

Arts Week

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the *Daily Nexus*. For the Week of June 30-July 6, 1993

Places To Go

• In trying to keep with the times, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History has released a Dino News mailer about an exhibit that will take patrons 100-million-years back in time. In a primeval forest visitors will come face-to-face with monsters long extinct. This will apparently serve as a fine educational complement to Jurassic Park.

• **Wednesday.** The Santa Barbara Shakespeare Festival, a local theatre company, will be performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Center Stage Theatre in the Paseo Nuevo Mall. There are six UCSB graduates involved in the production. The acoustic folk rock duo Joel & Robert will perform at the Green Dragon.

• **Thursday.** Patrice Leconte's bittersweet film *The Hairdresser's Husband* is showing at Campbell Hall, at 8 PM. Tonight also marks the final Circus Vargas showings in Santa Barbara. The last two shows are at 4:30 PM and 7 PM.

• **Friday.** The play *Shirley Valentine* by Willy Russell premieres tonight at the Circle Bar B Dinner Theatre. The Circle Bar B in Goleta puts on an interesting show. As a full meal is served through the performance, along with alcohol.

• **Saturday.** Reggae fans should enjoy Mystic Traveler at Toe's Tavern. During the performance there will be a Free Longboard Give-Away as well.

• **Sunday.** Independence day should serve as a fine respite from school, as well as art. Go to a party, barbecue or watch an old movie with the neighbors.

• **Monday.** In beautiful Solvang the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Oklahoma!, one of the most beloved and widely produced musicals in theatrical history, through live performances.

• **Tuesday.** At the idyllic Music Academy of the West, in Montecito, three classical pieces will be performed at 8 PM. The show will feature Mozart's quintet in E-flat for Piano and Winds, Kodaly's Duet for Violin and Cello and Schumann's Piano Quartet in E-Flat.

• To get your gig, exhibit or opening listed in "Places To Go", send the Daily Nexus press releases, or phone us at 893-2691.
-Martin Boer

"Eeenchrodeen, Garbaldo," rings incomprehensibly through the Big Top. A spotlight falls romantically on large hair and rhinestones, soon to grace a tightrope shimmering unimpressively a mere ten feet off the floor of the circus's single ring.

Between the speaker reverb and the accented Ringmistress, it is impossible to say what the tightrope master's real name is, but it doesn't matter. All is forgotten with "Garbaldo's" first struggle with balance and fate. An "oh shit" wells up in the throat of the crowd, halting on the realization that not even the kids are scared. "Big deal," comes out instead. Everyone knows that if Garbaldo's nimbler qualities fail him, his beautiful dancing assistant could catch him before his tights got dirty. Garbaldo's "world-renowned" talent eventually pulls him through the act without a fall, begging the question: why not higher?

Garbaldo — and Circus Vargas — play it close to the ground, losing their superhuman veneer amidst the dust, foregoing the heights promised by the striking 60 foot tent that greets the crowds from Highway 101. An essential piece of circus psychology seems to have been neglected with all the padding and safety wires. People go to the circus to see death-defying acts firsthand, without the benefit of camera tricks and stunt doubles. Anyone can fall ten feet into the arms of a beautiful woman. Without the eminent fear of death we all know and respect in our revered global tightrope community, the only difference between us and Garbaldo is that he can walk and jump on 30 gauge wire.

That's not even worth minimum wage. Some call it recreation.

Circus Vargas travels year-round throughout the states, in communities filled with youngsters and parents alike ready to focus their love on the daring masters of the ring, looking for a little danger, glamour, and action. Just look at how well T2 did nationwide a few summers ago, and try to argue that Americans aren't bored. I mean, metal shape-shifting special effects for muscular actors are just high-tech circus tights. They only work if the action is real. With safety wires and pads, there should be one circus rule: You use, you lose.

Back in WWII, when all of America got to be a hero, if a soldier was shipping out for Iwo Jima, he could count on some tender adoration and a free lunch from his "best girl". She knew that he might be dead the next week, and this might be her last chance to tango (don't blame me, I saw it in the movies). It's the same way with circus acrobats. We love them because we know they're on the verge of death. At Circus Vargas, no one is about to sprain an ankle. When I was a kid at Ringling Bros. acrobats were heroes and circus was war. Everytime I went my parents bought me a cap-gun and placated my childhood hostility with exciting barbs: "Didja see that, kiddo, he almost fell that time." It was real, man, 60 feet in the air. You couldn't even see the safety cables. Baddo.

Now circus is war in a different way, the American Way of the litigious and hyper-politicized '90s. The insurance companies have pulled Garbaldo down from the

heights, stealing his individual verve and leaving him eye-level with a tentful of skeptical Gap-kids. Further, interest group politics, time on their hands, have stormed center ring. Exiting the freeway on the way to revisit traditional Americana, sideshow-style, I was confronted with modern Americana at its most visceral level. Protestors at the corner traipse solemnly and with little fervor holding signs decrying the mistreatment of circus animals. "Boycott Circus Vargas", screams the first sign. Taking out a dollar for parking, I realized I felt guilty for going to the circus. It's easy to tell why Circus Vargas is playing close to the ground. They're ducking.

"Exotic cats that pace are abused," read one of the placards. Watching the cats closely for signs of cattleprods and pacing, they were surprisingly mellow, licking each other throughout the show, then licking the trainer. The kids thought they were cute. More than pacing, the lions and tigers sauntered, their mannerisms pensive and vain, almost bored. The biggest lion is reminiscent of the English guy that introduces "Masterpiece Theatre". So I waited to see what evil had befallen the elephants. "Elephants that sway are abused," read the roadside admonishment. There were no elephants whatsoever at Circus Vargas. Perhaps the protestors had never seen the show. I began to wonder whether the protestors had been hired by a temp agency, but it turned out that the elephants had simply been late for the first show. A confusing political arena can make for a very screwy circus.

See CIRCUS, p.4A

Gone To The Circus

A Fierce Trek Into the Depths of Big-Top Americana by Dan Hilldale

The Poppy Field

By Kevin Carhart

Fun is the Heavenly Option.

SpinART Records has done it again! The New York label has come out with a box set of music to rival last summer's *One Last Kiss* compilation CD. The new contender is *Pop Licks*, a box set of six 7" singles, with one each by Poole, Trampoline, Suddenly Tammy!, Swirl, Veronica Lake and Throw That Beat in the Garbagecan.

The SpinART people have tried to convey a sense of lightheartedness by jokingly giving this set the trappings of a kids' product. The six records, each pressed onto a different color of translucent vinyl, are complemented by a batch of nifty plastic toys — a plastic boat, fish and rubber ball (are nothing to sneeze at), a piece of candy, a couple of the bands' stickers and a coded message imprinted onto the box. While it certainly is gimmicky, they are fun gimmicks. And with 13 excellent songs to make it authentic, the set succeeds where it might have been a bit hokey if the music hadn't been so good.

The first record is by East Coasters Suddenly Tammy!, who were included on last year's collection *One Last Kiss*. Since then SpinART has released a full-length album by the trio.

The song on last year's compilation was "Lamp," which doesn't sound too promising at first. A tinny vocalist begins, "You like the lamp here, and I like it over there ... something about it makes my whole room pink ..." But the song grows on you; it's got that summer anthem quality when you can really appreciate silly lyrics. The new, dark orange 7" features the "Dave Mix," with echoes and improved vocals and "Mt. Rushmore," a track from the album.

Throw that Beat in the Garbagecan is a German pop band who took their name from a B-52s song. They seem to subscribe to the B-52s cartoony feel in their songs and their visual persona; they are wearing costumes on the sleeve photo of their SpinART album, *Large Marge Sent Us*.

But Throw that Beat's vocalists are less nasal and irritating than the B-52s. The tracks on the blue 7" start with a blend of male and female vocals. "Having a Laugh" adds an organ sound. "Lotsi Go Go Go" goes heavy on the background oos and ba-ba-bas. And "I Can't Walk" could be a lighter Toy Dolls played on a banjo.

Trampoline and Poole kind of run together, in that their songs are based around pleasant guitars and vocals which are difficult to make out. The Poole tracks "Tangle Up" and "In My Ear" are faster-paced. They add a female vocalist who isn't mixed very high, making it sound as if she is singing from the back of a studio. This might be a criticism, but faint vocals have gotten to be kind of a trademark of lo-fi pop. The Trampoline tracks "Shocked by a Revelation" and "Green Jacket," are equally hazy, but all four songs are quite good regardless.

The Swirl record starts with a "6/8 Lullaby," which features some really nice harmonies and a violin somewhere in the mix. "If I should die before you do, no church funeral, just a ... lullaby ..." they sing, over some simulated bells.

The group seems good at tapping into both poignancy and weirdness, one after the other, as the sentiment of "6/8 Lullaby" is followed by an unlikely tribute to "Androgeny."

A squall of distortion opens the song, as they belt out lines like, "Mother grows a mustache, Father shaves his legs ... androgeny, sweet harmony." They might be singing "sweet harmony-y" there, but it's hard to say.

Swirl and Veronica Lake both had tracks on *One Last Kiss* as well. The Veronica Lake songs presented here may have been intended for this season. On their first track, "Insecure Baby," they sing about "summer days, climbing trees ..." On the track "When You Smile," they sing, "When the summer's gone, will you still want me around?" After the first track, they've inserted a recording of people playing basketball — this record is meant to be heard in the hot sun.

The songs are played on acoustic guitar, with the former adding some well-placed synthesizer notes that recall their excellent *One Last Kiss* track, "Daisy Kiss." These are probably the moodiest tracks of the whole box, and they do a good job of conjuring up a lazy tone.

As a package, the box set can't be beat. *Pop Licks* is a great showcase for some of the best sounds of 1993.

Behind The Action Uncovering The Genius Of "Hero" by Morgan Freeman

Big deal if the title implies action. People are missing the point. *Last Action Hero* is not about action, it is about film. Action is a mere subplot.

So while Schwarzenegger is taking flack for not fulfilling "action" requirements, he's not being praised for breaking down the silver screen separating our world from theirs. It's thumbs down for not living up to T2 but deserves the same thumbs that rose for *The Player*.

In the diegesis, Schwarzenegger plays Schwarzenegger! but is famous for his Slater films. In the diegesis of the film within the film, Schwarzenegger plays Jack Slater, a buff cop with a big gun.

The film's genius arrives when die-hard Slater fan Danny Madigan is given a golden ticket to see *Slater IV* before it opens to the public. His dream comes true.

Danny sits alone, 10 minutes into the film, when the ticket stub starts to sparkle. He is launched toward the



A Hero To Miss

Arnie's Latest Picture Fails To Match His Previous Efforts

In 1993's version of Hollywood waste, *Last Action Hero*, Tinseltown beats all comers. A misfired attempt at pleasing every age group, the film only reveals what many have known for a long time — that bigger is rarely better in Hollywood.

Columbia Pictures spent a reported \$80 million to tailor its big summer entry to star Arnold Schwarzenegger's standards, which now translates into a PG-13 rating, a strained anti-violence message, and a cute kid for the hero to trade quips with. Now that the big guy has a toddler daughter, he has suddenly developed a conscience.

His first vehicle since *Terminator 2*, Schwarzenegger tackles his biggest role yet: himself. No murderous cyborgs or undercover police sergeant with a heart here. Instead, his Jack Slater is a big screen action hero idolized by young Danny Madigan, who can easily predict the lethal results of every explosion ("Slater lives, both cops die") and is so desensitized to the heavy death toll that he would make a sociologist's dream case study.

The kid is impervious to it all, that is, until he literally jumps into the thick of the action (something about a magic ticket and the legacy of Harry Houdini, but that's not important). Once in the middle of a typical car chase, the child comes out. And so do the film clichés. Screenwriters Shane Black and David Arnott (working with a story from Zak Penn and Adam Leff, who wrote the movie while in college) establish early that this is an exaggerated film-within-a-film, supposedly giving them a license to make every line, situation and explosion over-the-top.

This is where the film first loses control. And by the time a throng of mourners (including nuns and priests) at an Italian funeral pull guns out of their coats, the film resembles *Hudson Hawk* more than T2. Exciting action and broad comedy are a dangerous mix, and no recent film has been able to do it well. Escalating budgets too often get in the way of better jokes. In the case of *Last Action Hero*, what was probably a satirical poke at the action genre in its collegiate incarnation has been turned into an overblown production of Hollywood excess.

All this is unfortunate for director John McTiernan (*Die Hard*, *The Hunt for Red October*) who certainly deserves better than a massive budget, titanic star and hollow script. McTiernan sustains the excitement for as long as possible, but loud crashes and thunderous booms wear on one's patience, not to mention ear drums.

What is perhaps most sad about this film is what all involved have done with their generous resources. For \$80 million, the crew made another tired action movie. In comparison, Steven Spielberg spent \$20 million less on *Jurassic Park* and made dinosaurs. Who's taking out the garbage?

—Brian Banks

screen, and lands in the back of Slater's car, which is engaged in a high-speed chase.

No one in this world is aware of being in a movie, and it is Danny's job to convince them. Slater rejects the idea of being a star named Arnold. Danny takes him to Blockbuster Video to prove it, but when he finds the T2 video, Sylvester Stallone is on the box. "I love him. He's great," Slater grins.

Next, Danny points out that all the women he sees are beautiful. It must be a movie. And, when you look around, the streets and stores are packed with super models; Sharon Stone is standing on the steps of the police station.

Another time, Danny writes vulgar words on a sheet of paper and demands Slater to state them. He refuses. Danny concludes that because the film is PG-13, he can't. Slater is stumped, but not convinced.

Adding to his confusion, Slater can't explain how Danny knows what the bad guys are planning. Danny knows more than anybody in the Slater-world because he saw the first 10 minutes of the film in the theater. Once a spectator in suspense, he now has the chance to straighten things out. Normally your options stop at whispering in your neighbor's ear. Imagine having the opportunity to jump into an episode of *Three's Company* and explain the misunderstanding.

Hitchcock says suspense is created when the spectators know more than the characters, as opposed to mys-

ARNIE, SHARON, TOM
Art by Matt Ragland

Filming Life

Stone's Voyeurism Challenges Our Reality

On the surface, *Sliver* seems shadowed from beginning to end with sex and violence, but underneath it retains a deeper meaning. The film exemplifies the effects of television and film on the spectators, revealing a strong desire of voyeurism within contemporary society.

Sliver addresses a question which many individuals don't dare ask: What effects do television and film have on the eyes of the viewers?

Sharon Stone plays the role of a single woman who moved into an apartment building only to learn that the bedroom she occupies has an alarming past: A woman was killed there. Then, after researching the incident, she finds that the woman looked identical to herself.

Amidst these troublesome events, Stone is harassed by two male neighbors and soon believes one of them to be the murderer. Neighbor Tom Berenger plays a trashy novelist who insists upon taking Stone out, but she is more interested in neighbor William Baldwin, a rich playboy with whom she has a passionate relationship.

As Stone wades through her surrounding chaos, she is lured into Baldwin's secret world as a voyeur. He owns the apartment building and has a camera in each unit whereby he can watch — but not experience — the every day lives of his tenants, allowing him to see a *real* drama instead of an *acted* one.

Stone becomes entranced by Baldwin's world and begins to dabble herself, finding that she is hooked on his elaborate display of television screens and video equipment and cannot stop observing.

The suspense of the film heightens as Stone becomes more disillusioned by a death ... and finally finds the convictive evidence needed to put order back in the film's chaos.

The film keeps the audience on its toes with passion and violence as well as the ever-captivating question, "Who did it?" Baldwin brilliantly portrays the part of a man bored with life who turns to "peeping" for entertainment. Stone's fascination in this and the intensity of her relationship with Baldwin keeps the audience intrigued.

But most fascinating about *Sliver* is the fact that it directly addresses human interaction with the mass media. Television, advertisement, film and video have given each individual the ability to spend a lifetime as an observer. Baldwin epitomizes a person who has resorted to watching the lives of other people instead of acting out one of his own. When Stone fiddles with his video equipment, she is really fiddling with his life. In the end, the audience is left with one shocking question: How has mass media affected your spin on reality?

—Jennifer Borenstein

tery, created when spectators and characters share the same knowledge. In the theater, Danny saw what the bad guys were planning, something unseen by everybody in the film. He can point them out.

Just as the golden ticket transports Danny into the film world, it takes Slater — and others — into the real world. On the streets of New York, Slater punches out the window of a car and painfully learns that it really can hurt. And when he fires his guns, it lacks the extra intensity laid on by sound effects editors. He doesn't understand.

When the villain of *Slater IV* finds himself in the real world, he is amazed and thrilled that he can kill people without the police sirens. In movies, the sirens always come within seconds.

The villain decides to enter other films and bring the bad guys to New York, where they can get away with crime. He frees the Grim Reaper and plans on summoning up Dracula. In the movie world, the bad guys are plagued by happy endings. The ticket is their remedy.

In *Last Action Hero* every film ever made has its own reality. Every character ever seen in a movie is living somewhere, unaware of being an actor. There are an infinite number of worlds. The concept is novel, and the fact that it was put on the screen is to be acclaimed, not bashed. Although it's a couple hundred million behind the dinosaurs, box office numbers have about as much to do with quality as a cover has to do with pages.



TOM AND TINA UNITED

Seattle Lovin'

This New Summer Comedy Hits Love On The Mark

The concept of finding *that* one true love twice in a lifetime is a rather stale cinematic paradigm, one that is refreshingly revived in the heartwarming comedy *Sleepless in Seattle*.

I mean how many times can Hollywood expect us to sit through boy meets girl, boy loses girl, ad nauseam? Realizing this, writer/director Nora Ephron (*This is My Life*) brought together the best and the worst of the male/female courting ritual in a delightful tale colored with the naivete of first love and the gut-wrenching madness of being alone.

After losing his first wife to cancer, Sam Baldwin (Tom Hanks) moves himself and his son Jonah (Ross Malinger) to Seattle so he can avoid the daily reminders of his late true love. A year and a half after their loss, Jonah calls a late night national radio talk show that's asking people about their Christmas dreams.

Jonah persuades Sam, who is still incredibly tormented by his loss, to share with the nation his sorrow and all of the things that were special about his wife. "I knew we were perfect for each other the first time I touched her. ... It was magic," he said as thousands of women were weeping coast to coast. The radio pop-psychologist tags Sam as "Sleepless in Seattle."

One of the women touched by the call is Annie Reed (Meg Ryan) who is betrothed in Baltimore to an anal-retentive yet heartwarming neurotic named Walter (Bill Bullman). Torn between her love for Walter and her insatiable curiosity about "Sleepless," Annie has to come to terms with her destiny — whatever that might be.

Ephron does such a wonderful job building up the individual lives of Sam and Annie, that wondering whether these two continent-crossing lonely hearts will ever meet becomes a secondary element of satisfaction to the viewer.

Although surprisingly minimal, the comic relief performances by best friends Becky (Rosie O'Donnell) and Jay (Rob Reiner) help to accentuate the crises of Sam and Annie's lives.

The soundtrack is as wonderful as it is elegant. From torch songs such as "An Affair to Remember" (the theme from a subplot Cary Grant classic) to the old Gene Autry favorite "Back in the Saddle Again" and the Louis Armstrong staple "A Kiss to Build a Dream On," the music helps to create an atmosphere once restricted to an old-fashioned Hollywood tear-jerker.

Jeers to the cinematographers who missed quite a few cut-ins with some terrible camera angles and editors whose long shot sound overdubbing seemed to regularly miss the mark.

Despite these obvious production flaws, *Sleepless in Seattle* is a pleasant way for a couple to spend an evening, and is definitely worth the price of the tickets — even to the most budget-minded consumers.

—Duke Conover

Eyeing Tina

A Good Glimpse At The Heroic Life Of A Legend

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the theater without having to sit through the usually unsubstantiated tales of abuse told by celebrities, along comes *What's Love Got To Do With It*.

The difference here though is the outstanding way in which the story is told. Director Brian Gibson, through the support of Disney-owned Touchstone Pictures, does a marvelous job of presenting the biography of Tina Turner. An example of this is a parting comment I heard by another patron leaving the theater: "You don't have to read the book because you just saw it."

The book she was referring to is *I, Tina* by Tina Turner and MTV's Kurt Loder. Both book and film tell the story of Anna Mae Bullock who blossoms into the adult Tina through the help of her husband, musician Ike Turner.

In 1958, Anna Mae/Tina (Angela Bassett) joins her estranged mother in St. Louis from her childhood home in Nutbush, Tenn. While hanging out in a dance club with her sister, she meets future husband Ike (Laurence Fishburne).

Ike builds Tina's career, but at the same time he fails to realize that without her almost raunchy singing style, his "Ike Turner Revue" may never have made it out of St. Louis.

Both Bassett and Fishburne give excellent performances detailing the lives of the rhythm and blues duo over three decades. Not only do their performances draw you into their characters, but they actually seem to take the form of their musical alter egos. This is aided by set and costume designers whose transitions from one gaudy period to another are so outrageous they're wonderful.

The now public tumultuous relationship between Ike and Tina seems to be characterized quite well throughout the movie, but only if you're like me and have a great deal of trouble distinguishing between fictional film and realism. It isn't quite clear whether it's drugs, the strain of work or the need to control that drives Ike toward destructive behavior. In the realm of the early 1960s, Tina's mom sums up Ike's behavior by saying, "Oh child! He's just bein' a man."

Director Gibson does make some tactical mistakes in production. The use of prefabricated "home movie" footage, first in black and white and then in color as technology would have warranted, is very sloppy. So often, as in this case, it is unrealistic to believe that the typical family member could be shooting some silent 8 mm film from the hood of a moving car.

Another *faux pas* was the bringing in of the actual Tina Turner to appear as herself in ending segments of the film. This is an incredible let down because, as I said earlier, Bassett truly has you believing she is the real Tina. It appears to be the end result of some nonsensical backroom Hollywood contract arm twisting. But this couldn't be the case because Tina was the helpless, not-in-control victim, wasn't she?

—Duke Conover

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Musically Speaking...

Aerosmith
Get a Grip
Geffen Records
☆☆☆

Janet Jackson
janet
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☆☆☆

I have this recurring dream:

I'm in the womb and there's this racket going on. My mom, apparently, is at a rock concert. In the dream it sounds like Lynrd Skynyrd or the Stones. It's hard to make out, but when I come out, I realize it's actually better. ... It's Aerosmith!

And all is good. But I'm a baby and I get hungry and something tells me that I will be fed, but when I turn around I see my mom lifting up her shirt which is good, but what's better is that she's Janet Jackson.

It all sounds like a Keystone/Keystone Light commercial, but the funniest part about all this is, yes, their beer is good and so are these records.

Aerosmith surprisingly has a lot more creativity left and they must be, what, a hundred years old by now.

And Janet ... Janet sounds like a giddy cheerleader whose boyfriend just found her G-spot and someone recorded her telling her best friend all about it. Thumbs (and everything else) up.

—Tony Pierce

Paul Westerberg
14 Songs
Sire/Reprise

Thirteen too many.
—Tony Pierce

Yall So Stupid
Van Full Of Pakistans
Rowdy Records
☆☆☆

Once upon a time rappers were very large. Big Daddy Kane bounced around stage, grabbin' his crotch while braggin' about Philly. Slick Rick and Eric B wore eye patches and did much damage. Chuck's Uzi weighed a ton. Rappers fronted to be pimps and hoodlums adorned enough gold to tie down a pack of pit bulls. No uptown street hustler ever lived as large as the "ladies love" or "the pusher man." But as rap left New York's rough boroughs, more and more hip-hop acts began to replace the favored mac-daddy machismo with a silly softness.

Being silly is something today's rappers are definitely good at. When



it comes to celebrating self-effacement, today's new jacks hold a veritable monopoly in a genre of music that has spanned nearly two decades.

Sure there have always been court clowns like not-so-new school fools Flavor Flav and MC Serch, but they were always kept in check by Chuck the prophet and Pete Nice from "Crooklyn." But who is there now to keep Fat Lip or Humpty in line?

The strong and boastful are still flowin' rhymes, but there seem to be many more acts out willing to just get goofy on the one. De La Soul, Diggable, Digital Underground, the Pharcyde, Trends of Culture and Arrested Development are just some of the acts perfectly comfortable with strolling away from rap's accepted norms.

A new Atlanta-based rap act Yall So Stupid serves as a fine case in point. Their debut album *Van Full Of Pakistans* is a remarkably goofy addition to the ever-growing treasure chest of rap albums, and a strong one at that.

One of the more slammin' tracks, "The Plant," a fine ode to their favorite grow, is a series of silly questions the band members ask of each other.

Logic asks, "Why did you paint your mom's house purple and pink?" to which the band jointly replies, "Cuz I'm fucked up." H2O then wonders, "Why'd your mom put her kids in the house for the homeless?" Again the chorus: "Cuz she's fucked up."

Even funnier is their long series of offbeat phone conversations laced between the other jumpin' tracks. Sometimes the rappers will crank-call demanding to speak to a "Gloria" or an "Emma Jean." At other times they'll call homeboys, who are then pressed to throw much props about Yall So Stupid.

Sure they're goofy, but these tracks are very much hyped. Definitely peep these tracks: "Introduce Me," "Bowl Of Soul," "The Plant," "Bootleg Breakdown," "Dirty Road White Girl," "Monkey Off My Back," "Super Nigga," "Yall" and "85 South."

—Martin Boer

X
hey Zeus
Big Life / Mercury
☆☆☆

What do you do when you're a groundbreaking rock 'n' roll band, you play your heart out, but the music biz doesn't seem to notice you until a decade later?

You breathe a sigh of relief, that's what. Punk rock pioneers X have come home to play on *hey Zeus*, their first release in five years. Now that the record companies have gone garage-band fishing, there is less resistance to the punk end of the spectrum. Unfortunately, the new album isn't really, well, punk enough.

The lyrics are a great X-ample of the intensely personal and emotional political insight that gives this band its power to communicate without preaching. One track, "New Life," clearly deals with homeless children, but the power is in the believable picture it paints, rather than in the



music itself. Describing a girl on the street, a scene is set: "Papers blow by just like her luck."

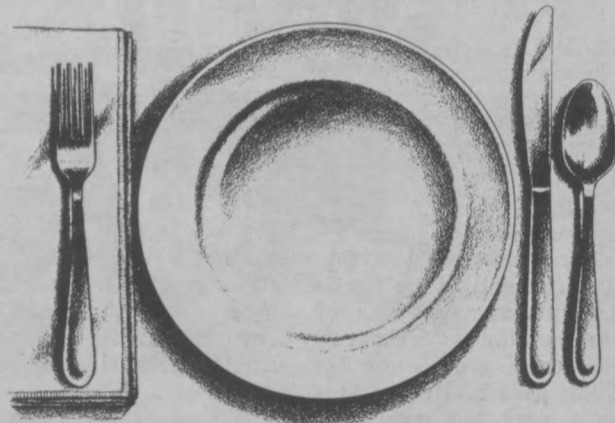
The track "Arms for Hostages" threatens overt politics, but instead tells of people held hostage by our militaristic society; the arms are the friends and lovers we look to for comfort.

Unfortunately, the edginess and urgency of the music seems to have been sacrificed to make room for John Doe and Exene Cervenka's trademark vocal style. These songs probably sound good and raspy in their practice room, but in the studio, somebody added way too much syrup. But hey, a new album should mean a new tour. With any luck, the live show will put the oomph back in the sound.

This album isn't their greatest, but it's not an evil pop crossover either. Whew. I thought we were going to have to lose faith.

—Derek Carmean

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CIRCUS

Continued from p.1A

Upon exiting, everyone got a leaflet with Circus Vargas' side of this controversy: "We do not use drugs, intimidation or food deprivation — ever." Circus-lovers were urged to express "concern to friends and local and state governments." Soon, we can probably expect the Circus PACs to be endorsing candidates. They'd probably love Perot in '96.

Towards the end, a large, spherical, black cage was rolled out, and spotlights struck two figures racing on motorcycles toward the ring's center. As the act moved to the inside of the cage, things started feeling eerie. The two motorcycles began

chasing each other around the cage full speed, playing a very ominous game of centrifugal tag, climbing the walls and ceiling of the globe-like quarters.

The kids looked confused. Maybe they felt the metaphorical strength of two men chasing each other up the walls of a charred cage. Traveling around the country year after year, Circus Vargas has begun to resemble the U.S. in a perverted case of art reflecting life. Even better, with enough money, they were able to coax a woman in a leotard into the cage to give the two speeding drones high fives. The act was psychically unsettling, had no safety net, and yet, with cash incentives, ended on a brilliant but ironic note of optimism. This is why I'm sure they'd love Perot.

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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



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