

[flash]

Oct. 23, 2003

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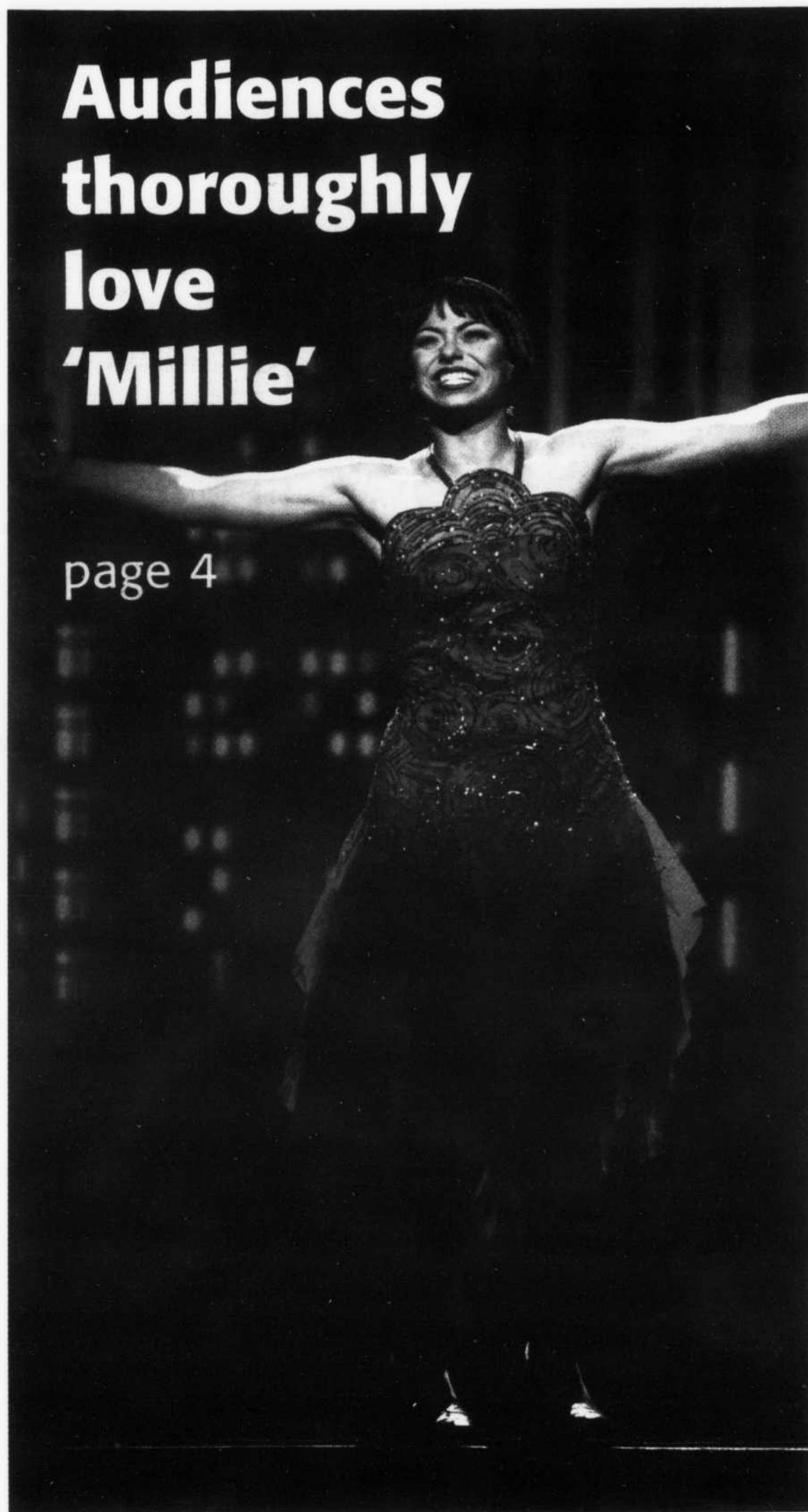


**Sex, drugs, violence:
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'Chutes' worth a shot

By Andrew Young

Chutes Too Narrow marks a bit of a sophomore slump for The Shins. While 2001's *Oh, Inverted World* was a uniformly gorgeous pop masterpiece, *Chutes* is a much more intimate-sounding affair that falls just a tad short of the promise of its predecessor.

But this is a Shins album, after all, and still contains some of the best melodies you'll hear this year. The chorus of "Saint Simon," with its violin accompaniment, constitutes the most gorgeous pop moment on the album. The band also debuts a few brisk, up-tempo pop numbers that are among the best songs on the album, namely "So Says I" and "Fighting in a Sack."

But most of the tracks on *Chutes* fall into the acoustic folk-pop category, and none of them approach the sublime quality of *Oh, Inverted World*'s acoustic numbers "New Slang" and "Your Algebra."

The opening tracks "Kissing the Lipless" and "Mine's Not a

The Shins

'Chutes Too Narrow'

SubPop Records

Released Oct. 21

☆☆☆

(out of four stars)

"High Horse" retain a brisk acoustic quality and soaring choruses that make them worthwhile listens, whereas "Young Pilgrims" and "Pink Bullets" are plodding and a tad uninteresting. "Gone for Good" is an alt-country experiment that features pedal-steel guitar, and the album closer, "Those to Come" is a somber, atonal song that sounds out of place on a Shins album.

Give the Shins credit for exploring some new musical territory on this album. While *Chutes* is not as enjoyable a listen as *Oh, Inverted World*, if you loved their debut, you'll probably want to run out and buy this one too. ★

Here's a tip: 'Waitress' worth spending your wages

By Andrew Young

Belle and Sebastian originally rose to indie pop prominence by performing literate, melancholy songs of disaffected youth in the style of The Smiths.

Since their breakthrough album, 1998's *If You're Feeling Sinister*, Belle and Sebastian have been leaning in more of a pop direction, resulting in albums such as 1999's *Boy with the Arab Strap*, and 2001's fragmented and ultimately disappointing *Fold Your Hands Child, You Look Like a Peasant*.

Dear Catastrophe Waitress is the band's first proper LP since the soundtrack to Todd Solondz's *Storytelling*, and continues their evolution away from melancholy twee pop.

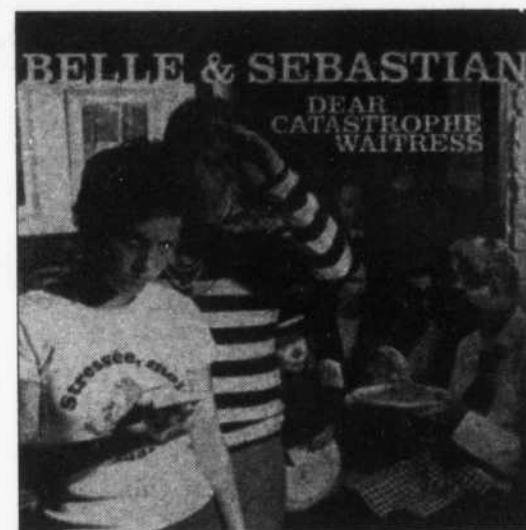
On first listen, *Dear Catastrophe Waitress* sounds almost like a different band. The album is much more polished than their previous efforts, and the sugary sweet harmonies of songs such as the single "Step Into My Office Baby" would make the Partridge Family blush.

Producer Trevor Horn has worked with numerous '80s pop bands such as ABC, Frankie Goes to Hollywood and the Pet Shop Boys, and as a result, *Dear Catastrophe Waitress* has the flat, over-produced gloss of those bands.

Belle and Sebastian explore some new musical territory on *Waitress*: "If She Wants Me" and "You Don't Send Me" both have a definite soul influence, while the album closer, "Stay Loose," recalls the dub reggae influences of The Clash. "Piazza, New York Catcher" is a folk-flavored number that wryly questions the Mets' player's sexual orientation, and "Roy Walker" is a sunny, '70s AM pop number that would be appropriate for any musical family that tours in a psychedelic bus.

There are still some familiar elements of the old Belle and Sebastian in songs such as "Dear Catastrophe Waitress," "Wrapped up in Books" and "If You Find Yourself Caught in Love."

The track "Asleep on a Sunbeam" recalls the vocal work of Isobel Campbell, who has since left the band. "Lord Anthony" details the tribulations of a bullied boy who is



Belle and Sebastian

'Dear Catastrophe Waitress'

Dischord Records

Released Oct. 7

☆☆☆

(out of four stars)

smarter than his peers, but it sounds like a relic on this album.

Word has it that Belle and Sebastian toured extensively before the recording of *Waitress* to test the new songs in front of audiences. The result is a much stronger batch of material than their last two releases.

Those who pine for the days of *If You're Feeling Sinister* won't necessarily be redeemed by the sunny, polished pop of *Waitress*, but the fact is, this is one of their best albums in years.

There's nary an awful track to be found, and vocalist/songwriter Stuart Murdoch returns to the forefront of the group, quelling the criticisms of creative fragmentation on their last few LPs.

If you can get past the glossy production values, there are some excellent songs on this album that become apparent after just a few listens. ★

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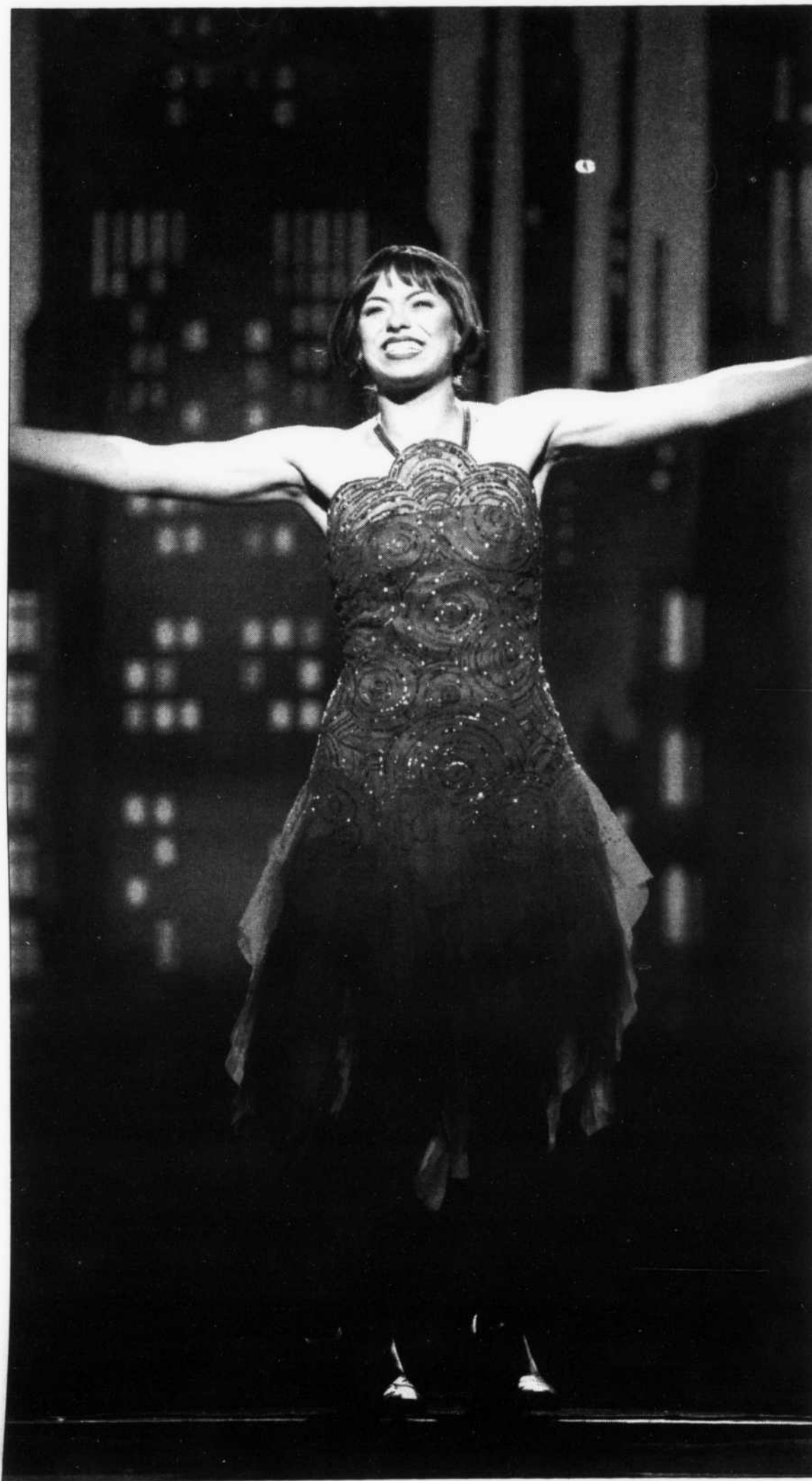
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Modern audiences thoroughly love Millie

The 1920s roar to TPAC

By Rachel Robinson

Listen up, women. The key to happiness is to marry a rich man. The new modern woman doesn't need love and affection. All she needs is a one-way ticket to New York City, the abilities of a stenographer and a keen eye for money-enhanced men.

Imagine, if you can, that you read this in *Vogue* magazine in the 1920s — a decade that ushered in the Harlem Renaissance and declared women worthy enough to vote, but also a decade when J. Edgar Hoover was appointed head of the FBI and the stock market crashed. It wasn't exactly a decade of consistency.

Women of the 1920s were screaming something, and their actions reflected their longing. They wanted change.

Thoroughly Modern Millie, the winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical, captures the longing, actions, style and music of the decade that still roars, even more than 50 years later.

And it's your lucky week. *Thoroughly Modern Millie* is coming to the Tennessee Performing Arts Center Oct. 21-26.

Millie is the story of a small-town Kansas gal who reads in the latest issue of *Vogue* that the new modern woman marries a man with money, not out of love. Millie promptly leaves Kansas for New York, determined to succeed in her search for a wealthy husband.

She soon sets her sights on her new boss, the wealthy Trevor Graydon, but, thankfully, fate steps up to cast aside the foolish notions of "modern love."

Recently, I got to chat with Sean Allan Krill, an acting veteran of 14 years and Millie's "love" interest, Trevor Graydon, about the production's upcoming tour through Nashville. Here's what he had to say.

Rachel Robinson: Can you tell me the story in your own words? A quick synopsis.

Sean Allan Krill: OK. A small town girl moves to New York. She wants to be the new "modern" woman. The new modern version of a woman is one that succeeds because she marries the right man. There's no love anymore. So, she sets her sights



Photos provided by Kay Waggoner

(Above) *Thoroughly Modern Millie* roars in the 1920s, when women wearing short hair and hemlines danced the night away in hopes of shedding the love-stricken housewife lifestyle. (Opposite page) Darcie Roberts stars as Millie, a "modern" who moves to New York City in search of a rich husband, but finds love instead.

on the most eligible man, but, obviously, her plans go awry.

RR: What is the relationship between Millie and your character, Trevor Graydon?

SAK: He's her boss at the insurance company where she is becoming a stenographer. The first scene of the show is an interview (that Millie has to go through) to get the position. It's called "The Speed Test" because it is a rigorous test as a stenographer. It was wrote very Gilbert and Sullivan-esque. You can't even tell what I'm saying at the end of the scene. I'm a big fan of Gilbert and Sullivan. It's a really fun scene.

RR: A couple of reviews I've read compare parts of *Millie* to *42nd Street*. Do you see any connection?

SAK: *Millie* is very much a success story, and it has an old-fashioned feel to it with a modern tongue-in-cheek twist. But *Millie* has more of an edge to it. It tries to retain the feel of the movie. Rather than be naïve and bright-eyed, it moves from that Victorian [image] to one where women are raising their skirts and bobbing their hair.

'Thoroughly Modern Millie'

Ticket prices range from \$17.75 to \$68.00 and are available by calling (615) 255-ARTS or by visiting www.tpac.org

The show runs Oct. 21-26

RR: How does *Millie* reflect the time in which it is set, the 1920s, and do you think that it could be placed in a different decade?

SAK: It needs to be at this time when women were bustin' loose. It was written in the '60s, and that decade would probably parallel the '20s. There is the same free spiritedness, but the sixties is a little bit darker.

RR: Why does Millie think her happiness is directly reflective of her finding a husband?

SAK: She grew up poor; you get a little bit of that. She's watched her mother and grandmother go through the circle of having kids. They never had their own day just for them. She's being told by a

magazine and society that this is the new key to happiness. But she does learn that you can't buy love.

RR: What is a "modern"?

SAK: The 19th century, the Victorian period, was very structured in every way. There were rules to uphold. Everything was tight and restricted and poised. There was an image to uphold. The

1920s gave complete abandon to that. Dresses were looser, skirts and hair was shorter. The women's suffrage movement was happening too, and women were standing up, saying, "We're human too." So many years of wearing a corset and being a man's ideal of what a woman should be were done. A "modern" was this new woman. And if you listen closely, you can still hear this woman screaming.

Loosen those corsets and go to any Ticketmaster outlet for tickets to *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

Ticket prices are \$17.75-\$68.00 and are available at www.tpac.org, or by calling 615-255-ARTS. ★

'Voices' vibrate TSU's walls

By Rachel Robinson

Harlem Voices, the latest production from the American Negro Playwright Theatre, brings to life the sights and sounds of the Harlem Renaissance.

Barry Scott, the compiler and director of the production, has sought to expand his ANPT audience, and he's hoping that *Harlem Voices* will do just that, with the help of Tennessee State University's new state-of-the-art 40,000 square foot Performing Arts Center.

Voices tells the story of the jazz age through the influence of the artists who lived it. Langston Hughes, Fats Waller and Duke Ellington are all sources through which the age is interpreted with song, dance and dialogue.

The end result is a beautiful glimpse into the most influential movement in American history. *Harlem Voices* will be at the TSU Performing Arts Center Theatre Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. until Oct. 31, and Oct. 26 and Nov. 2 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$25, \$5 for TSU students and \$10 for non-TSU students, and are available by calling 255-9600. For group rates, call 824-0101. ★

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'Radio': shameless Hollywood storytelling

By William Cleveland

Radio stars Cuba Gooding Jr. in the title role as a mentally-challenged South Carolina man, and Ed Harris as the local high school football coach who takes him under his wing.

At the end of the movie, we see footage of their real life counterparts, thereby proving the claim that it is "inspired by a true story." The hour and 50 minutes before that, however, are pure, unfiltered Hollywood. This movie is shameless in an almost sinister way. Every element is as tightly planned and paced as a political thriller, and in this sense the movie succeeds. *Radio* plays its audience like a harp.

The year is 1976, and Harold Jones' (Harris) life is dedicated to his team, the Hanna High School Yellow Jackets. This is a small Southern town where the old men hang out in the barber-shop and talk football.

One day, Jones finds some of his players harassing poor Radio, who suffers from a mental handicap that no one ever bothers to diagnose. Jones befriends him, nicknames him Radio (his real name is James Robert Kennedy), and lets him help out the team. The players ridicule and push him around at first, but it doesn't take long for everyone on the team and at school to fall in love with him.

There are the usual obstacles. The father of the star player thinks Radio is a distraction and wants him gone. An official from the school board investigates whether or not Radio is safe to be around high school students. Of

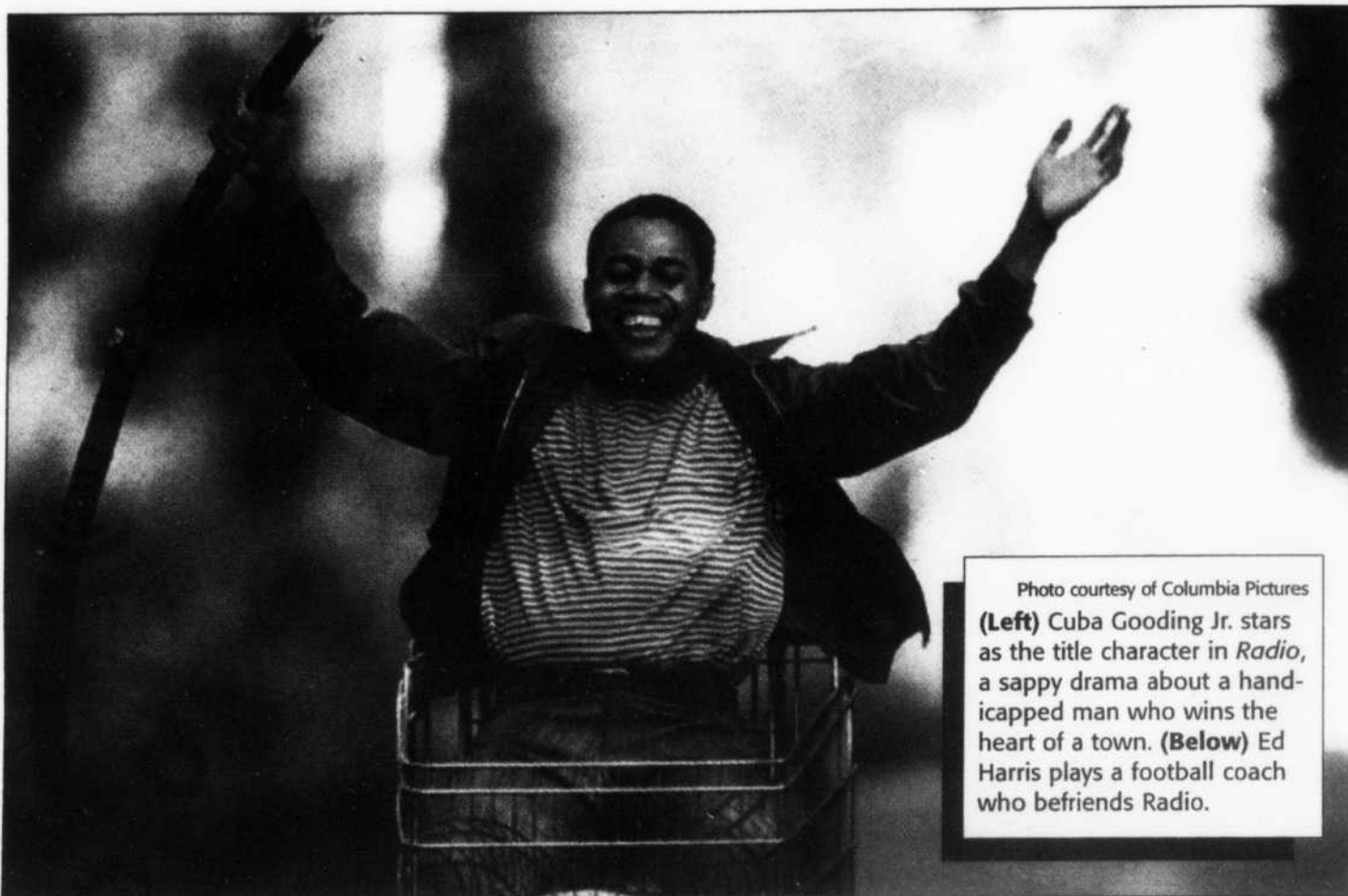
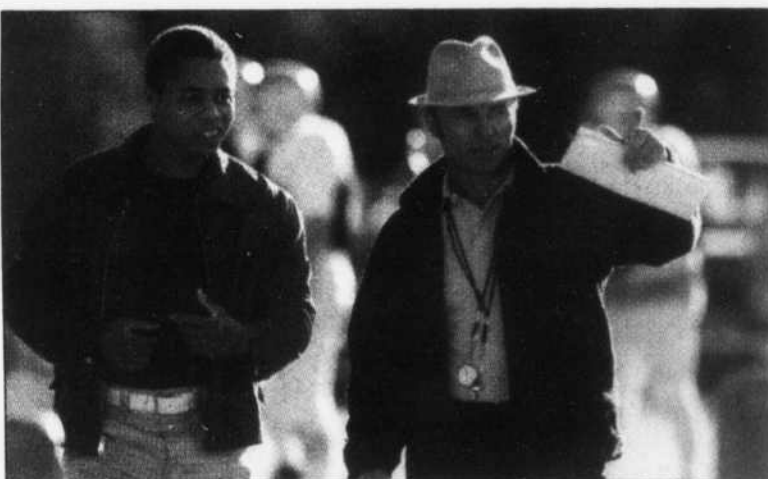


Photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures

(Left) Cuba Gooding Jr. stars as the title character in *Radio*, a sappy drama about a handicapped man who wins the heart of a town. (Below) Ed Harris plays a football coach who befriends Radio.



'Radio'

Starring Cuba Gooding Jr.,
Ed Harris, Debra Winger

Rated PG

Directed by Michael Tollin

Release date Sept. 24

Rating ★ 1/2
(out of four stars)

course, he is. Radio is nothing but good. He is not merely childlike; children can have bad feelings. He has the enthusiasm and unconditional love of a puppy, and that is how the movie treats him. Most of Gooding's scenes are played for laughs, and he gets plenty of "Awww" time.

It's a common practice, and not just in Hollywood, to deify retarded or otherwise disabled people. It's also a guilt-ridden romanticizing that robs actors and writers of the chance to create a realistic portrait of a handicapped character.

Radio is worshiped as the sum of all wisdom. The film establishes early on a distance between Jones and his wife

(Debra Winger) and daughter because of his commitment to the football team. One would think that the addition of Radio as a surrogate son would only widen that distance, but instead, their love for him brings them all together.

Then, during Harris's big finale speech, he is forced to utter the most clichéd and patronizing line of the entire movie: They haven't been teaching Radio, he proclaims. "Radio's been teaching us."

To his credit, Cuba Gooding Jr. dedicates himself to the character. The problem is the character he dedicated himself to.

Harris, one of the best and most

underrated actors working today, does his job professionally, but that's about all that can be said about it. And for her return to mainstream cinema, Winger chose a particularly empty role; her main function is to respond to Harris approvingly or disapprovingly.

One last note: Much is made in this movie about having character and heart. For the musical score, composer James Horner borrows liberally for his score from the sports classic *Field of Dreams*. The music in that film made grown men cry because the film itself had heart and character. In *Radio*, the strikingly similar music now rings hollow because it has no heart but what we are told it has. ★

Sex, drugs, violence: Life of a porn star

By Forrest Sanders

John Holmes, the introduction to *Wonderland* informs us, starred in more than 2,500 pornographic films during his career spanning the 1960s and '70s.

However, unlike other films following a pop culture icon's highs and lows (examples being *Man on the Moon*, *The Doors* and *Ed Wood*), *Wonderland* picks up as Holmes has already begun the downward spiral to his death. Along the way, Holmes will encounter financial ruin, a cocaine addiction and (in the film's primary focus) murder.

Wonderland is "mostly" based on the true story of the multiple killings that took place on Wonderland Avenue on July 1, 1981. I say "mostly" because whole sections of the film are based on accounts given to police rather than factual information.

The first account is told by



John Lind, a notorious drug dealer and the only man to come out uninjured from the Wonderland massacre. The second story is from Holmes himself – the former legend and convicted accomplice. Of course, each story vastly contradicts the other, thus lending the option to the audience to decide which account they find more credible.

Val Kilmer gives one of the

See **Wonderland**, 10

'Wonderland'

Starring Val Kilmer, Lisa Kudrow, Kate Boswell, Dylan McDermott

Rated R

Directed by James Cox

Released Oct. 17

Rating ★★1/2

(out of four stars)



Photo courtesy of Lions Gate Films

(Top left) Lisa Kudrow's breakout performance as John Holmes' wife is compelling. (Above) A very hairy Val Kilmer portrays Holmes – the porn star whose life spirals into a mess of addiction and violence.

Second helping of 'Texas Chainsaw' filling

By Forrest Sanders

The remake must be a pretty tricky film to tackle. Sometimes a film holds a built-in fan base who protest the slander of the original's name, and indeed, some originals are better left alone.

The prime example would be Gus Van Sant's unnecessary remake of *Psycho*. Despite being a shot-by-shot imitation of the 1960 original, the updated thriller couldn't hold a candle to Hitchcock's classic, and the only thing that proved to be as scary as the infamous shower scene was the lacking box office returns.

However, there also exists the sort of remake that works as an effective re-imagining. It takes a story to a new level and, in turn, introduces it to a whole new generation of viewers. Such a film would be 2003 remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Like the original, the story follows a group of

'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre'

Starring Jessica Biel, Eric Balfour, R. Lee Ermey

Rated R

Directed by Marcus Nispel

Released Oct. 17

Rating ★★★

(out of four stars)



Photo courtesy of New Line Cinema

Jessica Biel fights back against cannibals and rednecks in the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* – a remake of the 1974 horror classic.

teenagers (this time heading to Mexico) who have the misfortune of stumbling across the happy home of a close-knit cannibalistic family and their pride and joy, a facially deformed, chainsaw-wielding maniac affectionately named "Leatherface."

If it's any comfort to those going into *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the "based on a true story"

tagline is applied loosely. In fact, there were no teenagers on a road trip, no chainsaws were involved in the murders, and the events did not even transpire in Texas (though, admittedly, *The Wisconsin Chainsaw Massacre* doesn't sound quite as intimidating).

See **Massacre**, 11

Dr. Gangrene's horror favorites



By David Lawrence

As Halloween draws closer, the familiar trappings of the season are showing up everywhere you look. Among sightings of the Great Pumpkin and hoards of cheap candy, there's another constant presence.

Horror films.

Call them "slashers," or "that creepy stuff that gives nightmares," but this is the time of year when we can look forward to all manners of horror crawling from both our television and movie screens.

But there's another problem facing us: which ones to watch. What makes a horror film great? Is it the amount of blood spilled? Is it the amount of nudity shown by women with mostly augmented breasts? Or perhaps it's the feelings we have when we leave the theater and

make the near-endless trek back to the safety of our cars — do we feel giddy or grossed out? Horror films seem to be slowly making their way back into large theaters, but they all sadly seem to insist on having stunts done in slow motion or making lame attempts to reference pop culture in a vain attempt to be hip.

Judging which films to watch is never easy, especially in this fast-paced, remote-controlled, TiVo-dominated world of ours.

The sheer amount of films out there almost makes judging a Top 10 impossible, but thanks to the efforts of *Chiller Cinema* host Dr. Gangrene, who judged the films based on their ambience and impact on the film industry, we can get a general idea of the cream of the terrifying crop. ★

[Dr. Gangrene's top 10 horror movies]

1. *Frankenstein* (1931) — "Great monster movie! It set the standard for Frankenstein movies in the future. Karloff's performance is amazing. Simultaneously scary and sympathetic, Jack Pierce's makeup became the look the Frankenstein's monster would come to be forever associated with."

2. *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) — "Talk about zombie films and you have to start with this film. Made on a shoestring budget by George Romero, it influenced a generation of moviemakers and spawned the zombie craze that continues to this day. Its claustrophobic feel and documentary look lent a realism to the film that viewers had never seen. A truly scary movie with one heck of an ending."

3. *Psycho* (1960) — "Alfred Hitchcock's classic film about a deranged psychopath living in an out-of-the-way motel with his mother is a shocking film that traumatized movie-goers in the 1960s. Who can ever take a shower again without thinking of this film's best-known sequence with Janet Leigh? The format of this movie was truly revolutionary, killing the central character within the first third of the movie — viewers were truly disoriented."

4. *The Exorcist* (1973) — "How many *Exorcist* skits and imitations have you seen over the years? This movie truly scared a generation of moviegoers back in the 1970s with its theme of helplessness and bodily invasion. The make-up effects by horror master Dick Smith are outstanding. Truly a frightening film."

5. *Halloween* (1978) — "Has any film since *Night of the Living Dead* influenced a generation as much as *Halloween*? Director John Carpenter's stark soundtrack compliments and helps build the suspense as Jamie Lee Curtis, daughter of the famous Janet Leigh from *Psycho*, tries to escape from relentless killer Michael Myers. Is he a monster, madman or unstoppable force of nature?"

6. *Horror of Dracula* (1958) — "Amazing cast! Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, directed by Terrance Fisher ... this is one of the best Dracula movies of all time. Hammer Studios used the new innovation of color in their movies with great effect, and became known as the studio that dripped blood with good reason!"

7. *The Haunting* (1963) — "Based on Shirley Jackson's novel *The Haunting of Hill House*, this is one of the best ghost stories ever filmed. Hair-raising horror without relying on CGI effects and computer animation the studios use as a crutch in today's films."

8. *Evil Dead 2* (1987) — "Sam Raimi movie about a group of kids in the woods who read from the Book of the Dead (influenced by H.P. Lovecraft) and invoke evil spirits. This is a remake from Raimi's first movie, *The Evil Dead*, and features some truly creative camera work. It has a dark sense of humor throughout the film and helped launch Raimi's career."

9. *King Kong* (1933) — "The king of giant monster movies, this movie is action packed from beginning to end. Featuring absolutely breathtaking special effects from master animator Willis O'Brien, this movie was a landmark film in monster movies, and influenced moviemakers for years to come, especially one young Ray Harryhausen, who would go on to an amazing career as a stop motion animator himself."

10. *Jaws* (1975) — "In my opinion, Spielberg's best movie ever. Some people may argue that this isn't a horror movie, but that giant shark is a monster, and that qualifies it in my list! Truly frightening movie that had families scared to go to the beach for years. Used a terrific soundtrack much like *Halloween* — very minimalist and suspense-building."

★ Visit Dr. Gangrene online at www.chillercinema.com ★

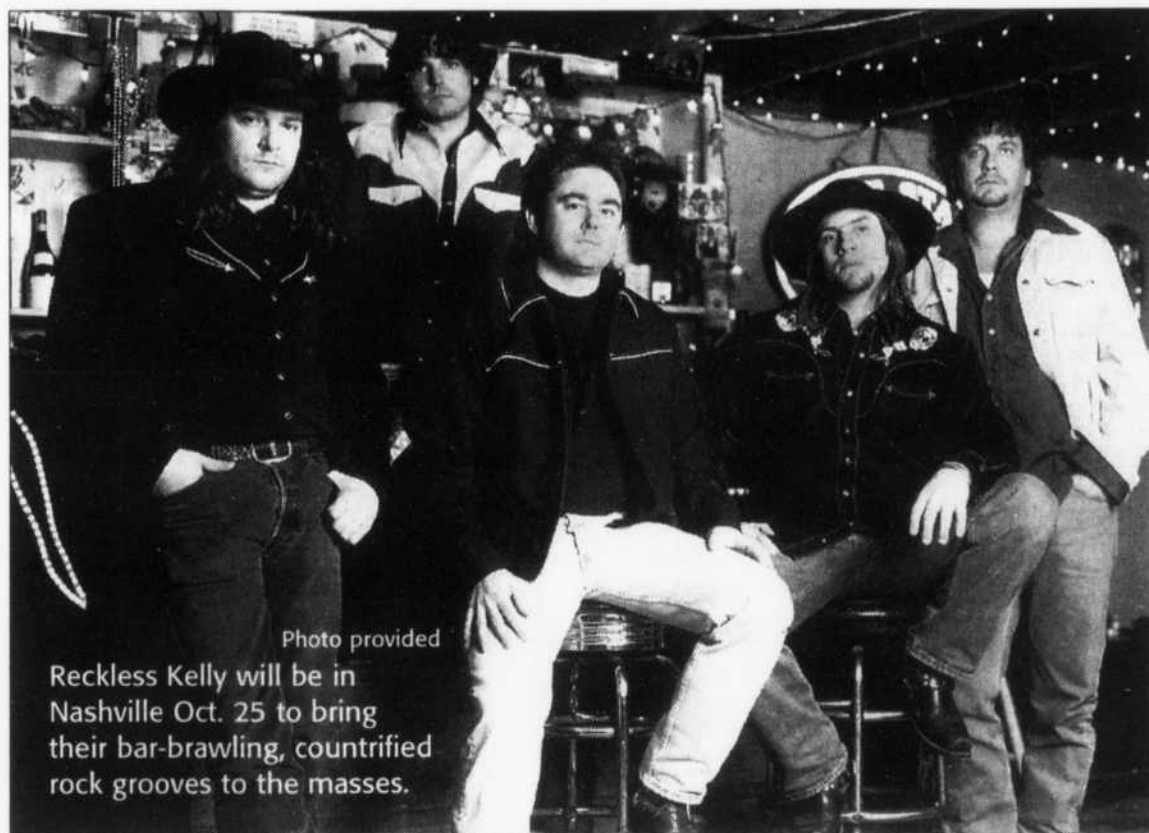


Photo provided

Reckless Kelly will be in Nashville Oct. 25 to bring their bar-brawling, countrified rock grooves to the masses.

Reckless Kelly has musical roots

By Al Brady

We live in a time in which music has countless different labels and titles.

Every day, a new genre is formed. Sometimes it's just good to see a performing group that likes to stay hooked on its roots and mix them with another type of music.

In most cases, the love child of such a merger is something amazing. In the case of the Austin-based country band Reckless Kelly, country music fused with old-fashioned rock 'n' roll and gave birth to a hook-laden sound that straddles the fence between a barnyard and a nightclub.

"Our style is a kind of hick rock," said backing vocalist and mandolin player Cody Braun.

The band gets its unique name from the 19th century Australian bank robber Ned Kelly, whose trademark was wearing a suit of armor during his robberies. The band has been together for about eight years now, and consists of five

members: Braun (fiddle and mandolin), his brother Wally Braun (vocals and rhythm guitar), Jay Nazz (drums), Jimmy McFeeley (bass) and David Abeyta (lead guitar).

With three albums under their belts and a tour schedule that includes about four shows a week, according to Braun, Reckless Kelly is making the mid-South and the deep South their own stomping ground, with shows in Arkansas, Idaho, Utah, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana and, this weekend, Nashville.

The group's debut album, *Milliican*, was released in 1998. *The Acoustic: Live at Stubbs* and *The Day* both followed in 2000. The band's current release, *Under the Table and Above the Sun*, released by Sugar Hill Records, has earned some rave reviews.

"We are not your regular Nashville country style," Braun said.

The Sugar Hill Web site describes Reckless Kelly's music as the Friday night bar music everyone needs to get rowdy with after a long week

of work.

After starting in Austin, Texas, the band was voted Best Roots Rock Band at the Austin Music Awards in both 1998 and 1999.

It seems that some of the talents in the band are genetic.

Both of the Braun brothers performed in their father's band, Muzzie Braun and the Boys — an old-west swing band — which included appearances on the *Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* and also Jay Leno.

Nazz played in his father's 1950s-style trio for four years. It's easy to see the musical blood running through their veins.

Reckless Kelly is a band on the cusp of being a worldwide success. With their new album, *Under the Table and Above the Sun*, and a new video that started its first run on Country Music Television on Oct. 5, this group is on the up-and-up.

Their own brand of culture shock will be near MTSU Oct. 25 at 12th and Porter in Nashville at 10 p.m. ★

Sonny Landreth plays Southern childhood

By Josh Orendorf

Sonny Landreth's music tells stories of a childhood immersed in the South and produces a sound that is synonymous with the homogeneous blend of Cajun, zydeco, country and blues that opens the door to the solid bottomless power of heart-felt and country-fed Southern blues music.

I had a chance to meet with Landreth and here's what he had to say.



JO: What influences in your life have most impacted your music?

SL: For the most part, the culture of South Louisiana — Lafayette in particular. It's really a special place for me because it's so deep in tradition, with the music and the food, the way people dance — just their whole outlook on life. It gave me a great point of reference and a background to grow up hearing a lot of different kinds of music.

JO: What is it like to be signed to Sugar Hill Records and to be able to share common ground with artists like Sam Bush, Ricky Skaggs, Robert Earl Keen, Nickel Creek, and The Gourds?

SL: It's really great. First of all, Sugar Hill is an artist-oriented label and basically that means you feel the freedom to create. In the past the other labels were a lot more formatted and there was pressure to produce a certain type of music, but that's not the case here. I feel very much at home. And speaking of all of the above, they're all such great artists and I feel a kinship with them. I think there's a strength-in-numbers factor that really kind of gets you down the road.

JO: Out of all your albums, which one means the most to you and why?

SL: Well that's a tough one; each one of them has their own vibe that I have a personal attachment to. And particularly if you look back and you reflect on your experiences at the time, what was going on in the world and what was going on in your personal world, it becomes reflected in that album. So I don't think that I can pick one in particular.

See Landreth, 11



Photo courtesy of Lions Gate Films

Kate Bosworth stars in *Wonderland* as Dawn, a teenage junkie who becomes John Holmes' on-the-road girlfriend, shouldering abuse and addiction along the way.

Continued from *Wonderland*, page 7

strongest performances of his career as Holmes, effortlessly shifting the gears from ego-centric at his high points, to a pitiful, helpless shell of a man when he's down.

Kate Bosworth is also convincing playing Dawn, the teenage junkie who has become Holmes' on-the-road girlfriend. She's far from an empowered character, but remains sympathetic because of the abuse she endures, and her childish optimism about her and Holmes' future together. Other highlights in the cast include an almost unrecognizable Dylan McDermott as John Lind, and Josh Lucas in the role of an eccentric and sometimes dangerously violent drug dealer.

Perhaps the film's most surprising performance, however, belongs to Lisa Kudrow.

Shedding her dumb blonde typecast, Kudrow plays Holmes' wife Sharon — the only character in *Wonderland* with any sort of grasp on real-

ity. She has become weary of Holmes' never-fulfilled promises to turn his life around and, while it's clear she still cares for him, her only wish is to completely dissociate herself with all the filth he brings.

We would certainly expect Kudrow and Bosworth's characters to loathe each other, but their relationship is quite the contrary.

Sharon seems quite aware of Dawn's immaturity, but this doesn't stop her from being a maternal figure in Dawn's life. It's even said in an epilogue that the two real-life women remain close friends to this day.

For director James Cox, this is vaguely familiar subject matter. His first film, (and direct-to-video feature) *Highway*, used the death of Kurt Cobain as the background. For the John Holmes story, Cox made his film effectively moody, bringing an overall "gritty" feel to the proceedings. Cox has done his best to

not only take his audience to 1981, but to give them a glimpse at the scum of the Earth and deliver a handful of potent scenes. The scene featuring the murders themselves is expectantly hard-hitting, but surprisingly, it's quite frightening as well.

Wonderland is a largely unpleasant film, and many audience members will likely become uncomfortable enduring two hours of the filthy, hopeless world Cox presents here. Its major disadvantage is that 1997's *Boogie Nights* (which was loosely based on the same story) was a more potent telling of a similar story.

However, the film does serve its purpose as an effective (though not entirely engrossing) look into the *Wonderland* murders that's elevated by stylish direction and several truly top-notch performances. ★

Continued from *Late-night*, page 12

for the intern grab-ass era of yesteryear. After poking fun at G. Dub, Dave lampoons *American Idol*'s cornball oblivion with "Is This Anything?" and ponders Noachian-age philosophies with "Will It Float?"

Guest List: After rebuffing potential celebrity guests during the '80s, Dave offers neutralized movie endorsements to ease previous adversaries in the '00s. ("That *Cold Creek Manor* is Creep City," Dave tells a fidgety Sharon Stone.) And to paraphrase Dave, "They don't give television shows to chimps."

Witness Dave's Charlie Rose-esque techniques with Dubya's henchmen. Dave grills those bloodthirsty Republican twits on the War in Iraq without forfeiting a lick of bipartisanship.

Musical Guests: *The Late Show* maintains well-tuned musical ears, thanks to Paul Shaffer and the CBS orchestra's hipster cred. In a typical week, *The Late Show* combs untapped indie rock territory and panders to the *Total Request Live* masses.

Rating: ★★☆☆

'Saturday Night Live' NBC

The Rundown: Tina Fey and Jimmy Fallon's snide "Weekend Update" one-liners notwithstanding, *Saturday Night Live*'s Oct. 4 premiere was the equivalent of a comedic root canal.

Soundbite Appetizers: "Shannen Doherty has signed on to produce and act in a new sitcom about a young woman with a reputation for being difficult and mean but who is really kind at heart. Doherty will play that woman's bitchy friend."

Post-Monologue Entrees: Honestly, this cast wouldn't know funny if it bit them on the ass.

Guest List: Jack Black hosted the season opener with equal parts tenacious determinedness and customary sweaty fat guyness.

Musical Guests: *SNL*'s musical arteries are clogged with greasy Clear Channel pop culture cholesterol — Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears within a week's span? What ever happened to the cutting-edge Portishead days of 1998? Hell, I'll even take Jewel's mid-career crisis over the inevitable *American Idol* appearances.

Rating: ★★

'The Tonight Show with Jay Leno' NBC

The Rundown: Ah, the McDonald's of late-night television.

Soundbite Appetizer: "Legendary gun maker Smith and Wesson is coming out with their own line of jewelry. Some people don't think this will work. They say guns and jewelry do not go together. Hey, have they ever seen the hip-hop awards?! They're calling the new line 'Bling Bling with the Bang Bang.'"

Joey's Sarcastic Assessment: Hi-larious. With material like this, Letterman should watch his back. Who knew that Jay Leno was this crap-your-pants funny? All hail the big-chinned one.

Post-Monologue Entrees: "Jaywalking," "Howie Mandel: Undercover," "The Fruitcake Lady" and "Headlines" — all tortuous in their own right. And yes, all part of Hell's fifth dimension.

Musical Guests: Beyonce Knowles, Nick Lachey, Toby Keith ... you know, all the musical geniuses of our time.

Rating: ★1/2

[club listings]

Thursday, Oct. 23

3rd & Lindsley: Krista's Married, The Heaters, 8 p.m.

All American Sports Grill: Shane and the Money Makers, 10 p.m., \$3.

Boro Bar & Grill: The Black Soul Choir, 9:30 p.m., \$5-7.

The End: The El Dorados, 9 p.m., \$5.

Exit/In: Matt Sharp, 9 p.m., \$10.

Mercy Lounge: Lower Level, The Loft, Mile 8, 8 p.m., \$7.

MTSU Tucker Theatre: The Presidents of the United States of America, De Novo Dahl, 8 p.m., \$5.

Friday, Oct. 24

3rd & Lindsley: Super T & the Tyrone Smith Revue, 10:30 p.m., \$8.

12th & Porter: Old Union, 10 p.m.

All American Sports Grill: Shane and the Money Makers, 10 p.m., \$3.

AmSouth Amphitheatre: Nickelback, 7:30 p.m., \$25-32.

Blue Sky Court: Tunnels featuring Sarah Pillow, The Stan Lassiter Trio, 9 p.m., \$5.

The Boro Bar & Grill: Dr. Gonzo, 9:30 p.m., \$5-7.

The End: Nathan Meckel, Spiral, The Ups and Downs of Industry, 9 p.m., \$5.

Exit/In: Delicious, 10 p.m., \$10.

The Muse: Intrinsic, 9 p.m., \$5.

Red Rose: The Post, The Cycle, 9 p.m., \$5.

Wall Street: Grand Revue, Ervin Stellar, 9 p.m., \$5.

Windows on the Cumberland: Max Vague, 11 p.m., \$5.

Saturday, Oct. 25

3rd & Lindsley: The Disco Biscuits, midnight, \$10.

12th & Porter: Stroller CD Release Party, Reckless Kelly, 10 p.m.

All American Sports Grill: Krosstown Traffic, 10 p.m., \$4.

AmSouth Amphitheatre: Widespread Panic, The Wallers, 6:30 p.m., \$25.

Blue Sky Court: Falling Down, Return to Self, Dead Sun, 9 p.m., \$5.

Boro Bar and Grill: A Taste at the Boro with Spooky Johnson's Original Rock 'n' Roll band, Cry

Room, Haduken, The Vivid Lemon, noon - 6 p.m., \$12-15.

Bunganut Pig: Murfreesboro: Reverend Rutabaga, 9 p.m., \$5.

Exit/In: Josh Rouse, Leona Naess, 10 p.m., \$12.

Red Rose: Stand Still, Believe in Toledo, 9 p.m., \$5.

Mercy Lounge: Eels, MC Honkey, 10 p.m., \$12-15.

Wall Street: Basementality, Brian Taylor, 9 p.m., \$5.

Windows on the Cumberland: Fluid Tuesday, The Ease, 10 p.m., \$5.

Sunday, Oct. 26

3rd & Lindsley: Marshall Chapman and the Love Slaves, Joe Firstman, 8 p.m., \$7.

Boro Bar and Grill: The McClary Brothers, Jack Pearson, 9 p.m., \$3-4.

Infernobar: Five Foot Annie, Emerson, Revelation, 6:30 p.m., \$6.

Mercy Lounge: Burrito Deluxe, Cool Shoes featuring Pete Muncie, 7 p.m., \$10.

Wall Street: Shoofly Pie, 9:30 p.m., \$3.

Continued from Chainsaw, page 7

Both the 1974 original and the remake are merely inspired by the crimes of Ed Gein, a 1950s serial killer whose heinous acts involved the making of clothing from his victims' skins.

Marcus Nispel, whose past experience includes directing music videos for artists ranging from Lil Kim to Tony Bennett, may not have been the most obvious choice to helm *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, but he has done an impeccable job with this material.

Whereas the original was presented in a bleak, almost documentary-style fashion, Nispel showcases an eye for style developed through the direction of dozens of music videos. Nispel leads his audience under the hot, sticky Texas sun through an almost whimsical-looking forest of trees, and finally, into the dark depths of a basement housing an unspeakable evil.

The differences between Nispel's film and the 1974 original don't end with cinematography. Though the basic premise is the same, the events leading the teens to the cannibalistic family's household and the suspenseful set pieces that follow are strikingly different.

As a matter of fact, Nispel's remake actually

borrows considerably less from the original than the sequels did.

The gore quotient has also been upped considerably for the remake (the original, contrary to popular belief, was an almost bloodless film) but *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* doesn't rely on its gruesome images for impact. The film is, first and foremost, a relentless thriller.

This level of suspense can be partly credited to some all-around solid performances from the actors. Headlining the cast is Jessica Biel, bringing a tough charm to her character and proving to be a heroine to root for once she's finished running and screaming and decides it's time to fight back. Other highlights in the cast include R. Lee Ermey, playing the tough-as-nails (and completely deranged) town sheriff to kooky perfection.

As evidenced even by this review, comparisons to the original are inevitable. But taken on its own merits, this remake stands as a surprisingly effective, well-acted, tension-filled glimpse into sheer terror. It's not high art, and it won't reinvent the genre, but if you're looking for a good scare at the movies this Halloween, you can do no better than a late-night showing of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. ★

Continued from Landreth, page 9

JO: Well, maybe if someone who had never listened to your music before was going to pick up one of your CDs and listen to it, which one do you think would be the most geared toward that?

SL: I tend to point back to *Outward Bound* because that was where the whole thing took off for me — in sense of a major label, as well as in terms of both songwriting and vision. The reason is because *Outward Bound* in 1992, *South of I-10* in 1995 and *Levee Town* in 2000 all formed somewhat of a trilogy in songwriting and concept for me — there's definitely a common thread that runs through there.

JO: You talked about each album reflecting an experience or an obstacle, both musical and personal. What are some that you have overcome to stand where you are now?

SL: Probably for the most part of getting into the mindset of being able to wear different hats at the same time — as a songwriter, as a guitarist and producer.

JO: I understand that the early 1930s delta blues legend Robert Johnson inspired and impelled you as a musician. If you could say one thing to him today what would it be?

SL: I would thank him profusely for opening my eyes and ears to the most soulful music that I've ever heard, but also for the epic journey of the story song. In other words, how his guitar work supports the lyrics of the song, while still keeping in mind the importance of telling the story. His music will withstand the tests of time. There is an element of mystery and passion in his music that is in a league of its own.

JO: What are your views or opinions on the recent steps taken by the RIAA to stop pirated music downloads online and how has file sharing benefited or stifled your own music as an artist?

SL: Frankly, I'm on the fence about the whole thing. There is so much happening in the economy, technology and at the major labels that the jury is still. I think that it does affect artists to a degree, but I am not convinced that it is to the degree that record companies would have the public believe. I think things are changing for the good, but there are some not so good things that have to happen first for that pendulum to swing back in the direction of where it really ought to be, for the artist and for the public.

JO: What pieces of advice can you give to young artists about the music industry?

SL: In the big picture, one thing always leads to another. Meanwhile, if you have it in your heart to play music for your life and for your career, go for it. I will tell you the same thing all of my mentors told me when I was younger, and that's simply how difficult it really is. If you decide on it, go for it, but you have to prepare and be ready to dedicate your life to it. You need to be ready to compete in a very competitive world of playing music. You have to be prepared for times when you are the only person who believes in yourself.

Landreth will be playing tomorrow at the Mercy Lounge at 9:30 p.m. Tickets for the show are \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door.

For more information on Landreth, Sugar Hill Records or the Mercy Lounge, visit www.sonnylandreth.com, www.sugarhill-records.com or www.mercylounge.com. ★

A look at late night

Painful or pleasant, sometimes late-night talk shows are all there are

By Joey Hood

Tired of late-night study sessions and last-minute weeknight beer bong parties?

"Sweet Mother of Pearl, I know this college student is," you say.

I thought so. Below is a quick guide to the best (a certain gap-toothed curmudgeon) and worst (a certain big-chinned idiot) in late night talk.

'Jimmy Kimmel Live' ABC

The Rundown: After moments of initial inventiveness, Jimmy Kimmel fumbles all signs of intelligence. *Jimmy Kimmel Live* is basically an extended version of *The Man Show*, sans the self-hating masturbator from MTV's *Lovelace*.

Soundbite Appetizer: "It could be worse. You could be married to Howie Long." (Kimmel to Dean Cain, on Teri Hatcher's Radio Shack commercials.)

Post-Monologue Entrees: Ever the reality television junkie, Kimmel douses viewers with his couch potato mockery. While taking swipes at dunce insta-celebrities is generally a good thing, Kimmel brownnoses to his lily-white brethren. According to Kimmel's reality aperçu, Jessica Simpson is a dumb wo'man,

the dude from *Camp Jim* is gay and black people be trippin'. For the love of Bill Maher, would somebody please beat Kimmel's white ass?

Guest List: Kimmel still packs the D-listers. Charisma Carpenter Bob Goldthwait and Jeffrey Ross have all been subjected to *The Jimmy Kimmel Live* debacle.

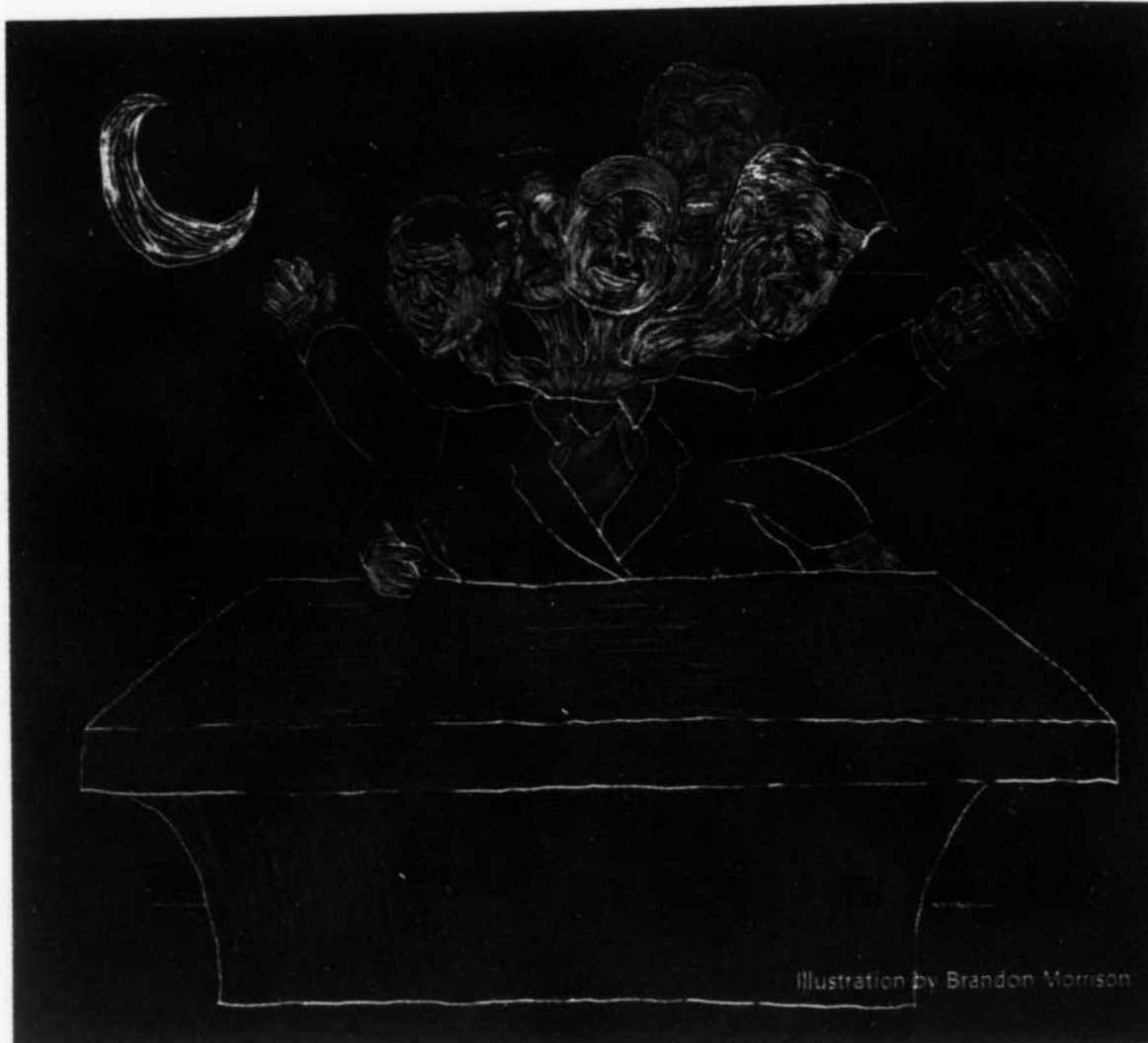
The Initial [flash] Reaction: "It looks as if Jimmy Kimmel will not be going back to Comedy Central any time soon. ★★ (out of 4 stars)" (Original story by Joey Hood, Feb. 13, 2002.)

Rating: ★★

In the future, kids, don't take my critiques at face value. I make Richard Roeper look like Pauline Kael.

'Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn' CBS

The Rundown: Kilby's aloof narcissism jeopardizes late night talk's main purpose: providing movie stars with 12-minute, self-promotional soap-boxes. Ever since Kilby's transition from cable, *The Late Late Show* strokes its host's machismo tendencies. Basically, *The Late Late Show* exists only to unleash the inner-drooling id of the coveted age 18-49 beer drinkin' male demographic.



Soundbite Appetizer: "The President and Arnold discussed California's deficit, but there was an awkward pause after Arnold suggested pushing it into a men's room and sticking a hand up its shirt."

Post-Monologue Entrees: Seeing as how Kilborn recycles bits from his stint on *The Daily Show* ("Five Questions," "This Just In"), homeboy isn't the most creative talk-show host in the bunch.

Guest List: Tom Selleck? What is this, 1984?

Rating: ★★ 1/2

Kilby isn't bad, but Jon Stewart is much better.

'Late Night with Conan O'Brien' NBC

The Rundown: When *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* debuted 10 years ago in David Letterman's shadow, critics likened this former *Simpsons*

scribe to Chris Farley's "remember that one time" interviewer on *Saturday Night Live*. Fast-forward to 2003, and O'Brien's highbrow absurdist humor bodes well after Jay Leno's smarmy celebrity circle jerks.

Soundbite Appetizer: "Earlier today Democratic presidential candidate Richard Gephardt referred to President Bush's foreign policy as 'machismo' and 'arrogant unilateralism.' Bush was furious. He told Gephardt, 'You wouldn't dare say that if I knew what it meant.'"

Post-Monologue Entrees: Question: Where can you receive the pleasure of watching both pooping sock puppets and masturbating bears? Answer: Only on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and Pat Robertson's *The 700 Club*, of course.

Musical Guests: Conan whores himself to those wacky college students with

Granddaddy, My Morning Jacket and The Black Keys.

Rating: ★★ 1/2

'Late Show with David Letterman' CBS

The Rundown: After enduring heart bypass surgeries, screeching Regis guest appearances and continual Nielsen pummeling from that hump Jay Leno, Dave Letterman is late night's true king of cool.

Soundbite Appetizers: "The White House is giving George W. Bush intelligence briefings. You know, some of these jokes just write themselves."

Post-Monologue Entrees: Letterman milks Dubya's perpetual state of confusion with the "George W. Bush: Joke That's Not Really a Joke" segment. It only makes one yearn

See **Late-night**, 10