

Keeping the reel going:

The trials of making films in Kirksville

by Jason Clampet

Students coming to Kirksville for the first time have expectations of what college will be like. Aside from the typical stereotypes of keggers and early morning lectures, there is a feeling among most students that college will bring a new cultural awareness to their eager minds.

But, students quickly realize that there are limitations to the variety of cultural experiences available here, in regards to both the University and the town. While some students see this as a turn-off, others have seen it as an opportunity to test and stretch the limits of creativity in a way which would be much more difficult in other environments.

In the spring of 1994, Mike Bischoff and Chris Peters created the Kirksville Filmmakers Guild, designing it as an outlet for student and community interest in making and watching films. They originally planned to put on film festivals consisting of films made by students and the independent film world. Financial limitations prevented the Guild from undertaking any of their plans for bringing independent or art house films to campus, but fortunately, "the University Players began showing some really good films," said Chris Peters.

Mike Bischoff departed in the fall of 1994, leaving all of the duties to Peters. Besides a few meetings at the beginning of the first semester, the Guild has somewhat fizzled out. "It was just too much for one person to handle," said Peters. Some of the problems were due to the poor technology available on campus. According to Peters, "the facilities are so pathetic," the University has only one video editor to work with, and it is primitive and often difficult to access. There are other problems, primarily related to the experience, time, and dedication that are required of those making the film.

A few students are overcoming these limitations with some success. One of the entries in the recent SAB film festival was *Tascan Dreaming*, a collaboration between Paul Cutak and Shawn Connelly. *Tascan Dreaming* was able to incorporate the aspects of Kirksville that its creators felt comfortable with, such as local music and the places one goes to hear it. The sound track consists of original material by local musicians such as the Incontinentals, Stacey Cox, Buffalo Mechanics, and Dave Kunau. With a

local sound track behind images of everyday life, Cutak and Connelly reflect some of their impressions of Kirksville both audibly and visually.

Putting all the pieces together is difficult, though. In statements that echoed Peters, Cutak commented on the limitations of making a film in this town: 8mm film must be ordered and there are no facilities at the university where it is possible to edit film, much less the cameras needed to shoot the film.

Even with all of the challenging aspects of making a film in Kirksville (or anywhere, for that matter), some students are beginning to take the initiative and create new works. Mike Roth, who assisted Cutak and Connelly on *Tascan Dreaming*, is working on

a screenplay for a docu-drama centered around the concept of the addictive power of bingo. "It's somewhat of an after-school special about hanging out and playing bingo at places like the Shriner's club," stated Roth. Another project in the works is *White Middle-class Kids Who Think They are Tuff*, a sarcastic look at the fixations that many young white males have with gansta-rap, violence, and apathy.

Cutak and Connelly are planning a trilogy of videos based on a song from each of the Incontinentals three albums. When it is completed, Cutak and Connelly plan on submitting the first of the three videos, "number 1" from the album *500 Incontinentals Fans Can't be Wrong*, to a film festival in Nevada this summer.

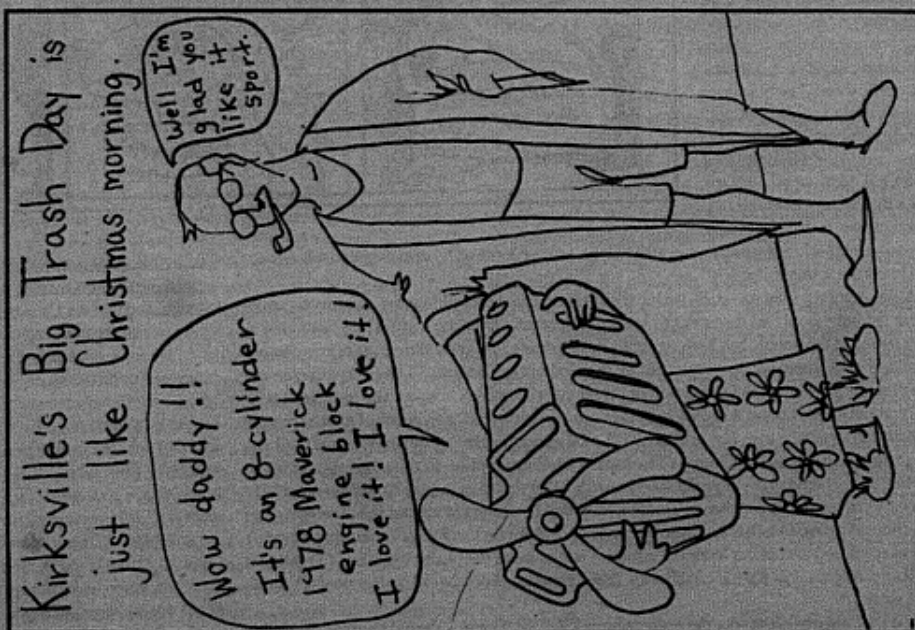
These new ideas will hopefully arouse the interest of others and lead to a surge of experimentation in the Kirksville film world, as small as it may be at this point. When the projects discussed here, along with others not mentioned, do come to fruition, Kirksville may see the first steps of a promising film culture. If so, there will need to be some place where the community can view them. This creates problems though because the University is busy building a rec center, Baldwin is difficult to obtain, the Little Theatre's sound capabilities leave much to be desired, and all that's left of the old Kennedy Theater is a parking lot.

It is in situations such as these that Peters sees a role for the Filmmakers Guild. "I see it as a political vehicle that will help to promote the interests of the film community to the campus."

"You don't want to be in a vulnerable position when you're making a film. You always go back to a neighborhood where you know you have the possibility of controlling the environment. As a filmmaker, that's one of the first things I learned."

- Filmmaker Hal Hartley in the introduction to *Simple Men and Trust*

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"Blow up your TV!" Triumph of the Will

by Ann Price

You know it all too well: you're sitting on the couch staring with a stupefied gaze at the TV flashing in front of you. You think—with the powers of reason left to you after hours of mind-numbing solace—that it's time to arise and conquer.

You think of all the things you could be doing instead of passively absorbing radio waves. You contemplate the homework you could be doing, the papers you could be writing, the stack of books you could be reading ... if you could only get away from that damned TV. You imagine saving the Amazon from imminent deforestation, if you could just for one minute break the spell, the hypnotic drone, of the channels whirling by you at the amazing speed of a Shriner's miniature car.

What is the force known as television that oppresses millions of Americans every day? And what can be done to end the indentured servitude that has drastically altered our once

conscious and productive nation? Now I'm not saying that television is an entirely evil and degenerative means of mass communication, but it is a force to be reckoned with. One that dares to return us to the type of feudal society some dead Europeans abandoned long ago. Television has become the master lord of our estates and we the great masses who dwell upon the sofa of serfdom.

It's true. In recent years, the middle class has shrunk considerably. Money and power have fallen into the hands of fewer and fewer, while television has invaded our homes (sometimes in every room) to be the divining instrument of our cultural stratification. The time once dedicated to reading as both entertainment and education has been replaced by time devoted to a small, square box that manipulates our optical nerves to induce a submissive euphoria—a trend that in 1991 alone caused 3 out of 5 American households not to purchase a single book.

As in all good feudal societies, we have institutionalized something that is so much greater than the individual that it enables us to feel our pathetic lives are worthwhile. Religion as the opiate of the people has been replaced by television; the great shrines have become our living rooms where we bow down before the God of sitcoms twice a day to encourage our faith in the simplicity and resolution of problems within 24.5 minutes and to believe with all certainty that Dionne Warwick is, in fact, our psychic friend. Our peace of mind is bought by advertisers at the low, low price of \$325,000 a commercial (during prime time) and we, in turn, give tithes to the Church of Conspicuous Consumption to show our appreciation.

How do we begin to dissolve the social contract that forces us in to such enslavement? By standing up from our couches of complacency and breaking the mental shackles that deep us chained to our TVs in one sweeping motion—by turning the TV off. And what a perfect week to take control of our lives and establish ourselves as People for the Ethical Treatment of Humans (yes, P.E.T.H.), considering that this week, April 24-30, is National TV turn-off week.

If it isn't already clear why the organization TV-Free America should be sponsoring this week of TV deprivation, here's another fact: the average American watches TV four hours a day, or rather two months a year. That's time spent confined to a couch that could be used to play sports, to take a long walk outside, to read to children, or to volunteer at a community center. Precious time. Moments that will never come again. So switch off and tune-in.

by John Larson

I received a presumptuous little piece of propaganda from StudentSenate not too long ago. You will surely remember it, that is if you didn't give it the old heave-ho the minute you figured out it wasn't money from your parents or your new BMG catalog.

The tone of this bulletin is one of a cornered animal. Spiteful and defensive, making the best argument out of the facts they have by creative wording and mixed messages. It is entitled "StudentSenate Presents the Facts Regarding The University Name Change" and continues on contrasting "myth" and "fact" about the change. Yet, as I said before the wording is all wrong, and the myths don't really match up with the facts. Let's look.

Directly quoted from the bulletin:

"Myth: There was no student or alumni input in making this decision."

Fact: More than two years have passed since a commission was appointed to determine if

the name Northeast Missouri State University reflects our current mission."

First of all, if more than two years have passed, don't you think that more than half of the student body will have changed, too? It is silly to think that all the students here think alike. The mere fact that all college students don't share the same views on the name change is probably the very reason they assigned this commission to survey students. Yet, just as idiotic is the assumption that even though half the student population has changed hands, their views will be the same, collectively. If such were true, we would need no elections at all, because everybody is going to vote the same way, anyway, right?

Continued where the quotation left off.

"That commission, made up of alumni, students, faculty, staff, legislators and community members, unanimously agreed, after eight months of surveying, that the current name did not reflect the mission change, and that the University should pursue a new name. Based upon this recommendation, the Northeast Board of Governors hired an outside consultant to assist the University in determining the top five most-favored names of students, alumni, faculty, staff and other interested parties."

The underlined sentence, although strongly worded, beats around the actual topic here. For, most people that I have talked to (I also have conducted a poll) are not upset over the fact that we are changing our name, it is what we are changing it to that is causing all the hub-bub. Plus, who is this outside consultant? I picture a tall, clean cut man with a long black trench coat assaulting students and grilling them for answers. "Answers!! I want answers!! Where were you on the night of the fourth?? What do you think of the university's name?!! Huh?! Here, take a bulletin, take it!" Either that, or a name pusher, very calm and hip with a hint of red in the eyes. "Hey baby, you want a name, I got one. See, I get 'em discount, yeah. Real cheap, yeah." Why isn't this mysterious outside consultant named here? He is mentioned again later. "A four-month study which utilized a combination of public hearings...to communicate and gather opinions was conducted by an outside consultant." Not at gun-point, I hope.

The logic in this handout that I have the most trouble with, though, is a six line pro-Truman campaign. It reads thus, "Harry S. Truman held similar beliefs to those embodied in Northeast's mission. He was committed to life long learning and he encouraged young

sepropaganda p. 3



propaganda from p.2

people to obtain a well-rounded education in the arts and sciences. Although not a college graduate, Truman was a self-educated man who was constantly reading and studying to learn more."

This is all well and good, and Truman was probably a good man. I didn't know him quite as well as our Student Senate seems to, though. If I had known Truman, I might have asked him, "How many elementary, middle, and university schools were destroyed in the detonations of Nagasaki and Hiroshima?" A man so dedicated to education must have learned this little fact in his lifetime. I suppose their destruction wouldn't have affected Truman's education much if he had been in either of these places at the time. Being a self-educated man and all he would've just kept plugging away at his books, assuming he survived the blast.

I do not mean to poke fun either at the disasters that WWII caused or at a man who can no longer defend himself or his decisions. I only want to call attention to the fact that when most people who have been to school hear the name Harry S. Truman, atom bombs go off in their minds. Future employers who sit and read resumes do not see this Student Senate bulletin deeming Truman as the true and honorable man he might have been. I, and I know I am not alone, hope to travel to Japan one day to teach English. If the decision comes down to the wire (and even if it doesn't) how far do you think my Truman diploma will get me?

Truman, it is said, was haunted the rest of his life because of what he has done. Enough lives, careers and (most importantly) educations have already been ruined and destroyed by these tragedies, to add our names to the list of victims would be unnecessary.

It was neither the intention nor purpose of the Monitor to offend any religious groups with the title of Dr. David Robinson's article, "Death to the Sacred Cow," on the outdated and burdensome core-curriculum. We sincerely apologize if anyone took offense.

the Monitor

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Wisdom, doughnuts, and Satan

by Brent Ricci

This past semester I took a class taught by Dr. David Partenheimer that dealt with several issues relating to archetypal and mythological methods of literary criticism. It was my impression when I enrolled that the focus would be simply, American literature. As it turned out, the geographic origin of the works was to be a peripheral issue and only occasionally mentioned. At first I questioned what personal benefits, if any, I would gain from this approach. Classes were full, and the group raised some interesting questions from day one, so I opted to stay. What I slowly realized was that we were learning not only something beyond the scope of American literature, but beyond the realm of literary criticism as well.

What we were learning, to some students' dismay, were real world skills, taught through the medium of literature; skills of analysis. It is my hope that through the process of writing this paper I might put these tools to use in some way that justifies a semester of provoking thoughts and questions.

I believe that literature is one of the most useful barometers of cultural change we have. Within literature is a remarkable amount of re-used stories and ideals. These recycled motifs say something about the subject with which they deal, namely that it is important and relevant to the societies that have used it. These recurrent themes are more commonly referred to as "archetypes." One of these archetypes that is extremely relevant to today's society is the classic "sell your soul to the Devil for something really neat-o" story. It's better known as the "soul-seller" archetype.

A special case of this archetype is Faust. He is, and has been, a man who wants to go beyond the limits of his own human life, and sells his soul to do just that. In 1593, Christopher Marlowe wrote one of the first Faust stories entitled, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*. In this story, the Faust character leads a fairly unproductive life with these remarkable powers and is taken to Hell by the devil and his associates.

So what's your point Brent? How is this such a powerful barometer of change? Well, to determine change, we need something to compare the older Faust example to. The first things we could easily put it up against are modern American examples of the story. In Steven Vincent Benet's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, a poor farmer named Jabez Stone sells his soul for money, and cheats the Devil out of it in the end. In *The Devil and Homer Simpson*, Homer sells his soul for a doughnut. Luckily he cheated the Devil also. Has Marlowe's knowledge deteriorated into our dollar, our doughnut? These values, and this cheating, are very representative of other American Faust stories.

More directly, and more interestingly we could compare the Faust story to real world buy-now, pay-later situations. We could compare it directly to our lives as Americans. Any contemporary analysis of our actual lives based on this archetype, proves difficult due to the negligible role the classical Faustian concept of the soul plays in people's minds today. However, the "buy now, pay later" ideal I spoke of earlier certainly does play a role in our world. It is not only the heart of the Faust archetype, but the American way of life. In these "soulless" times, many materializations of this ideal spring to mind immediately. Issues such as global warming, credit cards, non-health foods, fraud, and safe or unprotected sex are only a few.

We know that Faust acquired knowledge. It was what he

bought. We need to ask the question: What, within the limits of the "buy now, pay later" ideal are we buying? Concerning the examples of modern American culture, we could say that we are buying natural resources to fuel our machinery, merchandise in ways that we can afford more easily, good tastes, free merchandise, and good sex respectively. Where Faust would have bought knowledge, we have been buying, in the most basic sense, physical comfort. Faust's acquisition of knowledge has become our acquisition of physical comfort.

This, on its own, says something profound about us, about what we've come to. This becomes even more interesting when we consider how we've arrived here. Through feats of will and determination, we as a culture have pursued comfort with a vengeance. The comforts we have amassed have instilled in many, apathy. How many times have you watched Buffy on the Home Shopping Network because you couldn't spot the remote comfortably nestled between your ass and the Lay-Z-Boy? Is this what we've been fighting to achieve for so long? Is this what Faust's purchase has deteriorated to?

We next need to take this rationale one step further and ask the question: "What are we exchanging for our comfort?" Faust exchanged his soul for infinite knowledge. What have we exchanged for our debts? What have we exchanged for the natural resources we've stripped from our earth? What has the sold soul become in today's America?

The answer of course is nothing. Where Faust exchanged his soul, we have given nothing. The barometer seems to be falling quickly. This lack of payment brings us to the American version of the soul-seller archetype: we always cheat the devil. Now let us take one final reading. When we take the resources and heat the globe, when we begin on credit and end in debt, when we eat our grease and earn our coronaries, when we steal and end in jail, when we ignore the "safe" before the "sex," who are we cheating? Who have become Marlowe's Devil?

Now don't start packing your Bermuda shorts just yet. According to this line of thought, there has been somewhat of a decline in values at work, but you may wonder if any society has ever existed that has given just as much as it has received. It sounds an awful lot like Utopia to me and Utopia, literally translated, means no-place.

What I'm writing about here pinions on the assumption that literature is a reflection of culture, and not the opposite. Personally, I don't agree with what this rationale has turned up. This tells me that either I need to reassess my own moral views, or that the some of the lessons I've been taught in fifteen years have been somewhat flawed. It certainly does raise some interesting questions though. I'm not trying to damn anyone, but I do think that we as a nation need to reassess and pursue the values that we supposedly hold so dear.

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Going meatless isn't easy in the Heartland

by Jill Goodheart

This is Kirksville, Mo. This is the Heartland. Things are done the old fashioned way here. The American Way. Picture the ultimate American family scene: A family sits down to eat the barbecued ribs Dad just cooked. That's the way things are always done in the Heartland, isn't it? Surprisingly, the answer is no.

Although Kirksville is a small farming community, people do not necessarily succumb to the American tradition of eating generous amounts of meat. With the presence of the University and a growing concern about health, more people are cutting meat completely from their diets and becoming vegetarians by overcoming the restraints of the small town.

There are a variety of reasons for this growing number of vegetarians. According to Maxine Shafer, owner of Maxine's Back to Nature Health Food Store, the main reason is because of the increased concern for health.

"Times are changing, and people are taking more responsibility for themselves," she said. "People are getting to know more about health alternatives."

Another reason for the increase in vegetarians is a growing concern for

animal rights. Many people feel the treatment of animals during the preparation process is inhumane and violent.

The main problem is that most people do not agree with the vegetarian philosophy. This creates more problems for vegetarians because it makes meatless meals and products harder to come by.

An example of this in Kirksville is the limited amount of vegetarian meals in restaurants. Because of this "heartland" mentality, many restaurants don't even think to put a completely meat free item on their menus.

One solution is calling ahead to the restaurant. Associate professor of English Betsy Otten sometimes calls restaurants three days in advance to let them know a vegetarian is coming so that they have time to prepare an appropriate meal.

Senior Michelle LaVallee substitutes other foods, such as tofu, for meat when in a restaurant. They are usually glad to accommodate, especially at Chinese restaurants, she said.

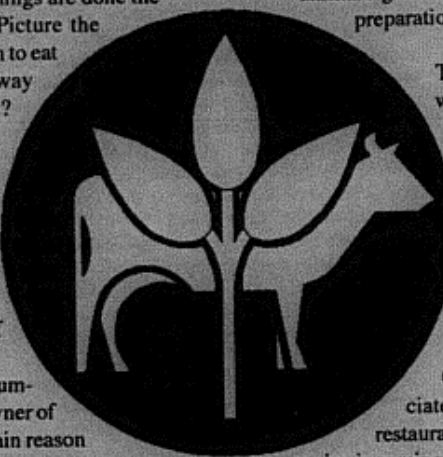
Another limitation is the lack of variety in grocery stores. While produce departments are usually good, stores carry a limited amount of other staples for a vegetarian diet, such as rice and tofu. For example, Kirksville grocery stores don't carry tofu mixes, which save hours of work in the kitchen according to Otten.

A possible solution is joining a cooperative buying club, where groups of people order food in bulk and have it mailed to them. An example is Blooming Prairie which is based in Iowa City.

Associate professor of English Martha Bartter, who has been a member of Blooming Prairie for 10 years, said it "makes things available that aren't available in local grocery stores." The catalog for the club, which is 200 pages of fine print, is "enormously diverse" and provides many options for vegetarians, she said.

Instead of the one or two kinds of rice available in Kirksville, there are about 10 different kinds through the food club, and they are bought in much larger quantities. The same is true for tofu and other soy products.


"It's not necessarily vegetarian food, but various types of food that supply vegetarians are available," Bartter said. "If you happen to want organically grown stuff, it's a good way to get it."



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Other vegetarians solve the variety problem by traveling to other cities to buy food in bulk at large health food stores. Otten usually travels to Ames, Iowa or Chicago to do the shopping for food staples. She stocks up every four or five months.

Many vegetarians, especially students, do survive without traveling to another town or going through mail order, although it is more difficult. "Kirkville produce sections are diverse, but students living alone can't buy a large amount of vegetables at one time because they are the only ones eating them. 'It's hard to cook for yourself as a vegetarian, especially without a car,' said LaVallee, who has been a vegetarian for about a year and a half.

One local option is Maxine's Back to Nature Health Food Store on Baltimore, where about a quarter of the customers are vegetarians. Maxine's has a section specifically dedicated to vegetarians and another section with prepackaged products made from soy and grains. According to Maxine Shafer, someone could probably do all of his or her vegetarian shopping there.

Maxine's also sells an array of dietary supplements, which are often helpful to strict vegetarians who usually lack protein and iron in their bodies.

"A vegetarian needs to be really careful and make sure they get a balanced diet, especially protein," Shafer said. "They're not too big on foods with protein — meats, dairy, eggs."

With all of these limitations in Kirkville, the question arises of whether or not vegetarians really are healthier than the meat eating population. Although some lack good eating habits, vegetarians seem to be healthier overall.

Otten pays close attention to her dietary needs, and she usually gets enough nutrients because she eats cheese and soybean imitation meats. Other healthy staples in her diet are lentils and rice.

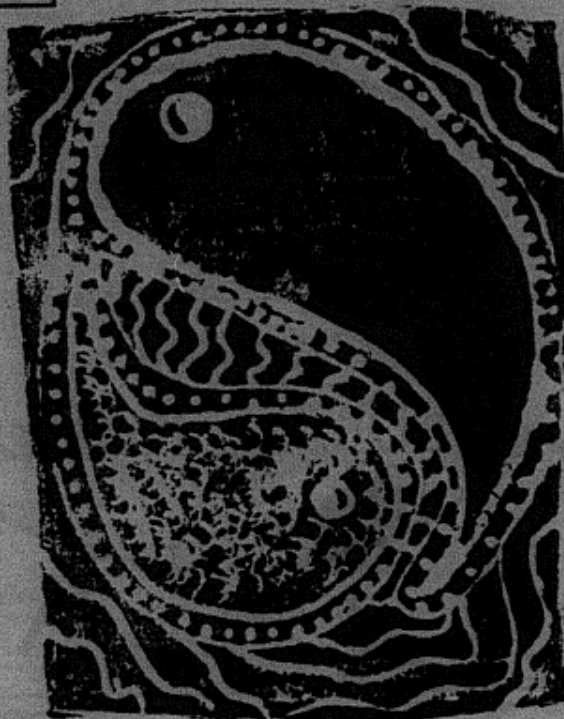
However, the vegetarians are not the only ones who think they are healthy. According to Shafer, a health food professional, vegetarians can be much healthier than those people who eat meat.

"If a vegetarian is careful and gets all the nutrients and watches their protein, I think that they are more healthy," she said. Shafer points out that even people who eat meat need to watch their intake of nutrients.

"A lot of things can be prevented with a healthy diet — diseases, heart problems, diabetes," Shafer said.

These limitations in Kirkville can be overcome, and a nutritious meal can be successfully attained by vegetarians because of the growing trend to not eat meat. Stores are stocking more meatless products, and places like Maxine's are surviving because of them, and vegetarians are able to stick to their diets.

"I feel more entitled to expect accommodation," Otten said.



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by Myron Ester

Two weekends ago upwards of fifteen NMSU students trekked up to Grinnell, Iowa to see what was, for some, the best rock 'n' roll show of their lifetime. The band was Guided By Voices: a group that demonstrates how fantastic music can be. This five-piece has spent the last ten years in Dayton, Ohio working day jobs (the lead singer/songwriter was a fourth-grade teacher up until last May) and recording hundreds of songs on various band member's four-tracks. Since 1986, they've put out at least twelve EPs and 7 inch singles, and their newest release *Alien Lanes* is their tenth (or ninth or eleventh, depending on how you count) full-length album.

Why are they so great? Picture a band that can create a perfect pop song in twenty seconds and stop before you get a chance to sing along with the chorus. Imagine hearing a perfect melody coupled with lyrics that are beautiful in spite of the fact that they seem like nonsense.

On "Always Crush Me," the twenty-seventh track of *Alien Lanes*, Robert Pollard sings: "Full head of nothing, Fail to see the difference, Fail to feel the mercy, Off to join the flagstaff, Always crush me, Picture my amazement, When it doesn't always pain me, And I will reproduce faster." Nothing could be more beautiful than these words backed by a violin-mimicking guitar, all recorded in one of the band member's basement.

"I've entered the game of pricks, With knives in the back of me... You could never be strong, You can only be free, And I never asked for the truth, But you owe that to me," Pollard sings on "Game of Pricks," while backed by a tune that, if played over and over, could even keep you awake on a late-night drive across Iowa or Kansas.

There are seven other members of the band who play on this album. Guitarist/vocalist Tobin Sprout is able to write some pop gems himself as well as add his elfish voice to the lead vocals on three tracks. Greg Demos, Pete Jamison, and Jim Pollard have moved on to other bands or began to practice law (in Greg's case). Mitch Mitchell, Kevin Fennell, and Jim Greer (*Spin* magazine columnist) round out the current touring line-up.

It is impossible to listen to the band now without visions of the Grinnell show dominating my thoughts. I see Mitch Mitchell striking guitar-God/Pete Townsend poses, Robert Pollard doing high kicks while trying to keep from spilling his beer and feeling his crotch like he's stuck in a glam-rock band in the early eighties, and Kevin Fennell sneering over his drum kit like Alex Van Halen. They are able to mock the symbols of rock while embodying the heart and soul of it. Buy their albums or go through life not knowing how great music can be.

Film and Music Reviews

Just watch Minnie Driver

by Mitsuru Nakamura

"Circle of Friends," based on the novel by Maeve Binchy, is smartly done with great performances and tender, nostalgic charm. Set in Dublin in the late '50's, the film is about three Irish girls who go to a university in Dublin and learn about love, loyalty, and sex. The story sounds like a cliché, but the film is far from it and has some remarkable features which keep the audience's attention.

This old-fashioned romance opens with narration which tells the audience how the Catholic church influenced the Irish people in the '50's. Benny (Minnie Driver), the narrator and main character, and her friends, Nan and Eve (Geraldine O'Rawe and Saffron Burrows) grow up on a small town in Ireland and go to a university in Dublin in 1957. There they meet a good-looking medical student, Jack (Chris O'Donnell), whose father is a wealthy doctor. Benny and Jack soon fall in love, but their Catholic morality keeps them away from sexual intercourse.

One of the interesting aspects in "Circle of Friends" is how the Irish Catholicism affects their sexual activity. They are obsessed with sex but cannot do anything about it under the strict Irish Catholic rules of love, sex, and marriage. Benny's romance with Jack is also disturbed by her father's attempt to get her married to his young colleague and her friend.

There are some problems in the movie. Despite its title, the film focuses mainly on Benny and her romance with Jack, not on her relationship with Nan and Eve. The characters care very much about their friendships, but the film provides only a few episodes which describe these relationships.

Compared to the other characters, Eve's character is very weak. Even though she is the smartest and plays a significant role, Eve is still a flat character. Her character development and explanation are not as well-described as Benny's and Nan's. The plot of Nan's pregnancy (she discovers she is pregnant and tries to steal Jack when her wealthy Protestant lover refuses to marry her), which unfortunately creates the climax of the story, sounds like a soap opera and is not quite fit for the film.

However, those problems are relatively small. The film itself has a lot of excellent qualities. It can be compared to other Irish films recently released in the U.S. such as *Snapper* and *Widow's Peak*. The story which is told from a feminist point of view is favorable.

The music from Michael Kamen adds a tender atmosphere to the movie. Kamen has worked with Sting, Eric Clapton, Pink Floyd, and others. He has composed many soundtracks including *Brazil*, *Lethal Weapon 1, 2, and 3*, and *Robin Hood—Prince of Thieves* and has been nominated for several awards.

Pat O'Connor's directing, like old John Hughes, captures heart warming details of adolescence. Supported by brilliant dialogue, all the acting is fine, but the greatest of all is the admirable and notable performance by the lead actress, Minnie Driver. Everything she does in the movie is simply superb and very charming. Minnie Driver as Benny is one of the most outstanding performances from a newcomer in years.

Forget about Chris O'Donnell. Just watch Minnie Driver.



Essaywhuman?!

by Dave Heaton

"Do You Want More?!!!!!!!!" is the major-label debut from The Roots, a Philadelphia-based rap band. On the first track, their music is called "organic hip hop jazz, 100% groove," and that about sums it up. The Roots consists of two vocalists, Black Thought and Malik B., drummer B.R.O.THER?, bassist Leonard Hubbard, keyboardist Scott Storch and occasionally others, including Rahzel the Godfather of Noise (vocals), guest vocalist Cassandra Wilson, saxophonist Steve Coleman, trombonist Joshua Roseman, and Graham Haynes on trumpet.

On "Proceed," the second song, Black Thought says: "just think - what if you could just, just blink yourself away." In the next hour, the Roots let the listener escape by creating inventive music which sounds fresh and immediately grasps the listener's attention.

The Roots have both talented musicians and vocalists. Besides effectively delivering lyrics, Malik B. and Black Thought also use their voices as instruments, rapping, singing, humming, mimicking instruments, scatting and beat-boxing throughout the album. The musical and vocal improvisations of the Roots are best exemplified by "Essaywhuman?!!!!!!!!" a "sound check" recorded live at the Trocadero in Philadelphia.

Despite the innovations, the Roots are also genuine rap artists. They give thanks to previous rappers, from Slick Rick to A Tribe Called Quest, and acknowledge the influence of these artists on their own styles. In "Distortion to Static," a straightforward rap song put to a background of laughter, Black Thought says "I'm every MC, it's all in me." The Roots represent a fresh connection of the past with the future, paying tribute to rap legends while taking the music to another level.

The lyrics on the album deal mostly with topics of everyday life, from "lazy afternoons" to block parties and relationships, with some bragging and boasting thrown in. The lyrics are not groundbreaking, but are often witty and entertaining, and fit in well with the group's overall sound. Other highlights of the album include "Datskat," where Black Thought demonstrates his scat-singing techniques, "The Lesson Part 1," featuring a guest spot by 15-year-old rapper Dice Raw and "vocal bass" by Rahzel, and "The Unlocking," a showcase for poet Ursula Rucker.

While the Roots will likely be compared to rap groups that use live musicians (Digable Planets, Spearhead, Basehead) and to rappers that emphasize vocal "freestyling" (Black Moon, the Pharcyde), the group effectively combines the two styles. "Do You Want More?!!!!!!!!" should appeal to rap fans and to fans of music in general. In a time when the rap world often seems filled with imitators and self-proclaimed "gangstas," the Roots have created genuine, innovative music which avoids easy categorization and provokes the listener to think and to dance, all at the same time.

The excuse for my escape:

A legendary concert at Mississippi Nights

by Robyn E. Ratcliff

When I found out that Eddie Vedder was going to be at Mississippi Nights, I was pretty stoked. It was on a Tuesday (April 18), and attendance entailed missing my night class. I decided to attend anyway; sacrifices must often be made.

When I called to get the tickets, I asked who was playing that night, just to be sure I wasn't lied to. The phone woman said, "Like what?" and I responded, "You know, like, who's going to stand on the stage and sing?" She laughed with great enthusiasm and explained that she had said Mike Watt. Oh. It really made her day. She laughed for a long time. I guess I was expecting her to name the guitar player in Watt's band... guitar player Eddie Vedder.

Though I had never listened to Mike Watt before, I really enjoyed the show. The guy had a great deal of personality and looked a lot like a lumberjack. He danced around with his bass guitar and giggled while he sang. His band included Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam; Dave Grohl, formerly of Nirvana; and Pat Smear, formerly of the Germs and Nirvana.

The opening bands were Hovercraft, a multi-media presentation, and Foo-Fighters, fronted by Grohl. Hovercraft was interesting; there was a band of three playing with a silent movie as a backdrop. Being kind of short, I couldn't see too well, but the movie was a montage of primarily nature shots and pictures of India. The music of Hovercraft was dark and loud and it came and went in massive waves of sound.

Foo-Fighters were even louder than Hovercraft and Grohl took head-banging to an entirely new plane which I will call full-body-banging. There was a remnant of Nirvana in their sound, but they were a little too metallic for my personal taste. I could hardly hear anything but a supreme, whiny, feedback sound for two days, and I blame the Foo-Fighters, though it may have been the result of prolonged exposure to loud music in general.

The highlight of the show was Watt's song "Big Train" which was very entertaining. Vedder sang two songs during the set and they were ecstatic experiences for the whole crowd. Most people were there to see him anyway, but there was no attempt by Vedder to steal the show from Watt, which was cool. Watt provided an interesting array of musical styles and themes. Another favorite of mine was the song "Against the 70's" which Watt and Vedder sang with a great deal of enthusiasm and vigor.

In general, the Mike Watt show was incredible. He has a new album out called *Ball-Hog or Tugboat?* which I hear is really great and plan to buy tomorrow. It occurred to me after the concert that it was really an incredibly liberating experience just to drive to St. Louis with two great friends on a Tuesday night. In fact, had there been no concert, no Eddie, no beer, I think I would have had just as much fun.

As the stress of finals and finality approaches, I strongly suggest going on such an adventure yourself. Something about just getting in the car and driving away, being in another city on a school night, unable to be reached even by phone, can make you feel like a free person. You may not get to see Eddie Vedder like I did, but anything beats another night of cultural isolation.

Making a little sense

by Brett Kirkpatrick

he asks,

"what are the roots that clutch, what branches grow,
out of this stony rubbish?"
the past you see, unfertile ground,
the present and its topsoil,
only nuclear active and broken,
broken into conflicting words.

a request,

bring your trashbag to the roadside rally,
but please don't be late,
the world is at the fingertips of fate.

all the heroes blown to mistakes,
tumbleweed across a desert highway,
a wasteland.

i question the relevance of all your talk,
you only aggravate,
suffocate.

a solution,

'tis better to direct your energy elsewhere.
in a world without myth,

there lies one gift.

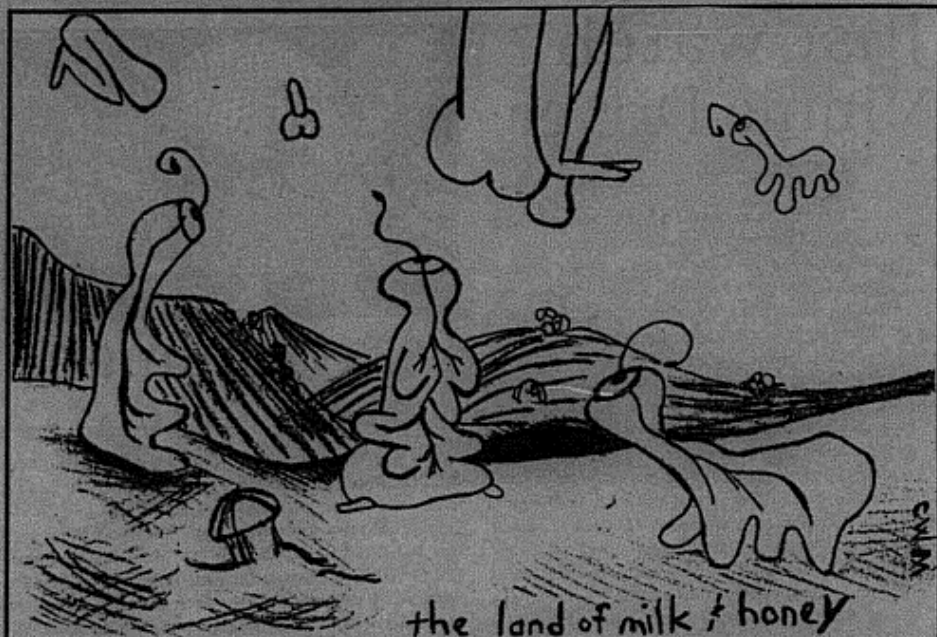
from the "do you fit the mold" war in the cold,
comes the white negro and his peripheral ecstasy.
brass and mobility,
a string of epiphanies.

he sees,

he sees it all as art, nostalgia.

to purely experience without scratch paper,
void of the mad caper. . .
analyzation.

purity is the only thing sacred,
away from your warm abode,
no overthrow of goodness,
when you're on the road.



"The Land of Milk and Honey" is an animated acknowledgement of a fancy that people commonly try to actualize in reality—that is forcing a separation between a desirable thing and its undesirable consequences. It draws a parallel between the fictitious idea of lactation independent of a mammal and interpersonal relationships independent of conflict. It suggests that, in many situations, people can achieve a separation between a desirable thing and its undesirable consequences only by deceiving themselves. "The Land of Milk and Honey" describes the absurdity of employing such deception.

— Cindy Wysocki

To a Dying Breed?

by Laughton Messmer

I wish to bid a fond farewell to an ~~NMSU~~ TSU tradition in case some "purists" get their way. Although I personally have never indulged in the ecstasy of nicotine, many of my confidants do. The soothing clouds of smoke are a sure sign of friends, as I entered the room. I would sit down among cigarette consumers, the warm buzz of a student asking me for a light. "Sorry buddy, I don't smoke." But I'm cool any way because I'm amongst those who do. Sitting like cattle in a small area, trying to calm down from the stress of classes with a puff of tobacco, coping with this university in their own special way. Looking for a little salvation that comes from lighting a smoke. All brands are worshipped, Marlboro, Camel, even rolled cigarettes. Oh, but alas, next year the privilege will be smashed under the fist of the "purists". Or won't it? Anyway, to all Mainstreet smokers, thank you and good luck for the year to follow, for you are a breed that is being hunted. I pray you don't become extinct.

All in a Week's Work

by Jessica Walters

The night stretched on endlessly and
ended way too soon,
The conversation ranging from men to
women and back again.
What if's,
Do you remembers,
All the things high school buddies talk
about years after the fact.

Not really buddies in high school,
But you pretend so you can enjoy all
the pleasant trips of the past.
Talking into the night of things that mean
so little,
Given meaning as you grab shreds of
remembrance to pull together
the present.
Time slipping away as you see the
last chance pulling out of your grasp
Dawn comes,
Reality Returns.
The hi-hos and I owes of everyday

returning in leaps and bounds,
Yet somewhere in the archives of your
mind, the tapes play on.
Then, once again, the memories are
injected into the reality by the
past on your doorstep.
Expectations develop,
Innuendos fly as freely as the jokes.
Promises made — hearts broken
Stories began — scripts conceived
All this, and three hours of mind boggling
body numbing orgasm.
Not a bad weeks work if you can get it.