage that got cut!	<b>Total Recall</b> ▶ They adapted a Philip K. Dick story  ♥ It sure is a weird adaptation!	<b>True Lies</b> ▶ Hey! Tom Arnold!  ♥ A nuclear WHAT goes off?
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**Sebadoh**  
**4 Song CD**  
**Domino Records**

Sebadoh kindly gives us an import-only taster for the forthcoming full-length album *Bake Sale*, on their lyrically titled *4 Song CD*. Actually, there are 10 songs on this disc, so the title is some sort of nerdy joke, but since it means more music for less money, I can forgive them. Of the 10 songs, there is the usual mix of Lou, Bob and Jason songs, plus Bob's interpretation of the Coltrane classic "Naima." Due to personal preference, this mix makes the album uneven in quality, but there are definite classics in the making.

"Rebound" is my favorite on this album so far; it is fast and energetic due to the bass and drums, but also completely enervating because of the one inane catchy riff that Lou man-

## THEY BUBBLE AND THEY SQUEAK

ages to sneak into many of his songs. The lyrics also put a smile on my face as they outline a dysfunctional love story. The other song all three band members contributed to, "Careful," also carries the melancholy but rockin' theme, and sounds a bit like the Afghan Whigs somehow.

Bob's songs I traditionally have not been too fond of, perhaps because they seem mainly like weird, cut-and-paste affairs, but I thought his version of "Naima," with saxophone overlaid with electric organ and drums suitable for a velvet-wallpapered cocktail lounge, was pretty interesting.

Of Jason's works, I like "Lime Kiln" because of the rattles and pinging sounds, and the Slint-like "40203." Both of these, we are told, were recorded all by Jason's self on a 4-track.

The two Lou-only songs, "Not A Friend" and "Mystery Man," are good but not as appealing as the songs by the full band, simply because I'm getting tired of the low-fi, "angst about women" angle that is always being presented.

Perhaps Lou's songs remind me of how much of a humorous, Buddy Holly experience it was to watch a live show where young women were drooling over

the poor guy, rather small and average, wanting to help him like a little boy lost. Then again, maybe I'm cranky because I haven't had my nap today. If you are a staunch Sebadoh fan or like their truly lo-fi stuff best, you must buy this CD. If you aren't a die-hard, cross your fingers and wait for the full-length.

—Rena Tom





# TALES FROM ELSEWHERE

What would happen if Batman was a pirate in the West Indies? Or if Superman's spaceship had landed in the jungles of India instead of the midwest and he had been raised by wolves, just like in *Jungle Book*?

These scenarios and others are explored in this year's round of DC Comics' annuals. Once a year, many comic book titles have a special "annual" issue that is larger and generally more in-depth than regular issues. It often gives the creators a chance to use different ideas with their characters that can't be fit into the normal schedule run. DC has taken that idea further this summer by introducing the issues under the banner "Elseworlds."

Each issue starts with an explanation: *In Elseworlds, heroes are taken from their usual settings and put into strange times and places — some that have existed, or might have existed, and others that can't, couldn't or shouldn't exist.* In this format, regular characters are given a lot more leeway in their actions, and often

the creators really shake things up.

The concept is not totally new. Marvel Comics has had several runs of the *What If* series released over the years, issues that have generally dealt with what would have happened if one character had or had not acted some way in their past. However, the idea of taking a well-known character and putting them into a different setting is refreshingly new.

The majority of the annuals are in the stores already and there have been several excellent stories so far. Issues worth checking out include Batman as a pirate prince fighting against his rival sea captain, "The Laughing Man," in the *Detective Comics* annual, a young Superman living on an Earth that's been taken over by his native Kryptonians in the *Man of Steel* annual, and the struggle between Batman and Two-Face, *a la Citizen Kane* in *Legends of the Dark Knight*. Additional titles are still to be released before the end of the summer.

—Matthew Nelson



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TOMORROW! Riveting. SNEAK PREVIEWS  
Thursday, July 21



Sweeping and sensual. NEW YORK TIMES  
Sunday, July 24



# BASEBALL HEAVEN

The only problem facing *Angels is the Outfield* is that it will be saddled with the moniker "a feel-good hit of the summer," a phrase that curmudgeons like myself avoid like the plague. But there is something different about this film.

Perhaps it is this movie's subject matter revolving around baseball and family. Baseball *as it should be*, that is. There is no mention of contracts or salary raises. No mention of strikes or labor negotiations. Nothing to take away from the fact that this is a child's game played by grown men. Proof positive that this film is a work of fiction.

The film revolves around the California Angels and a young boy in a foster home named Roger (Joseph Gordon-Levitt). When Roger's father leaves him, he tells the boy that their family will get back together when the last-place Angels win the pennant. Roger offers up a prayer for divine intervention on behalf of the Angels, and it is an-

swered in the form of Al (Christopher Lloyd), who brings some friends from above to help out their namesakes on the baseball diamond. The only catch is that Roger is the only one who can see the angels, and he has to keep quiet about it for fear of scaring them off.

Al and his band of pesky assistants help to push the feeble Angels from their home in last place to the penthouse of the American League West. Roger and his fellow foster child, J.P., (Milton A. Davis, Jr.) are adopted as good luck charms by manager George Knox (Danny Glover), who has a hard time believing in the Angels, both the celestial creatures and the team.

Glover does an outstanding job as Knox, taking what could have been a boring role and making it very entertaining. His temper-tantrums and outbursts make him look like a top student from the Billy Martin school of baseball managing. Also impressive is Tony Danza, who plays an ailing, weak-



armed pitcher who makes a comeback as the Angels make their run to the top. His role, the most serious of the characters in the film, shows a side that goes beyond his comedic television work.

The film is based upon 1951's *Angels in the Outfield*. While the principal plot remains the same, the new version differs in that the audience is able to see the angels, whereas in the original it was left to their imagination. The use of sophisticated computer imagery puts the playful cherubs seamlessly into the action and allows for some dramatic and fun moments.

The angels are handled in a non-denominational sort of way that even atheists would appreciate.

Although there is mention of "God" and the angels are decidedly of the Christian persuasion, there is no discussion of their origin, nor of their reason for being.

Overall, the action sequences are well done, with the characters looking more like baseball players than actors playing baseball players. Also, look for cameos from former big leaguers Mitchell Page and Carney Lansford.

As baseball films go, this rates on a par with *Major League* in terms of enjoyment. And if life follows art, look for the Angels to make a big stretch run in the second half.

Hey, it could happen.  
—Ross French

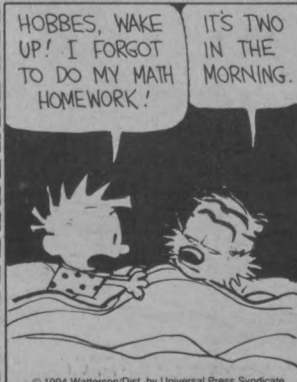
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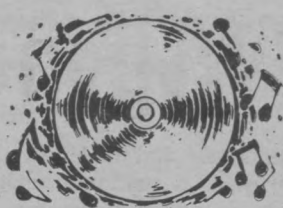


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WUOSH



By Kevin Carhart



# DISAPPOINTING JOURNEY

Earlier this year a deal was struck between TriStar Music, a division of Sony, and the English record label Creation, as a part of Creation's 10-year anniversary. Creation has talented, popular bands and a back catalog of beloved, influential indie-pop. TriStar Music has the same Pegasus logo as TriStar Pictures — they're part of a machine that's very, very big indeed — so they bring to the deal the ability to distribute many more Creation artists to the Americans than just those who are signed over here already.

When it began, the new Jazz Butcher album and a domestic release of the Telescopes kicked off the conglomeration. The latest CDs to come from this deal are the Biff Bang Pow! compilation *Bertula Pop*, and a stateside issue of the Weather Prophets' 1988 *Diesel River*.

Biff Bang Pow! is Creation's "house band," featuring label mastermind Alan McGee and business partner Dick Green. At various times, the group has also featured Phil King, now of Lush, Dave Evans, later of the Jesus and Mary Chain, and Ed Ball. (This information nicked from a story in British weekly NME.)

Listening to this new compilation of tracks from their albums of 1987 to 1991 reveals Biff Bang Pow! to be one of the pioneers of '80s echoes, atmospherics and feedback, like My Bloody Valentine and the Jesus and Mary Chain. Those bands, and even the later waves of groups on labels like 4AD and Creation — such as Lush, Ride and Slowdive — have gotten an amount of attention that is modest by some standards, but it's still a lot compared to Biff Bang Pow! This is surprising when the compilation unfolds, and every track is great.

The opener, "She Paints," even sounds a bit like the Go-Betweens' "You Won't Find it Again," which is not an easy comparison to reach. In places, they evoke the Field Mice. Notable moments include the hushed "Miss You," which only holds its quiet beauty up on placards in a dim light, then picks up steam and volume and goes out with twice the layers and incidentals of sound, making for a glorious moment.

In the end, "Miss You" is almost soulful. But most of the album is the jangling strum that early Creation was known for. The Weather Prophets were also one of the groups in those days, with Peter Astor writing some spare pop with a variety of feels. "In My Room" works in some wide, developing guitar strikes, and the tense bass on "Wide Open Arms" makes it sound like a spy anthem. A fairly plain cover of Robert Johnson's "Stones in my Passway" shows how well those blues can be redone, as well as how much all this pop owes to those sorts of songs.

**Paul Oakenfold**  
*Journeys by DJ Moonshine*

For some time now, I have been championing the capabilities and accomplishments of electronically arranged or generated music. I have tried to open peoples' minds to new genres of music such as House or Trance, and encouraged them to buy what I thought were good examples of these genres. Considering the domination rock music and its sub-genres have had on popular culture for the last 30 years, this has not been a simple task.

Many people just cannot get over the notion that music is only music if it is played live by "real" people on "real" instru-

ments. They only take into consideration the process of making it, and ignore the end result. On the other hand, there are many who, based solely on their taste, genuinely don't like these types of music, finding them monotonous or overly repetitive.

The truth is that much of House and Trance music is just that — monotonous and overly repetitive. But just like any form of music, there is good stuff and shitty stuff. Because House and Trance and such are relatively new genres, the exposure most people get to these are the weak attempts that many mainstream groups make at remixing one of their songs into a nifty "house mix." This is unfortunate, because, as is the case with a lot of mainstream music, the remixes

are usually complete shit.

A prime example of this is the new release in the series *Journeys by DJ*. Coming from Moonshine, which is normally a good label, the disc contains 15 songs mixed by Paul Oakenfold — "the most recognized DJ in the world." Paul is one of those guys who helps bands remix their songs into silly dance versions. His production and remixing list includes U2, The Shamen, Massive Attack and even Snoop Doggy Dogg.

The music on the CD is the monotonous, overly repetitive stuff that repels many people. All the songs have the same steady one-two beat and a variety of unoriginal electronic sounds looped over and over again. There is no sense of depth in any of the

songs, which is one the greatest attributes of good dance music.

The most surprising thing about the CD is how weak Paul Oakenfold is as a DJ, when he is supposedly "the man" in Europe. His mixes include straight cuts from one song to another, which is only cool if done at specific points in the songs, when it enhances the mix. He also simply fades one record in while letting the other wind out, which, while standard practice for some DJs, is not very impressive. He never cuts it up between records, and his mix choices are not even well selected. For a guy who has mixed for more than 100,000 people in stadiums, this is really a minimal effort.

—Matt Turner

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