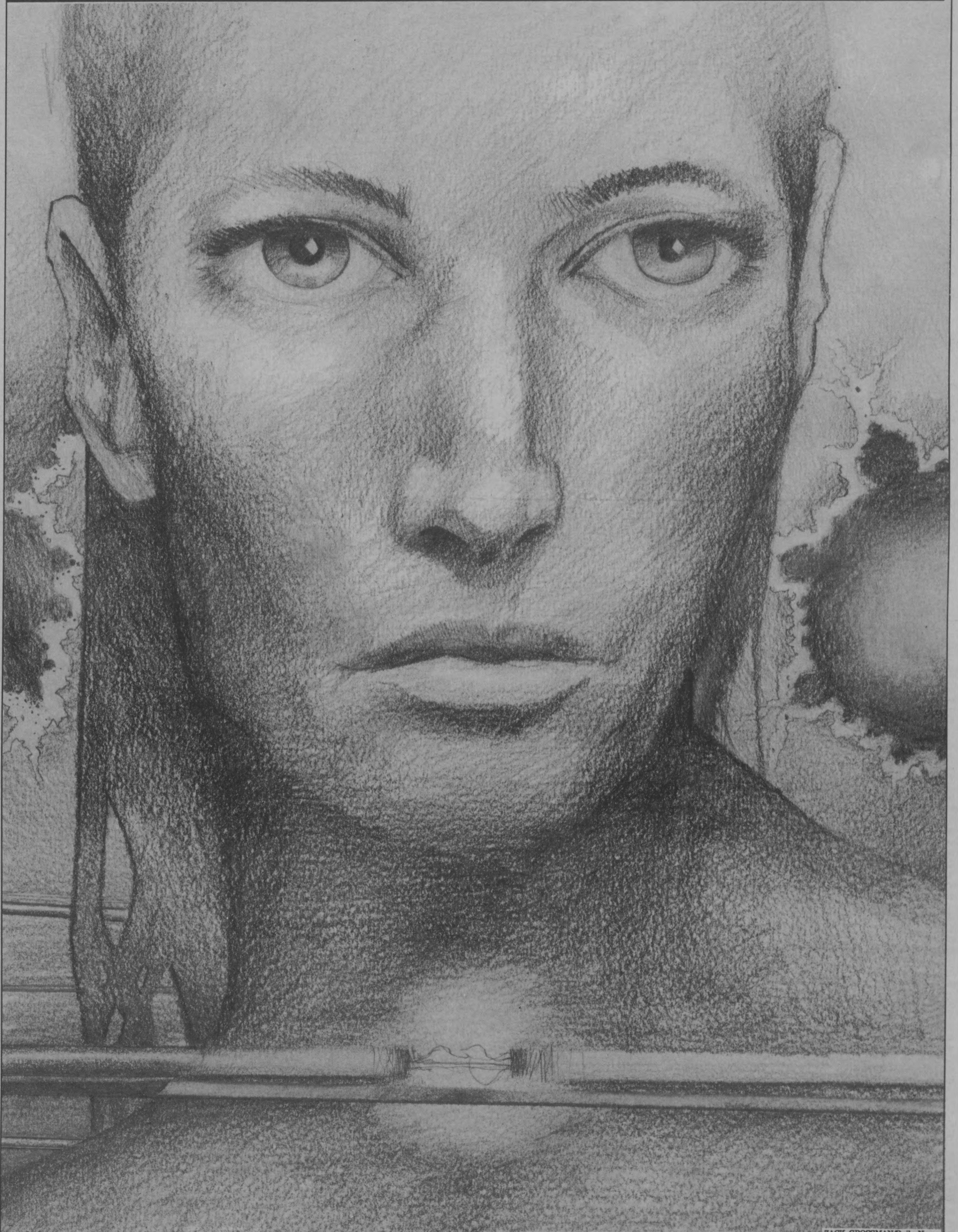


Artsweek's interview with Steve Kilbey of The Church is on Page 4A.

Artsweek

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus, for January 26th through February 1st, 1995



ZACK GROSSMAN/Daily Nexus

New fiction from Neal Stephenson. *The Diamond Age* reviewed, Page 5A.

BEST

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Daily Nexus



Liquid Sunshine
Barbary Lane
 self-released

I remember the first time I heard Liquid Sunshine. I was a freshman in the dorms and was hanging out in the room of a friend down the hall. As a native of Santa Barbara, she was already familiar with the band, and she played the first track of their first album for me.

It only took one listen for me to fall in love with the song and, consequently, the entire album. I thought it would be impossible for the group to equal their first CD, but I was proven wrong one fall day at a concert in Anisq' Oyo' Park, after waiting for hours to hear them.

When I was greeted with some of their new songs, it was like that day from my freshman year all over again. It made the wait for the release of their new CD seem agonizingly long. Now, after weeks of anticipation, Liquid Sunshine's new album will finally be available Jan. 27 at the CD release party at the Underground.

Barbary Lane is replete with the harmonies that have become the distinguishing feature of the group, and is aptly led by the resounding vocals of singer Gina Villalobos.

The new album retains

BASK IN SUNSHINE



the usually mellow tunes and ringing open chords of *Sweet Commitment* that conjure up those Isla Vista days in spring when you decide not to do anything you have to, but lie in the sun instead.

The usually upbeat songs of the local band take a different turn on the fourth track, "Sex Phiend," with its sometimes barely audible lyrics that suggest dark desires and spooky, cobweb-laden recesses of the mind.

For the most part, however, the songs retain their carefree, melodic strains throughout. This is especially evident on the title song, with its fast-paced harmonies and rhythm that make you want to sing

along at the top of your lungs and dance.

Barbary Lane is the type of album that you put on when you're hanging out with friends doing nothing in particular, or that you pop into your Walkman when you're lying on the sand at the beach. It's a relaxing CD that embodies some of the best days there are — the lazy, sunny ones where nothing important or bad happens.

I didn't think it could happen, but Liquid Sunshine has managed to equal its first album, and if they continue to produce CDs that evoke such memories and good feelings, I should be a lifelong fan.

—Colleen Valles



Various Artists
None of These Are Love Songs
 Planet Earth Recordings

House music. At one time, not so long ago, it was practically an unknown genre of music. After its birth in Chicago, it was quietly smuggled over to Europe, where it has since blossomed into a thriving underground dance movement. However, as usually happens with all things new and exciting, it quickly became sucked up by corporate demons and spewed back out in new, readily accessible packages for the waiting masses.

But the underground record labels tried to retain the essence of house that was being discarded by the new paying public. In order to keep their integrity, these labels have made an effort to stay small and true to the game. Unfortunately, because of their size, these labels are not able to release compilation CDs like many other larger labels — until now.

Recently, Carl Ramm of Black Sunshine Records brought six independent underground London dance labels together to form one collective representation. With the help of the American dance and ambient label Planet Earth Recordings, Black Sunshine, Skip N' Slide, Flaw, Can Can, Full Circle and Lingo have put together this 10-track CD, *None of These Are Love Songs*.

The disc gets off to a good start with Boom-

TEN FROM THE HOUSE



shanka's "Gonna Make You Move." The uplifting piano and vocals of this house jam will bring a smile to your face and a nod to your head. Tranx Project's "Big Bud II" follows, with its snappy breakbeat and chargin' horn loop. As the jazzy piano loop leads a phat, bassy synthesizer melody, "Big Bud II" will fill any dance floor.

On *The Question's* "Who Runs The Show," a classic organ riff rides as the centerpiece, while sparse male and female vocal samples layer over a funky bassline. But after Boomshanka's "The Ride" and Big Bottom Music's "Big Bottom Hula," the disc begins to sag.

Aberration begins this dip with the trancy "Spirit." While the pushing bassline and soaring synth tones are nice, the track quickly becomes monotonous and unorigi-

nal. Boomshanka further thrusts the disc downward with "Sound From the House of Dread." This one starts out sounding great, with an anthem-like synth riff, but is then ruined by the annoying undulation of a siren.

The disc hits an overall low with Aloop's "Agent O." I will not even begin on this one for fear of getting carried away, but I think that only Offspring could think up worse lyrics.

Luckily, the last two tracks are able to pull this CD up to the previous standard of quality. The ascent begins with Mind Becomes Drum's driving trance tune, "Equatorial Dawn." Last is Sunz of Ishen and "Who Killed the King." The spaced-out dubby echoes of this track build to a strong beat and a good ending to a worthwhile CD.

—Matt Turner



BEEZEBUB BOOGIE

Mephiskapheles
God Bless Satan
Self-released

As you are lying in bed one evening listening to your stereo, a crazy feeling overtakes your body, and you become uncomfortable. What's that sound? Mephiskapheles, the ska band from New York City, rages in the back of your mind. Could it be that the king of the two-tone underworld is speaking to you through your stereo? Was this band merely the spawn of a silly pun, or could it be a channel for *dark forces*? By paying close attention to the

you had before putting the album on seems to have dissipated. When the second song begins with the actual voice of Mephiskapheles, saying something presumably evil and in Latin, you decide to grab your sheets and hide in your bed. Coincidence? Or Satan?

Terrified, you lie awake, waiting for the rest of the album to rattle off. A deep rumbling shakes your bed as Mephiskapheles plays on. The horn section, composed of a trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone and saxophone, is an integral part of this ska band — damn near all of the songs

this type of music.

Not all the lyrics are the garden-variety satanic ditty — “kill your mom, kill your dad, kill your dog.” Stylistically, the music is meant to be played in clubs that take an interest in jazz and reggae, with a slight hard-rock edge. Mephiskapheles' lyrics present the message of life's hardships in a way that is funny, yet not crystal clear. If you could picture another place where this type of music would be played, it would be during a scene of Cheech and Chong escaping from the Spanish Inquisition. This is primarily due to the high pitch and fast pace of the guitar, along with the squeakiness of the horn section.

“The Bumble Bee Tuna Song” is the last track on the album. Here, we see a shift in style — this song is comparable to something the Psychedelic Furs would put out. You wonder, is the Bumble Bee company a major killer of dolphins? Could this be what's attracting the satanic types?

Bam! A cloud of smoke blows up next to your bed. When it clears, Mephiskapheles himself is standing there, with his two lush red horns, cobra neck, bird beak, and a two-tone suit, derby and a sax. He snatches the album out of your CD player, and gives you his final judgment on the album, saying, “I shall live forever in the hearts and minds of all who choose to follow the ways of satanic ska!”

—Matt Gambee



The Nubian Nightmare
The Local Vocal
Benedog
The Contralto
Mikal "The Virgin" Beach
The Drummerist
"Underpants" Martin
The Organist
Alexandra McCabe
The Alto Saxophonist
Oshe "Hollywood" Ende
The Trumpet/Flugel Hornist
Greg Robinson
The Trombonist
Michael Biz
The Upright Bassist

music, you are bound to find out.

The opening song bears the album's title, and blares fast-paced, upbeat trumpet and flugelhorn that eventually breaks into a rocking guitar solo. On the whole, the song is orchestrated very well, and some of the apprehension

on the album start with horns. You would like to label this type of music “satanic polka,” but you know that this judgment is premature. Gradually, a more mellow feel complements the music with an organ and upright bass. You would venture to say that you could dance to



A PERFECT CD

Freddy Johnston
This Perfect World
Elektra

Freddy Johnston — you haven't heard the name, but you've heard the song.

Johnston's single, “Bad Reputation,” off his major-label debut release *This Perfect World*, epitomizes the lustrous yet melancholy pop that fills the 40-minute album.

groups such as Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins and Overwhelming Colorfast.

It's difficult to hear Vig's trademark sound on the album, as *This Perfect World* has a slower, quieter, more deliberate sound than much of Vig's previous work.

Johnston has been compared favorably with Bob Dylan, but I see his songs as being similar to some of

difficult for me to say. Judging from his picture on the back of the CD, it wasn't through intimidation.

The album is nearly perfect, but Johnston would have been better-served with 10 instead of 12 songs on *This Perfect World*. The fifth and eighth songs, “Cold Again” and “Gone Like the Water,” are plain awful.

The song “Dolores,” on the other hand, is delightful. It begins with “Dolores was her middle name. She'd read the book and everything.” In the song, Johnston reminisces about and pays tribute to a former girlfriend.

The personality that comes through in Johnston's songs is not one of a pop star. He doesn't exude charisma or charm. If he didn't have a record deal, you might see him playing in the background of a coffee shop with a microphone and an acoustic guitar. Actually, it seems that he wouldn't be too unhappy there.

This Perfect World is definitely not party music, but if you're curled up with a good book on a quiet night, this is your soundtrack.

—Curtis Kaiser



Although *This Perfect World* is Johnston's fourth album, it is the first one to garner any significant media, radio or video attention.

Johnston's choice of producers for this album may be surprising, as he employed grungemeister Butch Vig, producer for

Michael Penn's and Matthew Sweet's work.

The album begins with the title track, a four-minute piece of perfect pop genius. “I know I've got a bad reputation, and it isn't just talk, talk, talk,” Johnston sings.

How he went about earning this reputation is

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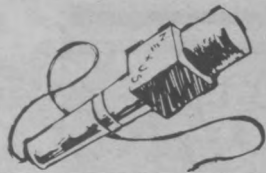
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SONIC DREAMSCAPES AND STARRY SKIES

An interview with Steve Kilbey of The Church, by Kevin Carhart

For years, one of the most distinctive-sounding groups producing nocturnal, transporting dream-pop has been The Church. They had already released five fine albums when their 1988 release *Starfish*, and its first single, "Under the Milky Way," achieved overt acclaim.

Since the departure of two longtime members, the band has consisted of Steve Kilbey and Marty Willson-Piper. Kilbey's distinctive vocals are heard on most Church songs. In recent years, he has also been seen in the side project *Jack Frost* with former Go-Between Grant McLennan. The Church will play an acoustic show tomorrow night at the Ventura Theatre, conditions permitting. *Artsweek* caught up with Kilbey by phone recently, and what follows is an edited transcript.

Artsweek: How is the group different now that it's just you and Marty Willson-Piper?

Steve Kilbey: Well, we haven't got Peter's input anymore. ... It's made the album different.

AW: Yeah, when I first heard *Sometime Everywhere*, I thought, "Hmmm, this is a change," but then I noticed some of the things I usually enjoy about the group, like interesting couplets of lyrics and songs like "Dead Man's Dream."

SK: You like "Dead

Man's Dream"? Yeah, that's one of my favorite tracks on the album. That's what I want to do with The Church, that's the direction I think we're going.

AW: I can't make out some of the things that are being listed off in that song. What are ...

SK: If you can't hear them, you're not meant to hear them. That's why we don't print the lyrics on the albums.

AW: Ah! That's very good, very deliberate ... if it's under the surface, it's meant to be under the surface. ... How would you characterize the environments you create?

SK: You try to do things, and you only have a vague idea of what you do. When there's a sort of atmosphere or ambience you try to create, it's beyond words, it's something you can't always articulate. About all I know is that when I listen to it, it makes me feel good....

AW: There seem to be some songs that are these fantastic scenarios, and some that are about the modern world, like "Businesswoman," I suppose?

SK: Well, finding the fabulous in the ordinary and the ordinary in the fabulous, that's what The Church is all about. Mixing it all up.

AW: When you do have those songs that have that otherworldly feel, that are historical or

mythological, is there something inherent at the core that makes you feel all the adventures? Is it difficult to keep the momentum up?

SK: That's what we set ourselves the task of doing. That's all we do, and we spend a lot of time doing it. I guess it's for others to judge if we're being successful. Even after all this time, we're learning about each other, we're taking it further all the time....

AW: Are you and Marty grounded in having learned about mythology and history?

SK: Well for me, the Roman, Norse, Celtic mythology ... things like the Bible and the Koran ... all those things have interested me. It's not as if I'm trying to skim through and put it in a rock song, but anything that's happened to one in their life finds its way back to their stories and songs. And there's a lot of morals in Norse and Greek myths that are relevant to modern life. The basic conflicts — power, greed, lust — haven't changed at all.

AW: I came in at the *Starfish* album. Was this a big dividing line for the new fans and the old fans?

SK: That's when we sold a lot of records and did lots of touring. It would be a lie to say it didn't change things.

AW: Your B-sides always seem really good, like "Warm Spell" and



Marty Willson-Piper and Steve Kilbey of The Church

"Musk."
SK: Well, "Warm Spell" and "Musk" were just recorded on a four-track in my bedroom.

AW: Really? I can't make out any fidelity difference on those....

SK: Surely you must be able to!

AW: No, no! Of course, a lot of people wear their low fidelity on their sleeves these days.... How do you feel about that?

SK: Well, the studios are there, people should get whatever sound they're after. ... Those early Beatles albums sound good because they were done in one day, and then you get

something like Pink Floyd that sounds like it was done in a studio and took four years.

Everything's valid. ... You could make a picture with a crayon, or you could make one with oil paints. Whatever's appropriate.

AW: Do you have any favorite material from *The Church*?

SK: It changes all the time. I might name one today, and tomorrow I would think, "Why did I say that?" I think on this tour, with the acoustics, it's going to be the ones that are our favorites.

AW: How did you get hooked up with Grant McLennan [formerly of the Go-Betweens]?

SK: I met him hanging around in Sydney, and we just said, "Let's do some songs."

AW: How is the new *Jack Frost* different from you or Grant on your own?

SK: *Jack Frost* has really taken on a life of its own. ... On the new record, we make quite a few where we knew what it should sound like. All I know is, I had a bloody good time making it. ...



TRACING AN AMERICAN MUSICAL TRADITION



Deep Blues is a tour through the heart and soul of American music. Documentary filmmaker Robert Palmer and music critic Robert Mugge act as our tour guides, introducing us to the local heroes of the blues as we journey through the Mississippi delta.

Deep Blues is punctuated by the music it seeks. We hear the sounds of the pre-blues, with Jessie Mae's Fife and Drum Band and classic blues played by Roosevelt "Booba" Barnes and the Playboys. As we listen, we see how the music is tied to the land, with shots of cotton blowing in the wind and chickens scratching. At one point in the film,

Palmer muses that "it must be something in the water" which inspires the sound of the blues.

Whether or not the Mississippi delta is responsible for creating that unique twang of the blues, it certainly holds the clues to the growth of American culture and the influence which African culture has upon it. Take the jukebox. It's an American icon which brings forth nostalgic thoughts of the early days of rock 'n' roll. And juke, Palmer explains, is a form of a Nigerian word for joy.

Blues is a music of invention. When traditional instruments aren't available, music will be made from whatever is available.

A wire, a couple of soda cans and a cylinder put together make the "diddly-harp," a one-stringed instrument whose sorrowful wail can rival the voice of the steel guitar when played by such masters as Lonnie Pitchford.

Deep Blues presents itself as a work in progress with very little pretense of explanation. It is a brief glimpse into the life and music of the Mississippi delta, as one might experience it while passing through on a larger journey. The music, land and people speak for themselves, with Palmer's commentary serving only as spice to an already flavorful feast of history and culture. —Sarah Crane

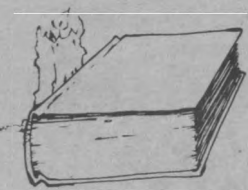
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TRIP THROUGH TOMORROW

BY
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TOM

For a cyberfiction writer, Neal Stephenson seems to be inordinately delighted with the past. His breakthrough novel, *Snow Crash*, mixes equal doses of technology and antiquity so that hackers and Sumerians roam freely through the pages. Though this willful obscurity muddies the flow of the story at times, I thought *Snow Crash* eclipses William Gibson's *Virtual Light*—both authors try to inject a sense of humor into the cold and heartless landscape they envision, but only Stephenson succeeds. His conception of the new American subculture, made up of out-of-work hackers moonlighting as pizza deliverers and messenger girls on smart skateboards, establishes him as the architect of a future world that is not solely inhabited by tough women in mirrored shades and rich, mysterious men dressed in shades of black.

For *The Diamond Age*, Stephenson plunders that curious period of time known as the Victorian age and returns to us a futuristic tribe known as the neo-Victorians, or Vickys, who both exploit and ignore the technology that makes them wealthy. Thus, Vickys live in an age where windows in the homes of the poorest families are made of a single diamond because they are easy to manufacture, but their own mansions have windows made of real glass because it is more authentic.

It's amusing to see that Stephenson's latest effort comes at our own *fin de siècle*, just as the original Victorian age did, and thus we can draw some uncanny comparisons not only from that era to the future Diamond era, but also to our own. In the 21st century, real estate is grown atom by atom rather than invaded and colonized, but property is still used as a safeguard against the negative influence of technological advances, which, after all, are beloved by the masses. As our century draws to a close, we can observe traces of the racial paranoia, love for formality and tradition, and an upswing of conservatism and conformity of thought that run rampant in Stephenson's *Diamond Age*. We can treat this book, then, as a forecast of things to come; this is not just science fiction, it is social fiction, and must be read more deeply than *Snow Crash*.

Stephenson has an easy hand for incorporating the imaginary with the real, creating a plausible and memorable universe, like Robert Heinlein could at his most inventive. Buckyballs and snuffboxes, gang terrorism and matter compilers all jostle elbows with ill grace in the area around Shanghai, which has been divided up into a modernized Coastal Re-

public, the ancient Celestial Kingdom, a neutral area called the Leased Territories and the domains of several tribes that people choose to affiliate themselves with.

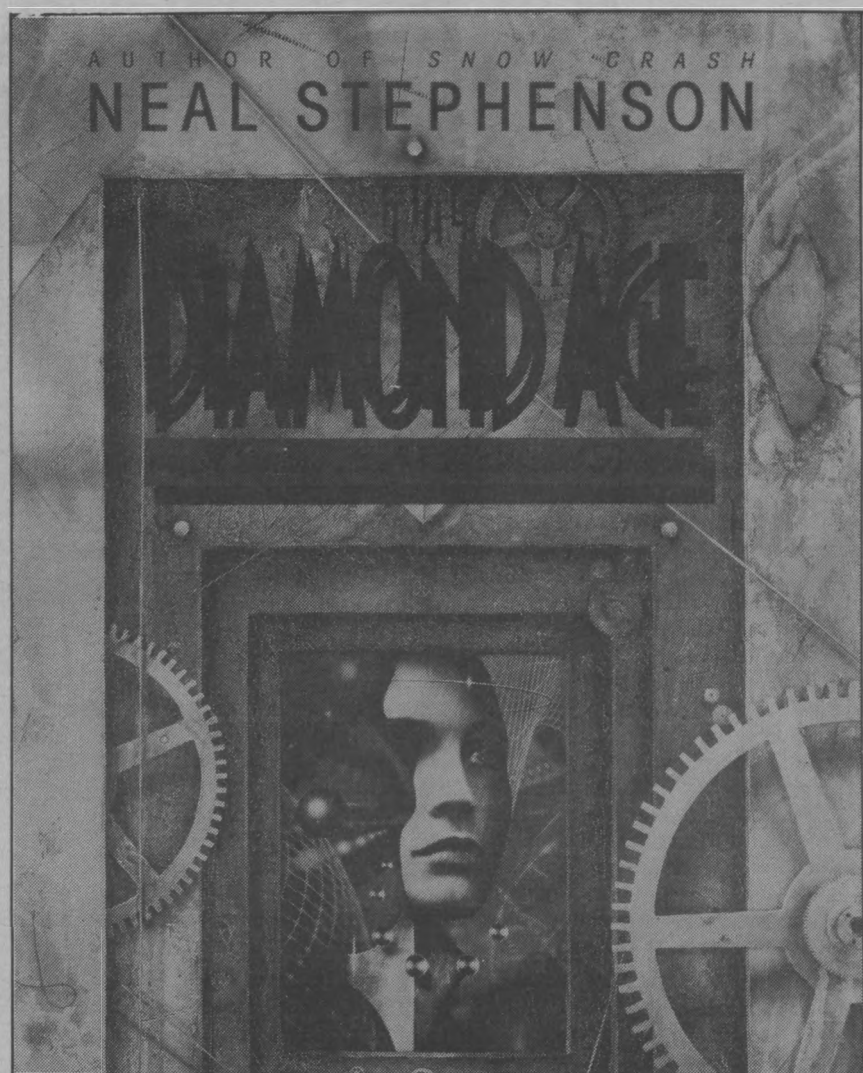
John Percival Hackworth, a Vicky engineer who has been commissioned to build a sort of interactive book (the *Illustrated Primer* of the novel's subtitle) for a rich lord's granddaughter, endeavors to create an illegal copy for his own daughter, so that she might benefit from its teachings. The grandfather wants the book because he thinks his granddaughter will grow up lacking some intangible quality of intelligence or personality which is slowly being obliterated in society. Finally, Hackworth's copy of the *Primer* is stolen by a young thief who gives the book to his little sister Nell, so that she too might experience some hope to escape her probable life of drudgery.

This is just the framework for the greater action in the story. The Feed is a sort of bastard of a telecommunication line and a magic gizmo that can turn atoms into matter of any form: mail messages, food, simulated wood and weapons. A radical organization wants to supplant the carefully controlled Feed lines with Seeds, with which any person can create any object at all. This battle of anarchic freedom

"Buckyballs and snuffboxes, gang terrorism and matter compilers all rub elbows..."

versus moderated civilization is waged, unwittingly, by Hackworth and Nell, and by a group known as the Drummers, who operate on a collective consciousness and whose bodies act as parallel processors for the nanocomputers that float in their bloodstream.

For the remainder of the book, a series of crimes are committed for the best intentions, while various government and private-sector agencies perpetuate schemes that have nothing and everything to do with the *Primer*. Stephenson indulges in subthemes that readers of *Snow Crash* will recognize—technoso-



cial diseases, brainwashing and other cult practices, refugees and rafts, and grand plans for world domination. He neatly mixes technological advances with religious hysteria so that the schemes of the characters seem wild but eminently possible at a time when one's morals are not as advanced as one's capabilities.

The groups explored in depth in this novel are the Vickys and the Chinese, who still adhere to Confucian thought despite their various tribal affiliations. Their personal interactions are often funny, as both furiously think of the correct protocol for every sentence uttered. Both groups seemingly share ideologies. For instance, in a meeting between a Mandarin called Dr. X and Hackworth, Dr. X tries to explain the reason for the Celestials' struggle with modernization. "For centuries... we have struggled to absorb the *yong* of technology without importing the Western *ti*." If *yong* is the physicality of an object, and *ti* is the essence, then it seems that both the Chinese and the neo-Victorians are pursuing the same thing: to maintain integrity and self-respect.

Stephenson does not pretend that racial and class discrimination have been extinguished. Race, money and class are still the primary motivating factors for the characters' actions and are more impor-

tant than ever. However, secondary in importance seems to be the desire to escape the inevitability of one's situation. Destiny and free will are explored offhandedly, with the identities of the key players flopping from "good guy" to "bad guy" and back again, but it is an obvious concern of the author to tackle this enormous philosophical issue and present his own opinion on it.

The Diamond Age is not as slick a production as *Snow Crash*, and the hip slang is reduced to a minimum as Stephenson focuses on a more sophisticated social group, but the scenes are just as outrageous and the images just as striking. There is still a lot of swordfighting and theatrics, but most of it is done by women, who play center stage rather than peripheral roles throughout the book. And there are no puzzling subplots where a reader might get lost.

The Diamond Age flows smoothly to a reasonable conclusion, which leaves an extra chapter to be desired, but does not truly damage the storyline. Stephenson ends his novel at the point where any of a dozen things could have happened next, and it is to his credit that the reader is left pleasantly unsatisfied.



THE TORTURED ARTIST IN FRAGMENTS AND BITS

To many, the thought of sitting through the two-hour-plus life story of one of the most tortured and deranged artists in history may seem like something far from entertainment. And at many points in Bernard Rose's *Immortal Beloved*, this feeling is validated. But then again, Rose wasn't exactly targeting the film for the audience that thought *True Lies* was a cinematic masterpiece. What he gives us instead is the thought-provoking, passionate and (dare I say) entertaining life story of Ludwig Van Beethoven, a man whose life is as colorful and interesting as his music.

The story of Beethoven's (Gary Oldman) life is told through a series of flashbacks, beginning after his death, and following Anton Schindler, his secretary (played by Jeroen Krabbe), in his inquiry into the identity of the "Immortal Beloved," the still unknown benefactor in Beethoven's will.

Though not a complete picture of the composer—I've always wondered how a "life story" can be told in two hours anyway—the film does much to humanize this mysterious and enigmatic figure, showing part of the source of his pain, his passion and inspiration.

Yet what is truly worth seeing in *Immortal Beloved* is not the story or the direction, but the incredible acting by Oldman, who has been, over the last 10 years, one of the most (if not the most) consistently strong character actors in the business. Best known for his title role in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and most recently seen in Luc Besson's *The Professional* (not to mention *Murder in the First*), Oldman has the uncanny ability to literally become the character he is playing, and he has shown it with a wide array of biographical roles, from punk rocker Sid Vicious in *Sid and Nancy* to Lee Harvey Oswald in *JFK*. It is quite

clear in *Immortal Beloved* that Oldman has a clear understanding of the character he is playing. He is after much bigger game than a mere Oscar.

Although Oldman ef-



fectively steals the show, the supporting cast puts in excellent performances as well, especially Isabella Rossellini, who as the headstrong and independent Anna Marie Erdody, one of Beethoven's many lovers, contributes one of

her best performances to date. A lesser known but equally talented Jeroen Krabbe adds a delicate and subtle flavor to the film as Alex Schindler, a role that could easily be flubbed on

Besides being an excellent show of acting talent, *Immortal Beloved* also proves to be one of the most political films this year, as many of the more disguised subtexts may very well be metaphors which are as pertinent today as they were 200 years ago. It is here that Rose (who wrote, directed and even played a bit part) shows his true directorial talent.

My only complaint is that Rose may have taken himself too seriously, which only shows in the film's tendency to drag around the middle. In addition, the film loses much of its power in the last 15 minutes, something which could have been avoided by simply leaving the ending out entirely.

Yet oddly enough, the film's somewhat fractured and disjointed narrative structure, while much more interesting to piece together than the standard linear narrative, may turn some viewers off. Do not expect a straightforward

"This film makes no claim at being an accurate biography..."

plotline, nor a comprehensive portrait of the artist. You're not going to find them here. This film makes no claim at being an accurate biography. Rather, *Immortal Beloved* seeks to reveal the source of the pain behind the man who gave us some of the most beautiful music ever composed. If you simply try to look beyond the film's few flaws, you will find an exhilarating and powerful story.

—Kelly L. Hartman

DECONSTRUCTING SLURS

Berkeley Breathed coined the term "offensiveness" in his *Bloom County* comic strip. Simply enough, it is the point at which people become offended.

Not so simply, however, is the location of this point, because what offends one person does not necessarily offend another. Wars start over disagreements concerning the location of this point.

Folklorist Alan Dundes has spent his professional lifetime pinning down the elusive offensiveness point, and has developed a tremendous reputation in the field. People invite him to their universities to speak to them about the origins of folklore, which includes potentially offensive material.

Dundes is a professor of anthropology and folklore at UC Berkeley and has published over twenty books on the subject. He has been awarded grants from both the Guggen-

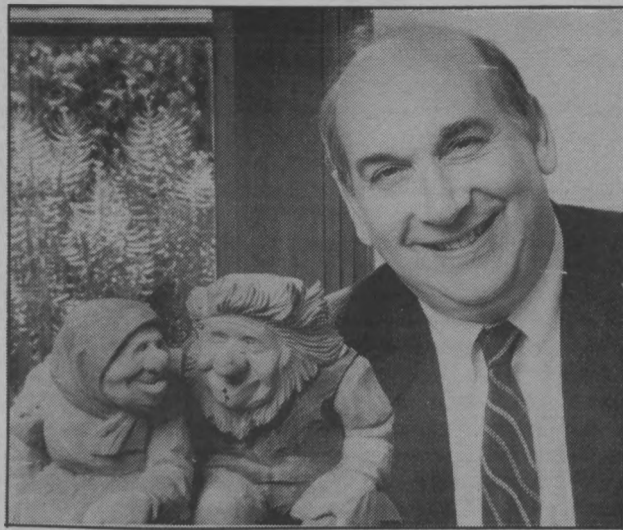
heim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

He'll be speaking at UCSB, on the meaning and effect of racial and ethnic slurs, a form of folklore which he believes has particular power.

"Asking what is folklore is like asking, 'What is English literature?'" says Dundes. As a vague answer to a broad question, he offers this: "It's traditional material passed down by example. It's not high culture and it's not low culture [and it includes] ethnic slurs...."

Folklore is "largely responsible for most people's attitudes toward other people in their community," according to Dundes. And therein lies its power — it is crucial to understanding the mechanics of culture.

Much of his lecture will cover material that crosses the offensiveness point. "It's pretty inflammatory. That's one thing I'm wor-



Nack
Eine Kleine Nackmusik
Company X

Anyone who's spent any time in Isla Vista in recent months would have to have been oblivious to the world not to notice the name of the band Nack being plastered and spoken about all over the town.

Brad Nack and his band, Nack, have released their album, *Eine Kleine Nackmusik*, full of 14 songs that range from thrash guitar to acoustic melodies to long speeches on a background of drums. It's quite a mix.

Nack has been a part of the local Santa Barbara music scene for quite some time now, but so far they've failed to expand beyond the area, and this album may be a fair example of why. *Eine Kleine Nackmusik* contains several songs that are entertaining and fun to listen to, but the others fail to mesh.

As I listened to this album, I never knew what to expect from one song to the next, but some things were constant. Lead singer Brad Nack's voice seems on the majority of the tracks to be just about to crack as he sings,

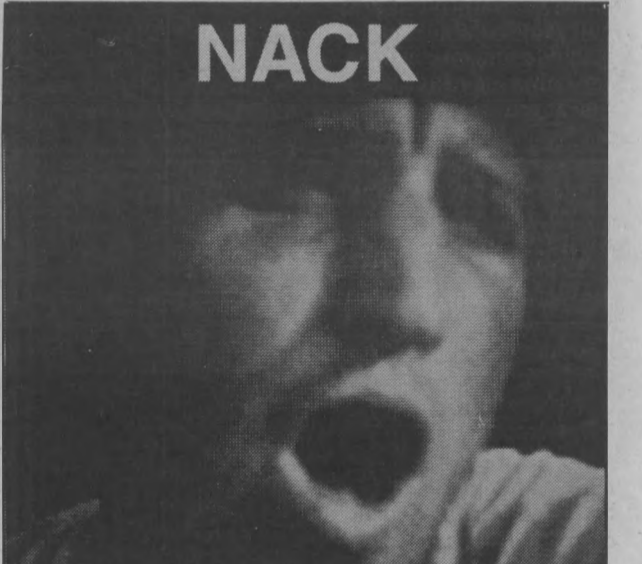
ried about, and I know the sponsors [the MultiCultural Center] are too," Dundes added.

Among the most interesting questions addressed during the lecture will be the use of ethnic slurs by and on different groups of people, and why one person will take one term affectionately from a person inside the group when the same term, used by a per-

son outside that group, will deeply offend the same person or group. He will use examples of slurs given by the audience to help illustrate their cultural pervasiveness.

The MultiCultural Center is sponsoring the lecture, which will be held in the UCSB Hatlen Theatre on Friday, Jan. 27, at noon.

—Chris George



and it lends a rough edge to the songs. This is added to the fact that in several of the songs, the lyrics don't flow together, and it sounds as though Nack has to rush the words to get them out between beats.

A song that really gave me a headache has to be track 13, "Bad Party (the ten-year anniversary tribute celebration)," which takes Nack's already rough voice and distorts it with effects to make it a grinding buzz saw. By the end of the song, the lyrics have worn down to a screeching yell, and it felt like the sound was rubbing through my last raw nerve with a worn violin string.

Even though I was annoyed by some of the songs, I, however, found real hope in some of the others. My favorite off the album has to be "The Smiths," which has a nice, clear beat and understandable lyrics that go somewhere. Other songs that caught my attention were "Hot Dog," and "Dan," which is seven minutes of heavy drumming while Nack describes a strange trip he took, during which he met a tourist named Dan.

There were a couple I couldn't decide on: "Transistor Radio," describing something he couldn't live without, and "Dry Donkey Gulch," featuring a list of his friends. But I did find myself humming the tunes as I walked from class to class.

The band itself seems to work together well, and the sound of the music flows well when heard aside from the singer's voice and the movement of the lyrics. It seems as though Nack is poised for overall stardom, but is just missing that one last secret element to make it big. I have a feeling, though, that it is only a matter of time. If Brad Nack keeps working on his band with all the effort and tenacity that he has for promoting his shows and *Eine Kleine Nackmusik*, someday his determination will pay off.

—Matt Nelson

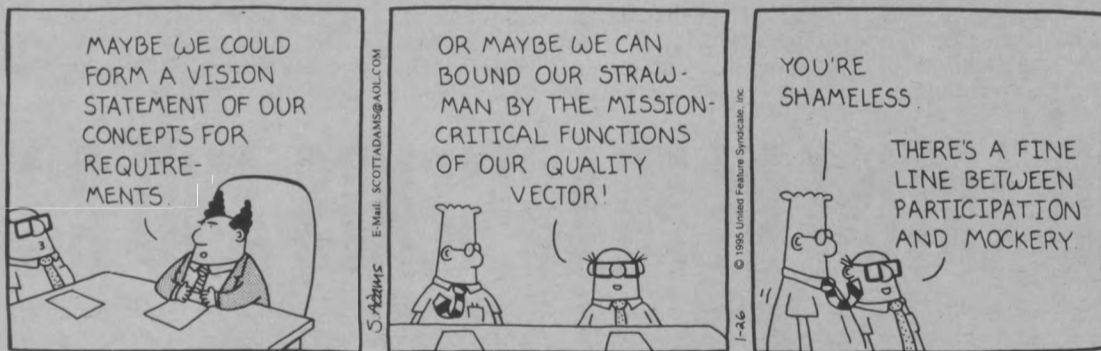
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TOGGLESWITCHING AT MARVAC DOW

Three Mile Pilot
The Chief Assassin to the Sinister
Geffen

I stood dumbfounded, one foot in the freezer, the other in the compact disc player. I had just arrived home after purchasing a new CD called *Salisbury Steak* by Hungry Man and 200 boxes of microwaveable *The Chief Assassin to the Sinister* from Three Mile Pilot.

Being elated to review the fine music and consume a fine meal, I chose to do both simultaneously.

The first song, "shang vs. hanger," was somber and depressing. It made me feel as though I were the last person to be picked for a third-grade German dodgeball team. I think that the message was basically "if you're going to trade your basket of miniaturized truck parts for your friend's prize-winning Australian gimlet accelerator, then you had darn well better pay the shipping."

Song two, "inner bishop," was surprisingly savory. The mushroom gravy was incredible. I bought a frozen meal with a silly name like Hungry Man, expecting something similar to incarcerated dog vittles, and actually ended up with something pleasingly palatable. Especially since all the lovely different "attempted flavors" had been freshness-sealed closer together than a

sheet-metal convention for fiber-optic telemarketers in the janitor's closet of Hugo Bunsen's Yukon Fishing Lodge, with the rookie accountant doing his rendition of "The Ballad of Pinkie Luxembourg."

Song three, "circumcised," had a curse word in it, so I have permanently washed it out of my memory banks.

Song four, "aquamagnetic," had a curse word also.

"[T]he chief assassin to the sinister," the fifth track, was nice, a love ballad with a technical twist. Speaking of technical twist, I was hanging out in the toggle-switch department at the Marvac Dow in Goleta yesterday.

After a half hour, the lady comes up to me and says, "May I help you?"

And I say, "No thank you, I am just loitering."

"Well, let me know if you do," she says and turns around to walk back to her desk. And just when her back is turned, I flip the 984367-42 GF into the "on" position and then back into the "off" position before she ever knows what happened.

A half hour later, the same thing happened and I totally got away with it again. I did this for three and a half hours before she caught on and forced me to leave. I was so excited, because I had completely broken my friend Doot's



"I then apply resulting mixture vigorously to the nearest lambasted pheasant."

record of two hours. It was the happiest day of my life.

How could one man single-handedly pull off a stunt of such magnitude? I'm sure you're curious, and hey, name me someone living in Torrance or the outskirts of Barstow who isn't. The secret is actually very simple. Every day, right when I get up, I throw two half-filled pallets of sprinkler fixtures and one can of miscella-

neous office furniture into the food processor, blending at high. I then apply resulting mixture vigorously to the nearest lambasted pheasant.

The rest of the songs just sounded like Vanilla Ice played backwards, which, for those who have tried, reveals a shocking hidden phrase: "Up the devil's nose with a rubber hose."
—David Potter


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The Weekend Connection

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LIFE IS OVER BY TIM MOLLOY

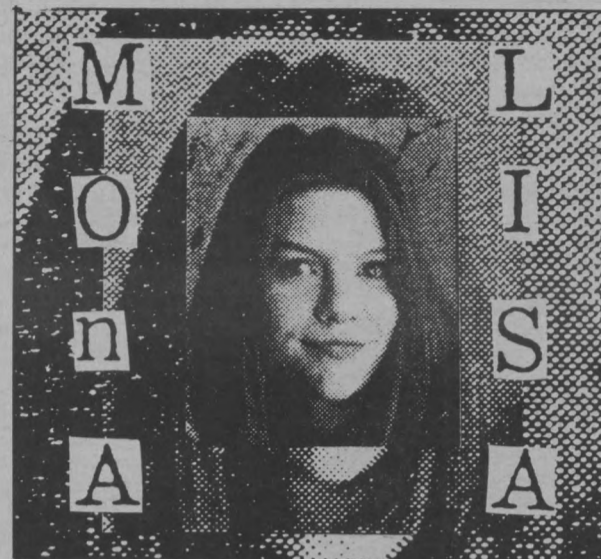
Tonight at 8, ABC-TV will roll out the last episode this season of *My So-Called Life*, an assistant to the show's producer tells me. Call me a sage, but it seems to me that when your season ends four months earlier than any program you share air space with, well, let's just say it doesn't bode well.

Which is a shame. Because for all its lapses into melodrama, for all its lingering shots of studly *Jordan Ca-da-la-no*, for all the silly visceral fits of our protagonist, Angela (Claire Danes), *My So-Called Life* is a really good show.

As teen-oriented drama is not my forte, I first watched *My So-Called Life* solely because its pilot was filmed at my former high school. I watched it partially, in fact, out of a hope that it would prove a terrible failure and quickly disappear from the airwaves — vindication for the times its camera crews had blocked a hall and made me late for class.

I watched and anticipated the blessed moment when someone on the show would lose their footing — when adolescently awkward Claire would break down, say something stupid and reveal that she was really a 26-year-old playing 15; when vaguely bisexual Ricky would get a job at Disneyland and miraculously become "straight," never again to mention his brief "confused" time; when wild child Rayanne would get a spin-off featuring herself and seven fly-girl sisters.

For weeks I watched like this, and week after



ZACK GROSSMAN/Daily Nexus

week I was disappointed. For at no point did any of these missteps occur. Truth be known, I was continually impressed with the remarkable sensitivity of *My So-Called Life*. The show was not only sincere, but involving, funny in a "that's so true" sort of way and remarkably watchable.

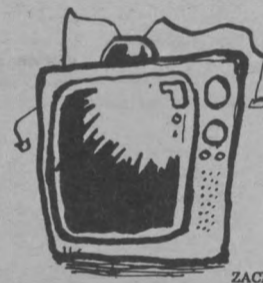
The immortal Claire Danes, awarded a Golden Globe last week for her work on the show, above so many other dramatic actresses, was perhaps the key to this. Her characterization of Angela is never lazy, but rather carefully and realistically performed. Like many of us, Angela is at one moment flawless and the next cursed, and Danes' malleable countenance brings this across magnificently. A litany of mannerisms and expressions help her run the emotional gamut from feeling wonderful to feeling like death (as when Jordan and Rayanne raised scandal two weeks ago) to "*How am I sup-*

posed to feel?"

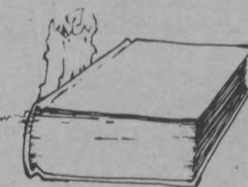
Supporting characters, particularly Ricky, have fleshed out nicely since early episodes, when missteps were anticipated hungrily. A clear professionalism has pervaded the show recently, as the writers seem to feel comfortable enough with their subplots to explore different characters as they please.

I suppose, in the minds of ABC execs, the low ratings of *My So-Called Life* qualify it as a failure, though by no fault of its cast or hall-obstructing crew. And soon, indeed, it will be gone from the air. Careful what you wish for, eh?

—Tim Molloy



ZACK



DROPPING LIGHT

"Being struck by lightning" frequently describes periods of inspiration. Rarely, however, does the cliché smack of reality.

While Santa Barbara poet, novelist and nature writer Gretel Ehrlich does not quite consider her own experience of being hit by lightning an inspiration, her book *A Match to the Heart* opens with her lightning strike in Wyoming and the subsequent self-discovery and natural vision she found during recovery.

Her reputation as a powerful nature writer stems from verse such as this:

These days I live

among the old masters gnarled oaks like Tang Immortals bunioned, twin

-trunked ...

Being hit by lightning was a point of departure for her rather than an inspiration, she says, likening the experience to "dropping a flashlight into your consciousness." She'll be coming to UCSB's Girvetz Theatre this Tuesday at 8 p.m. to read from her novels, books and poetry, and maybe to drop a little light into the consciousness of her listeners.

—Chris George



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