

ARTSWEEK

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus, For the Week of July 6 - July 12, 1994



ZOUNDS! THE CLUB SOUNDS OF DJ KEOKI

KEOKI SPOKE WITH ARTSWEEK BEFORE TAKING OFF FOR THE NEW YORK CLUBS WHERE HE IS A REGULAR INTERVIEW BY JENNIFFER CHEDAR

Club DJ Keoki has filled the world's stage with amazing hypnotic power, using his music and mixes to mesmerize minds and dazzle dance floors. He's a one of a kind. I was lucky enough to catch a moment with him in L.A.'s Moonshine Records before his departure for New York City. Even after a day of interviews, and nights of intense performance, Keoki's energy was just recharging. What follows is an edited transcript of the interview:

Artsweek: You just finished a European

tour with United Frequencies of Dance. From that experience, can you give me some insight as to what direction you feel underground music is moving in Europe versus the States?

Keoki: In Europe, it seems like the underground scene is a little more spread. There's more focus on the music there than there is in America. Here, it's sort of like a subculture. You don't hear much about it. It's a little more private. There, it's everywhere. It's part of the mainstream, especially in England. In London,

everywhere I went ... the music was bombarded at me, whether it be raves, or clubs, radio shows or dance acts. And I noticed in every clothing store I walked into, the music and fashion went together.

Artsweek: I heard that you were very involved in the punk scene. Do you think there is a resurgence of punk, and if so, is it fusing with the underground scene?

Keoki: The punk thing, for me, is just a fashion. I really like to be visual. I noticed in Berlin there were just loads of these

new designers coming up with these dope new clothes, sort of like a retro-punk fashion thing. So I hooked up with all of them and decided to wear their clothes. I have a few friends in New York who do my hair. It's all free.

And yes, I do think the punk fashion is definitely fusing with the underground scene. As far as the music, it's hard to tell — I don't think so. I always compare the punk explosion to the techno explosion, because it's the system of selling records. The record labels had to scramble to sell it, to label it. And with the techno explosion it's really the same thing. Labels don't know how to get a hold on it and sell it.

Artsweek: Who were among your musical influences growing up? Who are they now?

Keoki: I loved the Sex Pistols. I loved Iggy Pop. There are lots of people that I love now. The DJs that I dig are Larnet Garner, Svingvath, Taylor from L.A. ... Doc and Steve are cool. I like Taylor because he's not afraid to take chances. Doc and Steve are good at what they do, but I think that they do what they do and that's it. I think Taylor is a little more out there with his music. If you put Doc and Taylor in a room on Saturday night, I think Doc would be the one to take a step back with the music and Taylor would just do his thing.

Artsweek: Your production of Journey was brilliant. What was it like to be on the producing end instead of solely creating the music?

Keoki: Well, I co-produced a previous record called *We Are One*. Producing was the obvious next step. I enjoyed playing records that I produced in my set. It's an even more intense high than having a reaction from the crowd. To produce something, and they dig it, it's such a cool feeling. It gets you out there too. You know, the more ears the better. What's in my head to the vinyl — that to me is so cool. I'll have an idea, I'll go into the studio and I'll work around it, and in a week or two I'll have something that was originally in my head.

Artsweek: What will your next project be?

Keoki: My next project will be my first single coming out on Moonshine. It's gonna be smash. You're really gonna dig it. I'm still working around the name. I'm working on it most likely with an American producer or another English producer. I'm not sure. I think I want to keep it American.

Artsweek: With all this success and demand placed upon you, how do you escape from the stress of business?

Keoki: My job isn't very stressful. I think three percent of Americans love their jobs, and I'm in that three percent. I am incredibly fortunate. I find that the less stressed I am about anything, the better I



MA BINK ON THE TOWN

Filmmaker John Hughes has made a fortune exploiting the youth of America (in *The Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, and the soon-to-be *Home Alone* trilogy). But most of his characters have been teens and adolescents who have the ability to take care of themselves when placed in some rather precarious situations.

Enter Baby Bink (played by the twin brothers Worton — Adam and Jacob) in the latest Hughes creation, *Baby's Day Out*. In comparison to the confidence that oozed from many of his previous characters, Baby Bink stands alone. This kid seems to be more at home on the streets than in his playpen. Although

his comic perils are all due to happenstance, Bink handles each emotion-packed, gut-wrenching situation with an air of calm usually possessed by well-experienced members of police department bomb squads.

Nine-month-old Baby Bink is the apple of his mother's eye and the pride of his father, (Lara Flynn Boyle and Matthew Glave, respectively). But Bink is also bored with his humdrum lifestyle. So when the streets of adventure call out to him, Bink responds.

Bink is introduced to the streets when he is kidnapped by Eddie, Norby and Veeko (Joe Mantegna, Joe Pantoliano and Brian Haley), a group of thugs who are really

more childlike than Bink, but out for a quick buck. Bink escapes from his bumbling captors, and with one pratfall after another, the trio pursue Bink through the streets of Chicago, (with cries of "my money!") to what becomes a very obvious, yet quite enjoyable ending.

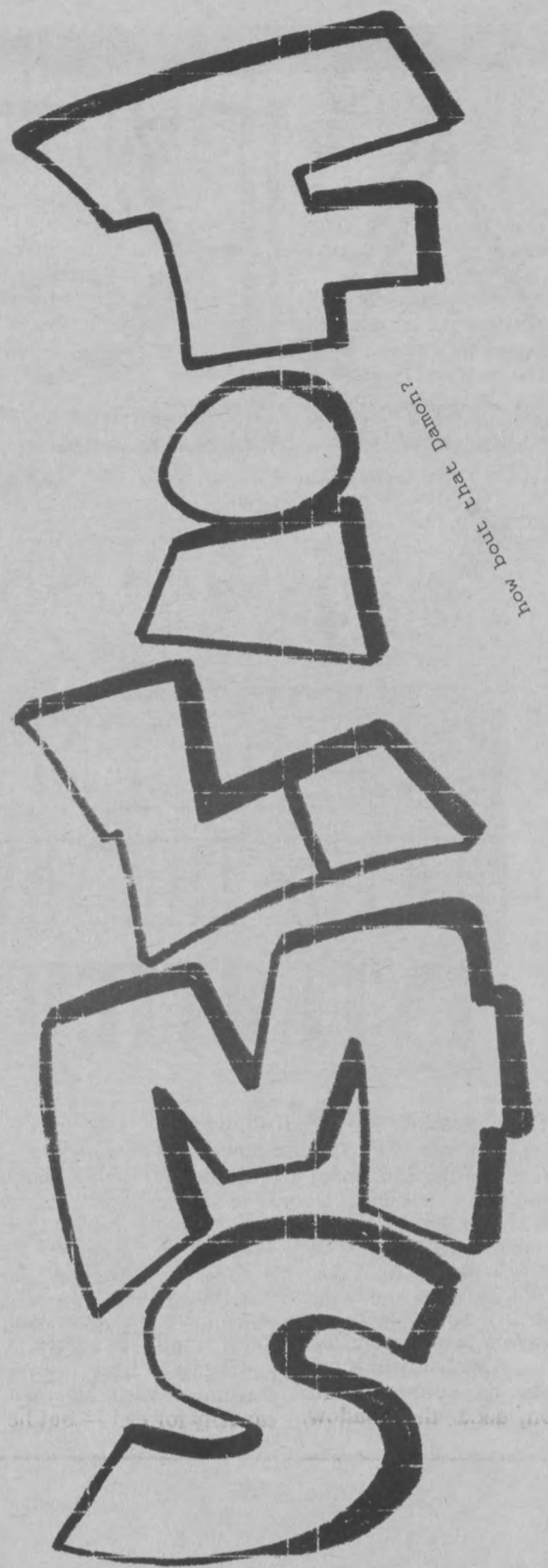
Hughes' writing can be construed as typical; given his aforementioned resumé. But there is a sparkle to the writing that is greatly accentuated by debut director Patrick Read Johnson and the photography of Thomas Ackerman, who worked with Hughes on *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. (Chevy Chase and Christmas lights — need I say more?)

Baby's Day Out is sure to be a summer hit, not due

to the storyline (which I believe was ripped from the pages of a Max Fleisher "Popeye and Baby Swee'pea" comic, and which includes a construction site routine that has been done many times), but because it provides the type of escapism one expects from a movie.

Sure, there are plenty of critics who will pan this film and try to ward off the moviegoing public. But these artsy-fartsy critics — with their golden quills shoved up their rear ends — have forgotten that the essence of a good film is not its significant social meaning, but its simple entertainment value. And nothing is more simple and more entertaining than Bink.

—Duke Conover



MA TERRIBLE TROUBLE



I Love Trouble serves as a reminder that the film industry is running out of ideas. It is possibly the most cliché-ridden film ever made. I would advise you not to go and see it, so that the film loses money and Julia Roberts and her clichéd cohort Nick Nolte are discouraged from ever making a film as bad as this again. Or any film.

The film delves into every sexual and social stereotype ever utilized and discarded by popular culture, and is so banal it makes you wonder about those films that never make it onto general release, and where their scriptwriters "learnt" to write.

The sun-kissed Nolte plays against type as the seasoned silver-tongued, philandering newspaper columnist pitted against a cub reporter, making her debut in the cutthroat world of print journalism. Unsurprisingly, Roberts' challenging role is dependent upon her legs, her Finesse hair and the annoying smile that pays her bills.

Their eyes first meet across a crowded landscape of death and destruction, at the scene of a train derailment. Amidst poignant portraits of suffering and anguish, they both look like something out of a Gap ad. Nolte has an excuse; he was on his way to a dinner party when he got the call to service. Roberts has no excuse.

Unfortunately for the audience, she spurns his lecherous advances (for which she is subsequently called a bitch), thus allowing for a further 90 minutes of flirtatious, mind-numbingly boring scenes, as they eventually become sleuthing partners in the conspicuous absence of any law enforcement officers.

I think the main problem is that you do not care what happens to the protagonists. You know they are going to end up in bed together. You want them to die when Nolte puts their car into a 360-degree spin in the middle of a rainstorm, just to rid themselves of a gun-toting passenger in the back. The

baddie dies, but they survive to torture us some more.

The plot is so convoluted that the director obviously changed his mind about which direction to take every time he poured milk on his cornflakes in the morning. The main plotline has something to do with cows, hormones, milk and cancer. Further than that I would be hard pressed to specify. The main strain of the film (and it is a strain) is Roberts' damn hair and teeth.

I would like to say *I Love Trouble* is a spoof, but I don't know what it would be a spoof of. The jokes are completely unintentional and I think even the director gave up at the end and gave it an ironic title.

Far too many people were paid too much money for far too little for this film, and if you don't want to wonder for 90 minutes how much better spent your ticket would have been fed to a goat, don't do it, don't go and see it.

—Louise Tutt

ANOTHER DARK AVENGER

The new movie *The Shadow* is simply good entertainment.

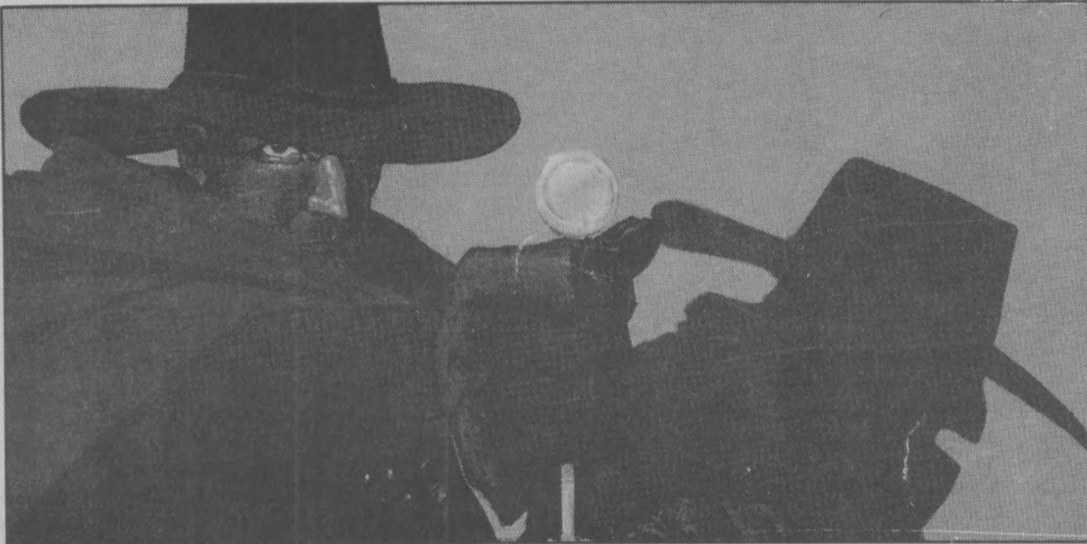
A big-screen version of the 1930s radio drama of the same name, *The Shadow* is a nice mix of a good story, high-quality special effects and enough suspenseful plot twists to keep the viewer guessing. The hero is heroic — yet not without his dark side, the villain is pure evil —

Cranston, the nephew of the New York city police commissioner, (Jonathan Winters), begins the movie as a powerful and ruthless drug lord in Tibet. After a number of reasonably heinous and evil deeds, Cranston is kidnapped by a supernatural Tibetan wise man who informs Cranston that he will redeem himself for the bad things he has done —

is a dark, comic-book hero in a dark, comic-book world. His face also has a tendency to change shape at certain moments.

Plot complications come courtesy of Shiwan Khan (John Lone), the last descendant of Genghis Khan, who breezes into town with the same powers as Cranston and who intends to use those powers to conquer the world.

movie — the hero who is a millionaire playboy by day and tormented crimefighter by night, the dark city-on-the-edge fantasy, the comic book-style villains — make it a dead ringer for the 1989 film *Batman*. The *Shadow* even has his own Batcave-style hideout and a regular "Shadowmobile" — a stylish taxi cab driven by sidekick/chauffeur Peter Boyle.



yet with a sense of style, and the 1930s era New York City setting is just cool to look at. Simply suspend your disbelief for two hours and you'll have a good time.

The key to a movie like this is the hero, and *The Shadow* is successful because Alec Baldwin is fantastic as Lamont Cranston, a.k.a. the Shadow.

whether he likes it or not.

Armed with a few supernatural powers of his own, Cranston returns to New York and starts fighting crime as the Shadow, a kind of invisible vigilante who runs around the city beating up bad guys. He never really becomes a good guy — he is always consumed with his own capacity for evil — but he

It's Shadow vs. Khan for the rest of the film, with the Shadow always just a step behind.

The Shadow is a peculiar movie, as it has the feel of originality without really featuring anything original. Not only is the character and basic outline of the story the revival of the radio series, but almost everything about the

Despite these obvious similarities, however, the fantasy world to which *The Shadow* takes its viewers is all its own. It's an adventure in the classic style, combining the intrigue of old radio dramas and the dazzling movie-making techniques of today. It's just a good, fun movie.

—Scott McPherson

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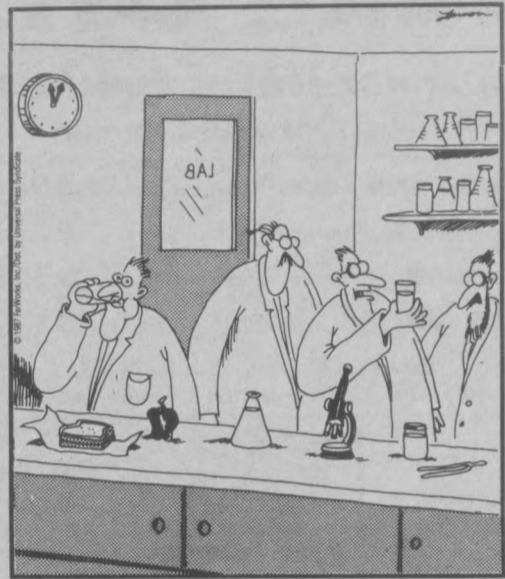
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FUN WITH FARCE

In a day and age where theatre usually means serious themes and storylines, it's refreshing to see someone acknowledge the power and value of farce. Too often, theatre companies get so involved with doing the Ibsens, the Pirandellos and the Chekhovs that they forget that one of theatre's most basic and ancient genres is comedy. They are so in love with the complexities and intricacies of serious drama that they rarely take time to step back and put on a pee-your-pants funny show.

That's where farce comes in: the cruelty to the innocent, the slapstick misunderstandings and the crazy plot twists all combine to tickle audiences' funny bones with wild abandon. There's nothing like a little ridiculous farce to liven up an evening, and that's exactly what we're getting all this month at the Ensemble Theatre Company. Their production of Joe Orton's farce "What the Butler Saw" promises lots of laughs.

"What the Butler Saw" is the story of Dr. Prentice,

a psychiatrist of dubious morals, and his tendency to seduce prospective employees. Throw in some typical farce misunderstandings and the doctor's wife's infidelities, and that spells F-U-N. If that isn't enough to tempt your imagination, then perhaps the straitjackets, high-heeled shoes, gunshots, underwear and drugged police sergeants (all promised by the Ensemble Theatre Company) will get your attention. The high-heeled shoes and underwear certainly got mine.

The cast of "Butler" in-

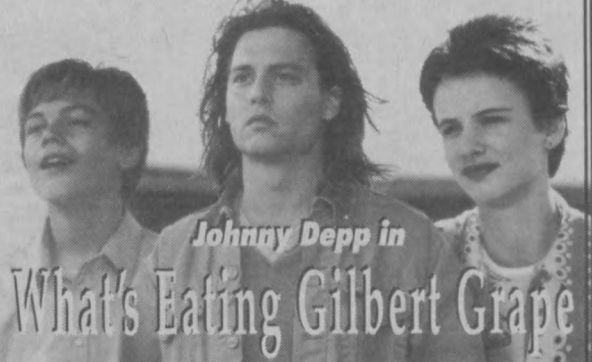
cludes Charles de L'Arbre as the Doctor, Gretchen Evans as his nymphomaniacal wife, Emma-Jane Huerta as the unfortunate job-seeker, and Ron Scala as the aforementioned drugged police sergeant. So, if you're sweating away in summer school and can't seem to figure out why you've put yourself through this torture, check out this play. It's certain to take your mind off the drudgery of school for a few hours. For more information, call the box office at (805) 962-8606.

—Davin McHenry

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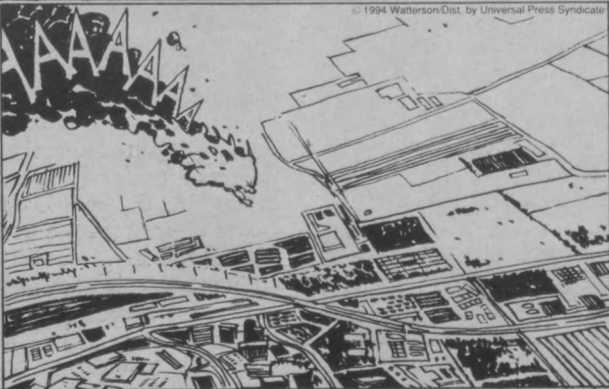
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KEOKI
 Continued from p.1A
 am at what I'm doing. So I rarely allow myself to get stressed. The only stressful part is getting up at 10 a.m. to do an interview.
 The only thing I'm afraid of is becoming redundant. That's why in the six years that I have DJed, you can ask people, "Well, what do you think Keoki is going to play?" and they never can tell you. And I think that's the coolest compliment. That's why I'm always changing. I believe you change or die.
Artsweek: Tell me a little bit about your two clubs in New York. How are they different?
Keoki: I do both on a regular weekly basis. Disco 2000 has an emphasis on tomorrow's sound. The newest music I buy, new records and new sounds. And I do Save the Robots on Thursdays. It's like 200 people every week. It's an after-hours; it's for people who know their music; it's a place to hang out where I can play pretty much anything I want to, a little more soulful. I play anything from Wide Boy Awake to the dopest house tracks.
Artsweek: You say you enjoy providing a "natural high" for your audiences and for yourself. How would you describe this experience for yourself either before or during performance.
Keoki: I'm always on a "natural high" when I'm playing. I'm not against drugs whatsoever. What

people do is their business. I don't condemn it or condone it. Drugs are there. I think the more people talk about drugs, the more of a problem it could become. I think people should educate themselves or their children accordingly. ... I had cool parents that educated me well.
 There's nothing that can take me higher than the feeling I get when I'm playing to a room that is totally receiving it. That's the reason why I didn't come to L.A. for a while. I think that was all part of a drug crisis going on in L.A. But I think now there is a new energy in L.A., and I think Taylor is responsible for that change. All the fresh new faces come in because his music is always changing.
Artsweek: I understand you have underlying themes in your music. How do you manage to relate them to your audience?
Keoki: My themes are always changing. I produce things in the studio and put them on my portable DAT [digital audio tape]. I'll just take bits and pieces and lay those things underneath tracks. Generally, my themes center around political things, or religious things. Mostly it's very spiritual stuff. I use a lot of Bulgarian chants in my mixes and I love using preachers.
 In the DJ booth at Lime-light, for example, there's a video machine, three turntables, a CD player and a DAT player. I can use all of those at once if I want. You can have all of

these people with their mouths shut, listening, dancing, feeling. You can just put so much into them. They're vulnerable and yet they're safe. You can just fill their heads up with these themes.
Artsweek: How do you define mixing other people's music as an art?
Keoki: That's all I'm basically doing. I'm playing other people's records. But you're doing it in a way that makes it an art in itself. People sometimes ask me, "Do you plan the records you play in advance?" This is not a dumb question. But I thought, "This is a dumb question." People actually thought I planned my records all in a row. That's just not how it works. I bring the records to the club and whatever I feel would go fabulously next, I play next. The more alert I'm feeling and the more equipment I have to work with, the better.
Artsweek: What do you define as trance music?
Keoki: It's such a vague term. It can mean anything. It can mean metal music, techno ... anything. I play dance music that's very trancey. I try to make it as smooth as possible to make it flow. The music is very mental. It's not just for your body, it's for your head as well. That's one thing about L.A., it's very body music here. But they don't give anything for the head. Nothing to fill my head up, nothing to make me think while I'm dancing.
Artsweek: Why did you leave Hawaii to come to the mainland?

Keoki: I grew up in Hawaii. I just wanted to get to the farthest place possible. New York City is very opposite from Hawaii. I wanted to travel, so I got a job with an airline. But I was making, like, \$2 an hour, so I got a job as a busboy in a club. Then I met the club people and I made my money lounge-DJing. And ... lounge-DJing is what really got me into this keeping-people-in-the-room thing. A DJ can't be annoying, he can't be redundant ... he has to be all over the place with all types of records. I played everything from cartoons to Frank Sinatra.
Artsweek: How do you feel about the Disco 2000 in L.A.?
Keoki: I met the guy who does that and I walked up to him and said "You stole our name? [from the New York club] ... Why haven't you ever flown me out or anything?" I have nothing to do with it. He's just capitalizing off it. And you can quote me on that.
Artsweek: Where do you like to hang out when you're here in L.A.? Where do you feel most comfortable?
Keoki: I like Sketchpad. I think they've got a really hardcore underground feel to it. It can get kind of messy, but I like it. By messy, I mean the drugs, but I really don't mind it.
Keoki can be seen hosting his two clubs in New York City's Disco 2000 and Save the Robots. "You can't leave them alone for too long," says Keoki.

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