

Daily Nexus



ISLAND REPRESSION BEFORE NIGHT FALLS PAINTS A DARK PICTURE OF CUBA

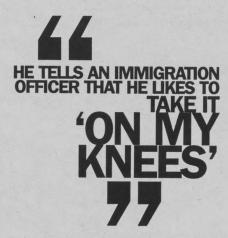
later kevin thomas_andy sywak

"The best film of 2000!" "A potent, visually stunning masterpiece!" "Rapturous, intoxicating filmmaking!" These are the slobbering cries of film critics that compelled me to go see "Before Night Falls" when it finally rolled into Santa Barbara. At the end it was visually stunning and maybe a little rapturous. Was it the best movie of 2000? Hardly.

Watching "Before Night Falls" is like drinking that orange Vitality beverage from Trader Joes: It looks cool and different, it doesn't always taste great but you end up finishing it because you think it's good for you. After you gulp it down, you walk away and think about whether or not you really needed that after all.

To its own merit, painter-turned-filmmaker Julian Schnabel ("Basquiat") has created a very original and daring film. The territory it covers — the artist's struggle under a brutal totalitarian regime — certainly has been done before. Still, with its graphic and frank discussion of homosexuality, Schnabel's originality lies more in the film's journey through a gay artist's mind than as a simple thriller about escape.

Set in post-revolutionary Cuba, "Before Night Falls" is based on the memoir by exiled Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas. A homosexual from the countryside, Arenas (Javier Bardem) finds himself in Havana just after Castro has risen to power. Intent on being a writer, he comes to some literary success and wins a prize. Soon, however, the Cuban police start to crackdown on homosexuals and Arenas is forced to smuggle his work outside the island for publication. Subject to constant police



humiliation, Arenas is imprisoned as his arresting officer tells him, "Because I say so." Two years after a horrible prison experience, he tells an immigration officer that he likes to take it "on my knees" and is finally allowed to go to America on the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. "Before Night Falls" is most satisfying when it sticks to its mesmerizing visuals and Arenas' touching flight from Cuba. Bardem is a truly amazing actor, and he commands the screen throughout, keeping some consistency to this ambitious and often uneven film. It is also refreshing to see an American movie that is not hopelessly romantic in its depictions of Cuba as some repressed island utopia full of smiling musicians and gleeful dancers. The glimpses into a Latin nation's eccentric and deeply repressed gay culture also make "Before Night Falls" a worthy film to watch.

Still, Schnabel cannot discipline himself when it comes to piling on the cinematic melodrama. Poems, flashbacks, and time-consuming plot turns make the film a very good test of one's patience. The main problem with "Before Night Falls" is that it lacks a real clear focus. Since much of the movie (and all of its gripping parts) are absorbed with Arenas' flight from Cuba, the film loses serious steam and purpose when this is actually accomplished.

Despite some real strengths, the tedious developments in "Before Night Falls" ultimately relegate it to the beret and bong art-house crowd. Perhaps this is the kind of movie one comes to appreciate in film school, when one learns to call painstakingly slow and visual films "real art" and slick plot-driven ones "Hollywood decadence." Whatever. Moral of the story: Don't trust the critics.



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art I review



PATRONS, LOVERS + OTHER ROMANTICS SETS THE TONE FOR THE DAY 'O' LOVE

There is no stronger or more mysterious emotion than love. It thrusts itself into the forefront, it disguises itself, it takes on many forms and it means different things to different people. Love may be the most difficult emotion to attempt to make tangible, yet that is just what *Patrons*, *Lovers and Other Romantics*, the current exhibit at the Contemporary Arts Forum, aspires to do.

Patrons features the "HeART work" of 60 artists, ranging in origin from Santa Barbara to London. Their mission is to create Valentines that express love. The artists succeed, especially as a whole, by communicating a spectrum of views that varies from artist to artist. And, with no boundaries on form, even the similar pieces take on a life of their own.

Among the more prominent forms of love displayed are those of a cheesy, high school sweetheart nature. These compositions might not be interesting by themselves, but they are appropriate in context. Tom Stanley's "Love Trophy 2001," for instance, is a square base with a heart where you would usually find a baseball or basketball player. Equally silly are mixed media pictures of a horse running on a heart-filled background and gray hands holding colorful, heart-shaped rocks.

The most common theme among *Patrons* is sex, which can be a physical act of love or a vain attempt to find love. The boisterous sexual works really stick out.

donning the turtleneck_jack lloyd clark, III

Penelope Gottlieb's "Peep Show #3" appears to be a chest with pictures of houses on the sides and a padlock keeping it closed. Upon closer inspection there is a peephole that gives a view of two dolls having sex on a couch in a small room. Susan Tibbles' "Do Not Disturb Us" assemblage is an antique-looking heart covered in Valentine

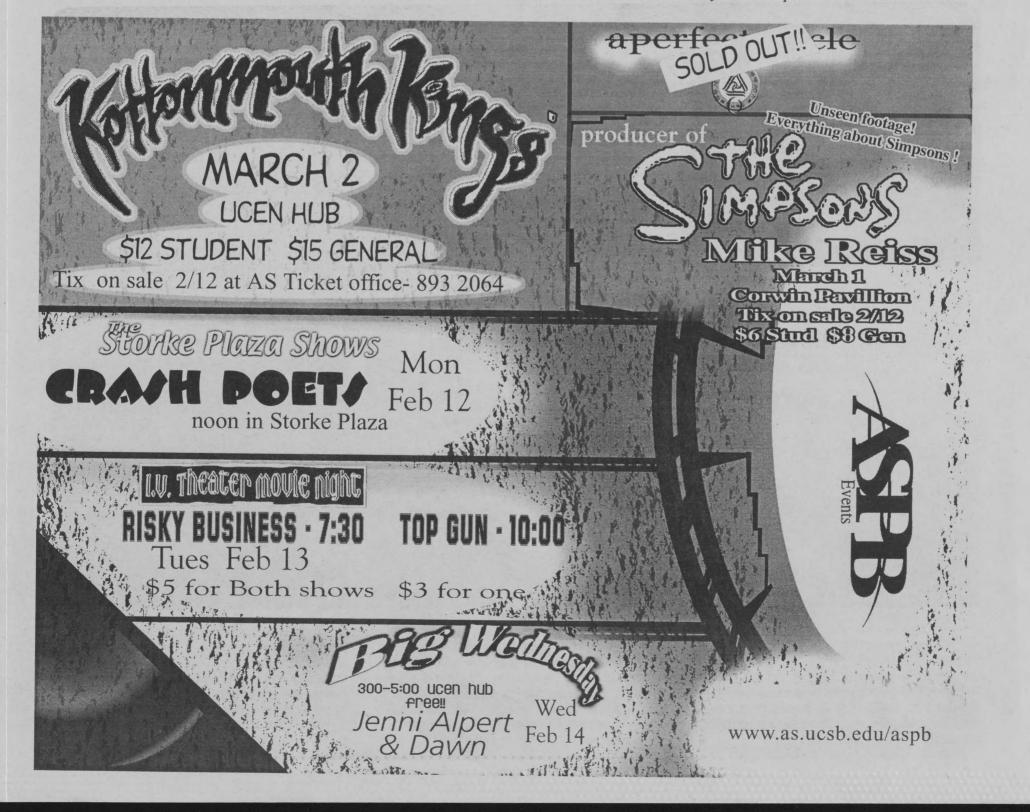


poems. Wings are screwed on the top of the heart near the sides, and a doorknob and keyhole take prominence in the middle. What really makes it interesting is the Polaroid picture pinned to the wall by the heart. The picture shows two women kissing with their faces outlined by a heart.

Alternative expressions of love not usually associated with Valentine's Day also have their place in the exhibit and prove to be particularly engaging. Paintings of cats and TV antennas both turn the focus from interpersonal affection, but the best of this sort is Mary LaPorte's "Ex-Voto #10." This oil-on-metal painting depicts an obese woman alone on her knees with a dark cloud hovering over a table of food behind her. She is praying to a skinny woman in a bright white cloud. Handwritten text below the painting reveals that she is praying to St. Vanna (White?), asking to lead her away from "eternal temptations of indulgence." This piece gives a perspective of the Valentine's Day shunned, which is needed in this mostly blissful exhibit.

Besides a few Photoshopped pictures that really don't fit it in with the rest of the exhibit, *Patrons, Lovers and Other Romantics* is an outstanding show of Valentine's Day-influenced work. With its wide array of ideas, it's an exhibit that can be appreciated by everyone, not just couples.

Patrons, Lovers and Other Romantics is on display until Feb. 10. Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, 653 Paseo Nuevo, Santa Barbara. Open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m



POURING OUT THE EMPTY BOTTLE UNVEILS SOVIET ANGST

big words_charles han

Question: "What kind of person lives in a toilet?" Answer: "20 percent before perestroika and 80 percent after perestroika." The irony of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's pun is in the fact that some citizens in the former Soviet Union actually lived in public restrooms. Incidentally, the installation of a Soviet public restroom/makeshift house drew protests from the persons who lived in those very dwellings.

Their comments and installation were not meant to be deprecating towards the citizens in the margins of Soviet society, but instead served to remark about the spiritual, physical and psychological toils that every Soviet citizen shared.

As part of the UCSB Art Symposium through Arts & Lectures, the Kabakovs presented an exposition of their art, which focused on the conditions in post-Stalinist Russia. While sitting in on a guest lecture in Isla Vista Theater is a routine exercise for many students at UCSB, giving such a lecture was inconceivable for the Kabakovs prior to their move to the United States in the late 1980s.

From the era of Stalin to Gorbachav's perestroika (an era of reform in the mid 1980s), Soviet realism was the rule. The state had a virtual monopoly on all the art officially produced. The exclusion of anything not in the socialist realist vein led artists like the Kabakovs to form



an "unofficial" art scene in the late 1950s. Even after the cultural climate liberalized after Stalin's death, unofficial art was shut out from state museums, galleries, and publications, denying fellow artists Erics Bulatov, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid exposure to a much wider audience.

Since then, the Kabakovs have been seen as some of the most cele-

brated Russian installation artists of the late 20th century. During their visit to UCSB, the Kabakovs worked on a public installation entitled "The Empty Bottle: Mother and Son." With the assistance of students representing departments from Art Studio to Asian American Studies, the Kabakovs transformed a series of iron bars into a structure resembling an enormous bottle.

The giant tilted-wire bottle leads to a round patchwork of pebbles on the ground from which a trickle of water flows out. If the function of the fountain was to



not the kabakovs >> Chancellor Yang speaking at the installation's opening

project water into the bottle, it fails miserably since hardly enough water is emitted to even be called a fountain.

This notion of the broken, dysfunctional, or incomplete is not inconsistent with much of the Kabakovs' work, the most prominent evidence of this being their series of "total installations." The irony, humor, and sadness that encompass their work is a reflection of the Soviet psyche that is still an integral part of the Kabakovs and why they continue to call themselves Soviet and not Russian artists.

ONE FOR THE ROAD A TIME FOR DRUNKEN HORSES SHOWS MIDEAST PROBLEMS

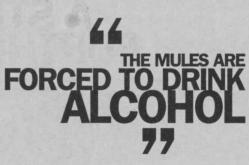
watching, waiting_joseph martinez

Harsh reality can be easy to deal with, especially when it takes place on another continent. "A Time for Drunken Horses" brings the harsh reality of the Middle East to the American screen, forcing its audience to take heed.

This is a weeping film, not for the cold of heart. A simple story about a simple tragedy, "A Time for Drunken Horses" is a bleak depiction of five orphaned Iranian-Kurdish children laboring for money to pay for food and an operation for their handicapped brother. It is a solid film that provokes compassion through stark absences.

Cutting into his own childhood experiences and the modern political struggles of Kurdish youth in Iran, Bahman Ghobadi makes his feature-length directorial debut with a focused eye on what desolation means. The main character, Ayoub,

is the 12-year-old caretaker of his family. He takes on a dangerous job smuggling goods into Iraq on the backs of mules so that he can pay for his brother's operation (which still will only keep him alive for a few more months). The mules are forced



to drink alcohol just to get them to bear the trek over the snowy mountain terrain to Iraq (hence the title). Ayoub gets nothing but trouble for his pains, but doesn't have the option of giving up.

However sparse the their life, callousness is undetectable in the softfeatured faces of these determined kids, who are forced to grow up too fast. But be forewarned — there is not a single sentimental brick in this house of survival. True, it is a hard film to watch, but it would be an even harder task not to watch it.

The director does not make a propaganda plea for pity about this ethnic minority, yet we are left in deepest sympathy for these unfortunate souls.

This is a fictional movie, but considering that most of the actors were common Kurdish villagers, it plays more like a documentary. This is certainly not your

average movie-going tripe, so relish the opportunity to witness something authentic.

"A Time for Drunken Horses" plays Sunday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m. in Campbell Hall.

today | thursday

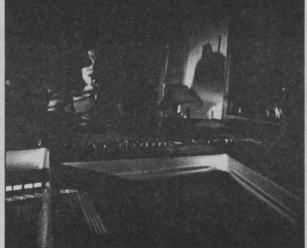
thingstodo >> Calendar



tomorrow | friday



weekend | saturday



Don't Thursdays just bring you joy? The blessing begins with *Artsweek*, and continues well into the night since it's close enough to Friday to give you the incentive to begin the party a day in advance. Thursdays also mean The ZOO goes off at Zelo's, where everyone from baby ravers to seasoned club brats get together to dance, schmooze and drink. Twelve Monkeys brings you world class deejays, so get yourself to 630 State St. \$5, typically

Here's an Artsweek recipe for success. Kick off your Friday night by joining your film fanatic friends for a streetcar at the Study Hall. Then, head over to Campbell Hall to catch "A Streetcar Named Desire," the essential screen adaption of playwright Tennessee Williams' smoldering drama. The action starts at 7:30 p.m., so bring \$5 and don't miss out. After, why not catch Bill's Bus and head downtown? You can pretend that's a streetcar and go get your fade on. According to critics, vocalist, pianist, songwriter and recording artist Jennifer Terran is like Tori Amos, Joni Mitchell and Ani DiFranco combined. She's produced and engineered three independently released recordings, and – guess what! – she's performing her work live. Grab your folksy friends and eat some grub food at Roy before checking out her skills in the next room. Jolly Tiger, 7 W. Carillo St.. For information, call 966-5636.



MOVE OVER RAP-ROCK SNAKE RIVER CONSPIRACY SLITHERS INTO TOWN

nü-writer_john syquia

What would you say if a band was described as postindustrial goth pop? Add electronic beats and elements of lounge and a description like this might really confuse you, but it's as close as you'll get to describing Snake River Conspiracy. Officially this year's "Next Big Thing,"

Snake River Conspiracy was chosen from over 75 bands to tour with A Perfect Circle. Snake River Conspiracy is lead singer Tobey Torres and songwriter/producer Jason Slater, and Artsweek recently got the chance to sit down and chat with Torres.

Artsweek: People often casually refer to your music as sounding like Nine Inch Nails or Garbage. What do you think about this tendency to try to classify your music?

Tobey Torres: I don't really care because somebody is always going to say you sound like someone else. Well, we *don't* really

sound exactly like anybody else. I guess it's industrial r rock pop, and we do have our pop songs. But if I'm going s

to write a pop song it's going to have fucked-up lyrics. Both Jason and I like a lot of different music, and we incorporate it all with our Star Trek-like beats and moaning porn stars in the background.

You guys utilize sequencers and electronics in your songs.

MUSIC DEFINITELY HAS TO

How do you think this increasing use of technology has affected music? I think it's great, in one aspect anybody can create these music days ... but you still have to have all the talent and elements to make something that isn't trite and boring. I love acoustic and straight-up rock, and it's cool that people stay true to their roots. But

music definitely has to evolve and I'm all for taking it a step further.

next week | tuesday

What do you think about the popularity of current hard rock acts like Limp Bizkit or Korn?

I like Korn; I think Jonathan [Davis] is great. Limp Bizkit sucks a big turd out of an elephant's ass! I can't stand their music; it's all the same. And he causes so much trouble! You have to have some guts to go out there every night and sing in front of so many people, for him to fucking dis people for doing that is messed up.

Well, what are your favorite current bands? Queens of the Stone Age are great. We toured with them recently and they're all great guys. I've been listening to At the Drive-In a lot lately; that album rocks!

How do you feel about being a female lead singer in the hard-rock genre that is mostly male-oriented?

I don't get intimidated by that shit because I'm always around men. I can kick it with the guys, and I've got a bad mouth and I'm a tomboy. So, I'm pretty comfortable with it. I try to make the music beautiful and feminine in spots so the women can relate, and so guys also see that I'm not some fake-ass bitch. But I am a woman and I am strong and I like to yell and scream in the mic.

So, how has it been playing with A Perfect Circle so far? It's been great; so far we've only done a few shows, but they've gone really well. We're a little more rough edged and screamy, but we have our mellow side, just like them. I think this will be a good tour because we complement their music well.

Snake River Conspiracy opens for with A Perfect Circle on Friday at the Events Center. Doors open at 6:30. \$18 presale students; \$20 general admission and at the door.

thingstodo >> Calendar

weekend | monday



If you wake up Monday and don't feel like going to class, why don't you roll to Mid-City Los Angeles and check out Meshell Ndegeocello at the Conga Room. You should remember her from her duet with John Mellencamp on the remake of Van Morrison's "Wild Night." Yeah, that song was lame, but she also sang the hook on Arrested Development's "Tennessee." That was dope. 5364 Wilshire Blvd. For information, call (323) 938-1696

 No, that's not some crazy picture circulated on the Internet, although you might be tempted to think of some

Internet, although you might be tempted to think of some silly caption like you work at *Maxim* or, at the very least, your high school yearbook. Believe it or not, those are some of the leading innovators in post-modern dance, members of the Pilobus Dance Theatre that thrills audiences with its ingenious, sculptural choreography and humor! Campbell Hall, 8 p.m. \$14 - \$20 student.

next week I wednesday



After you take your baby to that classy joint for dinner, stop by Madhouse's "Love Lounge" before going home to, you know, snuggle. Exchange sweet nothings over cocktail and martini specials in the reddest bar in town. Along with three chill party deejays and open-mic freestyling, you can snack on tasty Valentine's candy. Whether you go with your sweetheart or are just looking for some action to mend your unfulfilled heart, head to 434 State St. 21+

SOUND-SOUNDSTYLE*



Aesop Rock | Float | Mush

While listening to the thoughtful and philosophical Aesop Rock, I began to ponder my own validity in this world. I have questions I need answered: Is anyone reading my reviews? If so, would my recommendation of an unknown artist spur you to purchase the album?

If the answer to either of these is no, then move along as I quietly end my inconsequential existence. If your answers are yes, then check this out: Float, Aseop Rock's first nationally distributed album, is must-have material for those of you who listen to hip hop for more than just booty-shakin'. Aesop Rock comes equipped with more words to live by than you'll find anywhere else, often giving us listeners a real introspective view of his state of mind. There are too many quotables to possibly choose one or two of the best, so I'll let his intro chorus serve as an example as to what to expect: "I float / Everyone around me is busy drowning."

Sound egotistical? It is, to a certain degree. But the ego is just as quickly balanced by self-doubt, making Aesop Rock's *Float* one of the most well-written albums in modern hip hop. [JLC III]

Enemymine | The Ice in Me | Up

Before I describe the soul-shredding noise monster that is Enemymine, let me just say that the group once accidentally left its drummer in a roadside café while on tour.

That's fucking rad.

Evolving from godhead Silo, the world's first heavy metal rhythm duo. Enemymine has exactly one driving aesthetic - make all the noise it can with two basses and a drum kit (or just two basses, depending on the situation). Cold off the heels of 1998's self-titled EP, The Ice in Me sheds bassist Zak Sally in favor of some guy named Ryan, and in a way the results are disappointing: Sally's mellow, creaky vocals offset other bassist Mike Kunka's frantic screams nicely. Still, Ice has all the power and dynamic changes, not to mention the "How the hell can you play that on a bass?" melodies, of its debut.

This album is the epitome of Northwest noise. Crunching chords mutate into dark, ethereal rumbles, which in turn become jerky, electronic-sounding passages — but the band swears that every noise on the album is done with two bassists and a drummer. The mid-todown tempo nature of the music also insures that *Ice* is far from just another screaming hardcore record.

Furthermore, Kunka has been known to periodically grow himself a trucker 'stache. And that's fucking rad. [DJ Fatkid]

Various Artists | *Rapid Transit* | Chocolate Industries

It's been a long while since I gave up my former day job: financial analyst supervillain. But that doesn't mean I don't think of those days past, those days way back when I was a mild-mannered number cruncher, before I volunteered for mutagenic alteration, and hip hop was a straight-forward, easily identifiable genre. But now everything has changed. As fate would have it, all those eggheads did was make me really ugly and plant a computer chip in my head that activated a teleportation cloak. Unfortunately for me, I could never seem to teleport fast enough to avoid getting my heinie pummeled by that gang known as ASBG (Ass Stompers of Bad Guys).

Yet solace abounds, because hip hop is experiencing a renaissance. You've probably already heard this, but hip hop is expanding. For instance, the Chocolate



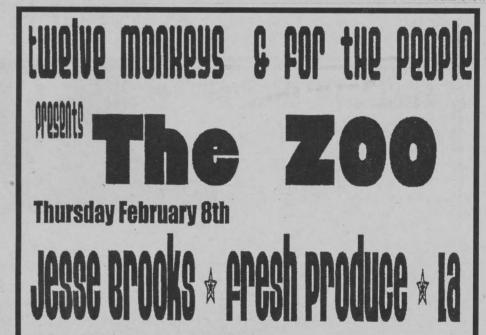
Industries Urban Renewal Program offers up a scintillating compilation called *Rapid Transit* that looks to tackle this expansion (and it truly is scintillating). Featuring the likes of Roots Manuva, East Flatbush Project + D.E.S., Push Button Objects and Funkstörung, the bases get covered and the rink zambonied twice over. Original and remix versions of the classic "Tried By 12," Ko-Wrecktechnique's "Metro Dade" and other tunes demonstrate both traditional and progressive hip-hop styles and abstract electronic music manifestations. Although I can't say that this compilation is better than a Wendy's spicy chicken combo with Biggie fries, I can say that *Rapid Transit* is really good. That's word is bondage, kid! **[Robotsex]**



Fauna | FlashFusion | Compost

The other night, while swilling Chardonnay at a press reception in Montecito among a crowd 20 years too old to be called my colleagues, I was struck with a great idea. Now, if you lived in a gorgeous Italian-style home, replete with Frieda Kahlo paintings and the like, and you threw a bash for members of the press and publicity, what music would you put on the hi-fi? Jazz? Classical? Not Enya, which is what our hosts chose to blare through their system. My new game plan is to start a consulting firm for these poor, deluded yuppies and gear them in the directions of the hip and new. For starters, I'll throw this CD in the changer and the crowd will give praise, thank you, for introducing some new sonic flavors into their bland stew of sucka New





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Daily Nexus

SOUND-SOUNDSTYLE*

Age emcees.

I had all but given up on drum 'n' bass until this album made its way to my desk - no disrespect to all the heads out there, but there's only so much of the same old boom-skat, boom-skat a gal can take before she turns the dial towards the latest sounds in DMX hardware. Not since Roni Size/Reprazent dropped New Forms back in 1997 has drum 'n' bass sounded so deep and mellow with enough raw, rough energy to keep the syncopated beat gymnastics innovative and fresh. FlashFusion moves from atmospheric quasi-downtempo grooves to heartier jump-up crowd pleasers without sacrificing production quality or fun. [Jenne Raub]



Field Mob | Ashy to Classy | MCA

The Dirty South has once again unleashed a plague onto the unsuspecting public. First it was Master P and his No Talent Soldiers, now it's the Field Mob with its debut *Ashy to Classy*.

Now for some of you who don't know what ashy means, let me fill you in. Ashy is when the skin is dry and appears to be covered in soot or ash. Well let me tell you that there's a whole lot of ash and very little class from Field Mob. These country fools stole a little something from Bone Thugs and Eminem, and the lack of originality and creativity is painfully obvious.

This album wasn't bad — it was really bad. Southern rappers should unite and beat the shit out of Field Mob because they're an embarrassment. Field Mob claims to be keeping it real. It's keeping it real dumb. Also of note, *Ashy to Classy* is an enhanced CD, which is industry speak for "they suck live." Hey, you never know, Britney's first CD was enhanced, and it went platinum — but she had a nice ass and a good plastic surgeon. I suggest Field Mob pack it up and try to get jobs back at Cleo's House of Hair. **[Ray Smith]**

Tipsy | Uh-Oh! | Asphodel

Electro-lounge, you've gotta heard it before. It's that chill but bouncy music pouring softly out of speakers at cocktail lounges and parties meant mostly as a nice accompaniment for drinking and scoping. It's the music that bands like Air and Thievery Corporation have made a killing out of. With a name meant to evoke the atmosphere of the music, Tipsy makes the case that electro-lounge is here to stay.

This San Francisco duo practically defines the genre. Dave Gardner and Tim Digullia combine meld guitars, horns, strings, keyboards, samples, record scratches and a whole bunch of miscellaneous atmospheric sounds to create a perpetually cheery sound. Like other instrumental electro-loungers, *Uh-Oh!* is full of that 1960s, Mario Esquivel-meets-James Bond peachy decadence that so many musicians find so enchanting. Indeed, listening to the album, it sounds as if most of these tracks just missed getting onto one of the "Austin Powers" soundtracks. With such rosy names as "Papaya Highway," "Sweet Cinnamon" and "Kitty Takes a Ride," *Uh-Oh*! isn't exactly a record you're going to want to put on when you want some heavy emotional sympathy. No no, *Uh-Oh*! is only meant to accompany our most buoyant of moods. With all its ballpark synths, giggly country guitars and cartoonish qualities, Tipsy wants you to know that they're all about fun. [Andy Sywak]



Honeydogs | Here's Luck | Palm

Here's Luck is another step of progression in the Minneapolis music scene. Extremely rich in sound, each track is almost a mini-masterpiece that proves that this band is not only accomplished, but now a veteran of the rock scene.

Minneapolis rock comes close to defining our current state of affairs in the U.S. In the early, economically depressed '80s, the city gave us Husker Dü and the Replacements, and the early '90s gave us the angst-ridden Soul Asylum. Now in the blissful turn of the century, we get the likes of the Jayhawks and Honeydogs. The music is innocent and unpolitical,

only trying to find melodies that will please the ear. Beatles-esque sitars abound on the record, and extremely colorful leads and vocal hooks leave one humming wanting and more. "Losing Transmissions" is probably the best example of the Honeydog's ability to fuse together 30 years of pop elements and formulate a song that captures the present. Adam Levy's dry and flat voice wastes no time in delivering a vibrant chorus about miscommunication and losing a loved one.

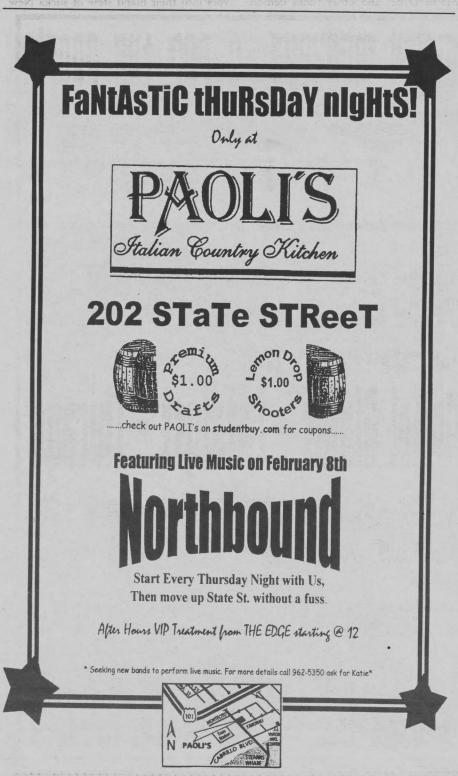
The album is not revolutionary, but it is a labor of love that delivers a sophisticated and advanced interpretation of rock music. The songs aren't glorified, just polished and meticulously orchestrated. *Here's Luck* is a statement of observation, love and making good music. [Collin Mitchell]

top10 guilty r&b pleasures

In honor of Valentine's Day, we picked our favorite love songs from the R&B genre that, as cheesy as some may be, express our feelings for you, the reader.

Jodeci, "Forever My Lady"
 Stevie Wonder, "Ribbon in the Sky"
 Aretha Franklin, "Ain't No Way"
 Boyz To Men, "I'll Make Love To You"
 Boyz To Men, "End of the Road"
 Babyface, "Two Occasions"
 Whitney Houston, "I Will Always Love You"
 The Temptations, "Just My Imagination"
 Sade, "Is It A Crime?"
 En Vogue, "Givin' Him Something He Can Feel."

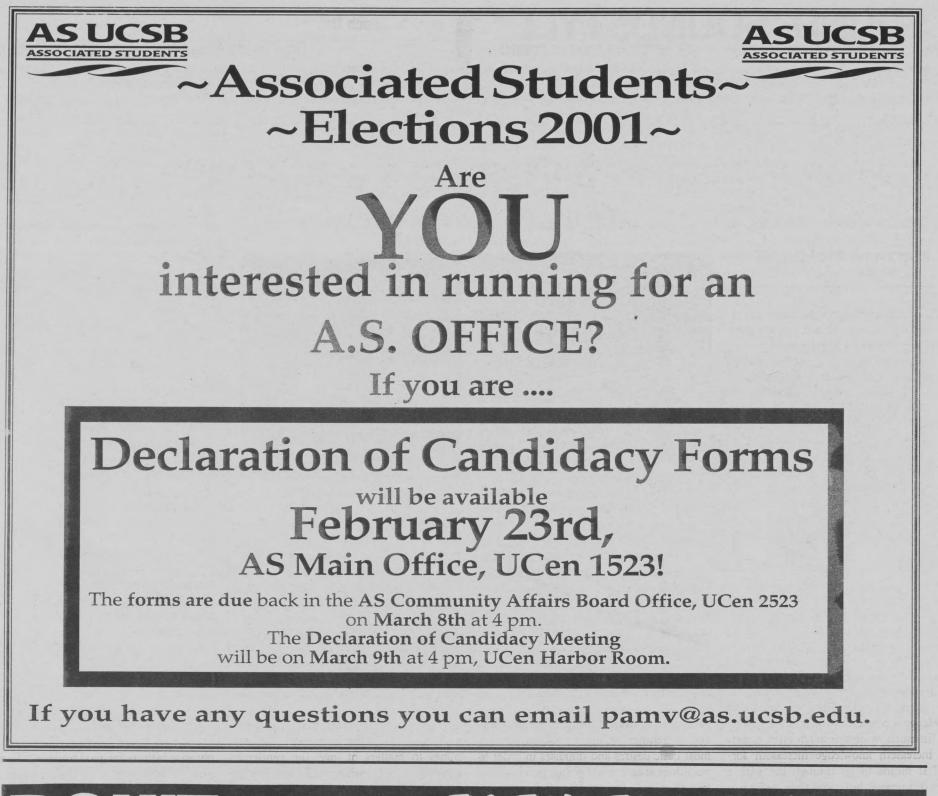
Check us out on the internet, where you can post comments to all these stories! We're at www.ucsbdailynexus.com and we love you.







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