By Alan Back

‘Useful Music’ 2.0: More of a good thing

By Alan Back

Artist: Josh Joplin Group
Title: Useful Music
Label: Artemis Records
Genre: Rock/Pop
Tracks: 8
Rating: ★★★★★

New to the Artemis family, Josh Joplin improves on the quality of 1999’s Useful Music by cranking up the amps in the right places.

Useful Music is a good example of something you don’t run into very often these days—a batch of well-crafted songs from a group of talented musicians who are also ordinary people. Nobody here is trying to hog the spotlight or perfect the rock-star pose (which is hard to do when your frontman sometimes

vein and establishes their respective credentials when it comes to rocking out. Two versions of “I’ve Changed” are included; deciding which is better is a real toss-up. Longtime fans will probably go for the space, open feel of the original, with bassist Geoff Melkonian adding a very pretty Irish touch on viola. The alternate take has more of a straightforward, head-on vibe to it and mire jangle from Davis. Either track, though, will speak to anyBODY who doesn’t pay enough attention. (Use your brain when you listen to today’s music! Heaven forbid.)

Down at the other end of the voltmeter, highlighting Joplin’s narrative skills, are cuts such as “Trainwrecks” and “Dutch Wonderland.” The first of these almost sounds like the story he’s telling, that of a long trip from one stage of life to another, with the occasional sudden flurry of activity to break up the sameness. His acoustic guitar nicely frames the second, a look back (with mixed emotions) at growing up in a small town and having little to do so he can keep himself entertained.

If the words “patriotic” and “God Bless the U.S.A.” are placed together in your head, “Hero” will pull them apart in short order. Thomas’ salute to the people he served with in the Army never even comes close to sappiness, thanks to Dee Rosario’s cooking guitar lines and Mullins’ production work. There’s a reason that most of these tracks sound as if a small choir is in the studio. Cornbread’s three backup singers (Jeanne Forehand, Kelli Franklin, and Andrea Martin) provide additional vocals throughout, assist to the songs and produce some splendid harmonies.

his bandmates have put the pieces together to form something that Atlanta critic were right to ap- plaud when they first heard it. Here’s hoping the rest of the country follows their example in short order.

Cornbread serves up new platter of treats

By Alan Back

Editors are obsessed with him

Artist: Cornbread
Title: No Place Like Home
Label: RBM Records
Genre: Rock/Pop
Tracks: 6
Rating: ★★★★★

Good things still come in small packages sometimes. Case in point: No Place Like Home, the new offering from the Columbus, Ga.-based outfit Cornbread. Released last month, it trades the diversity of their 1998 album Headache and Timing for a more focused approach and boils itself down to a potent little brew.

Lead singer Keni Thomas knows where he’s most at home, somewhere in between acoustic and Southern rock and blues. He wastes no time in getting there with a little help from Shawn Mullins, who handled production on the first two tracks.

One of the highlights of their set was “The South Will Never Let You Down,” a twangy, light-hearted poke at Bubba Central. About the only things missing are a car up on blocks and a sixpack of Pabst Blue Ribbon! The only weakness of No Place Like Home is that it wraps up so quickly (the six tracks total just over 20 minutes). Thomas’ writing and the group’s chops prove that there’s still plenty of fresh turf to explore below the Ma- son-Dixon Line. Think of these songs as a taste of what Cornbread can pull out of the even, with or without a crowd present.

To order No Place Like Home, visit the Cornbread home page: www.cornbreadmusic.com.

DramaTech holds auditions for spring musical

DramaTech is holding auditions for the musical comedy A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum January 29 and 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the DramaTech Theatre. Auditions will include singing, dancing and acting; dressing comfortably is advised.

Auditions for musicians (keyboards, drums, woodwinds, brass, and upright bass) will be held January 28 at 7:30 p.m. By appointment only. Bring your own musical instrument and be prepared to sight-read from the score. For more information, call the Theatre at 404-894-3481.

Recent Green Day show rocks Athens

By Jonathan Purvis

Awaiting February 27 in Athens

Green Day made their way back through Georgia last Friday night, unfortunately, they passed over Atlanta in favor of Athens (as Weezer is doing) and played at the Clas- sic Center. Despite slightly bad acoustics, the Classic Center was a decent venue. This reviewer is pumped about seeing Weezer’s Outdoor tour come through town.

The Get Up Kids, a quintet hailing from Kansas City, opened the show. Their set ran about 45 minutes, which turned out to be 15 songs in their short style. They played well, but it did not seem like the right kind of venue for a band like the Get Up Kids. Last time they came through Atlanta, they played at the Echo Lounge, and their style of play is better seen in a more intimate environment. The music was excellent though. Their songs would sound like Weezer if you added a bit heavier music to it and left out some of the guitar talent.

One of the highlights of their set was when Tre Cool, Green Day’s drummer, came out and sang a song with them. He sang an old classic, something about beer for breakfast. I have heard it once, but can’t remember who originally sang it or when. Tre Cool had an excellent presence with the crowd just for that one song he sang—something that the Get Up Kids seemed to be lacking throughout the show.

Stage presence is a huge part of this style of music, because you know that people aren’t coming for the amazing power solos. As catchy and entertaining as their songs are, the Get Up Kids admit that they lack in the guitar talent department. On their webpage, they plainly state that “we never did it (transcribed our music) because we didn’t want to be reminded what poor gui- tar players we are.” Either way, it was an

Take a bite of Crowe

Just when you thought the Gladiator craze was over, Crowe dots the i's in a stunningly well-crafted DVD.

By Kristin Oakes / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Billie Joe Armstrong pauses long enough to take a breath during Green Day’s recent high-energy tour of the guitar talents.

Opening this week at your local theater

- Shadow of the Vampire, starring John Malkovich and Willem Dafoe, directed by E. Elias Merhige. For review, see last week’s Technique.
- Sugar & Spice, starring Mena Suvari and James Marsden, directed by Fran- cine McDougall. Cheerleaders moon- light as bank robbers in this comedy.
- The Wedding Planner, starring Jenni- fer Lopez and Matthew McConaug- hey, directed by Adam Shankman. For review, see page 25 of this section.
Green Day

In a related story, Green Day’s latest single, “Warning,” has been accused of plagiarism. Members of a small British band named The Other Garden are threatening to sue. Their song “Never Got the Chance” was recorded in 1997, a full three years prior to Green Days latest album. They did not mention this at the concert, but after a quick trip on Napster, I noticed that Green Day’s “Warning” sounds exactly the same. I wonder what will come out of the accusations.

Green Day still put on a great show—one of the better shows I’ve been to lately. If they make it back to this neck of the woods, make sure to buy this album. Within seconds of the beginning of this cut, a listener will note the reinvention of Poe’s style. Unlike the days of “Angry Johnny,” Poe has dropped the jaded anger which led her previous foray into pop; she now soothes the listener with a sweet and sexy call and response that haunt the artist while evoking a chilling glimpse into the memories that haunt the artist while causing seamless transitions from track to track.

After a brief sample track about the passing of her father, Poe leads into the album’s title track. “Haunted” is unquestionably reason enough to buy this album. Within seconds of the beginning of this cut, a listener will note the reinvention of Poe’s style. Unlike the days of “Angry Johnny,” Poe has dropped the jaded anger which led her previous foray into pop; she now soothes the listener with a sweet and sexy call and response that haunt the artist while causing seamless transitions from track to track.

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Onward and Crossword

By Kit FitzSimons
The bark stops here

ACROSS
1. Actress Moore
5. French possessive
8. Type of rally
11. Speak
13. School that needs a [sic] (abbr)
14. French friend
15. Half a word chain (4 wds)
18. Carbohydrates’ suffix
19. Download word after high or low
20. SEE 23 ACROSS
21. Corrida cheer
22. Type of monk
23. With 20 ACROSS, rockabilly group
26. Distant
27. Night clothing, for short
30. Type of moss
31. Swabbing need
32. Tidy
33. As of now
34. Saucy actress West
35. Cocoa Puffs spokesbird
36. Word with cup or can
37. Famous satyr
38. This style (abbr)
40. Feel unwell
41. _Gel
44. Half of the word chain (4 wds)
47. Faun ___
48. “…_I saw Elba”
49. Cacophonous, for one
50. Tolkien tree
51. Nero Wolfe author Stour
52. Golf pegs

DOWN
1. Extinct bird
2. Cupid, to the Greeks
3. Sorcerer
4. Addams cousin
5. Tuske, as hair
6. Selfworth
7. UFO for one
8. Comb one’s hair, perhaps
9. Some flightless birds
10. ID number (abbr)
11. Not on time, perhaps
12. “_whiz!”
16. “_ whale”
17. Bronzed

21. Letters after L-A-B-C, to a scientist?
22. Fry with lightning
23. 007, for one
24. Type of shirt
25. Type of GT cap
26. Enemy
27. It beats the sword?
28. Feb. preceder
29. Eye condition
31. Occupy, as stations
32. Type of sister
33. “The Crucible” author
34. The hairdresser’s
35. Feather partner
36. Pendulum partner
37. Matt Smith and Chef Eric Reed. They’ll fill you up with a taste of New Orleans—chicken and shrimp gumbo.
38. Kasabian
39. Exam
40. Peak
41. “_pet
42. Got up
43. Matures
44. Leave ajar, in poetry
45. “_ you there?”
46. Kettle namecaller?

Answers on page 33.

By D. Michaels / NEW LINE CINEMA

Can’t get enough of stupid high school girl movies? Well, you’re in luck—Sugar & Spice opens today. Mena Suvari (American Beauty) plays one of six girls who take the strange leap from cheerleading to... bank robbery?

If you like Pina Coladas, and getting caught in the rain.
And the feel of the ocean, and the taste of champagne.
If you like making love at midnight, in the dunes of the cape.
You’re the love that I’ve looked for, come with me, and escape.

Ads. finding happiness in the small things.

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by: finding happiness in the small things.
One of the interesting parts of being an out-of-state Tech student is that I am constantly surrounded by Georgians. Before I am accused of putting a negative connotation with that word, let me explain why this is interesting. One in six of these native Georgians have never—or at least not recently—been to an international airport. And, as everyone knows, there are few things in this world more entertaining than international airports.

In fact, I can’t help but get a tear in my eye just thinking of Atlanta’s Hartsfield Airport (you may notice the repetition here; it’s for emphasis). So, for all you Georgians who forget easily, here is an inside look at Hartsfield.

The first thing you should know about Hartsfield is that it is huge. While other buildings look like model train sets props from the window of a landing plane, this place looks like a house. Once you get inside, it looks like Manhattan in a box.

While other buildings look like model train set props from the window of a landing plane, Hartsfield looks like a house. Once you get inside, it looks like Manhattan in a box.

The first sight I see whenever I arrive from my state’s international airport is a Burger King. This is not your average airport Burger King (meaning, a menu that spans two pages in a real subway, but its last stop is not Peachtree Street, it’s Baggage Claim). The subway also speaks to me on an inner level that nothing else has ever been able to do.

Three steps out of the Burger King, I was sucked into the airport’s version of the Burmese Tiger Trap: The Gift and Souvenir Shop. The second main characteristic of international airports is that there is no baggage at Baggage Claim.

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By Jayson Wehrend

Announced that he has no byline

After such a stellar year of mov-ies in 1999, it came as no surprise that 2000 was a terrible year for Hollywood. Frankly, I'm dreading the Academy Awards. The only good thing about a miserable movie year is that the good films stand out all the more, and Golden Globe-win-ner Gladiator is the standout movie of last year. Movie: Gladiator tells the story of Roman General Maximus (a very cool Russell Crowe), a fearless warrior who longs for an end to 12 years of constant war. After trounc-ing the barbarian hordes of Germa-nia, Maximus is more than ready to return to his family and simple farm life. Unfortunately, the Emperor has other plans for him. He wishes for Maximus to take over the empire after his death, su-perceding his overly ambitious son Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix). Before Maximus can decide wheth-er to accept, Commodus kills his father and orders Maximus killed as well. Maximus escapes death but not injury. After finally succumb-ing to his wounds he is captured by a roving caravan and quickly sold into slavery. Before too long he’s forced to fight again, not for the glory of the Empire but to survive.

Video: One thing I can’t stress enough is the advantage of wide-screen formats on DVD. Gladiator is presented in its original theatrical aspect ratio of 2.35:1. For those fortunate enough to have HDTV, it’s also anamorphic. Like most vi-sually appealing films, Gladiator uses different color themes. The movie alternates from very pleasing grayish-blue to earthy browns. This new DVD perfectly recreates this effect. The somber blue of the first bat-tle works very well with the gritty nature of the fighting. In contrast, the browns communicate the glory of Rome as well as the ideal of Max-imus’s home. Other than the inten-tional use of color filters, all of the films hues are beautifully reproduced.

During the entire two-hour mov-ie, there was only one scene that came out less than perfect. In the scene where the Praetorians attack Proximo, the film looks extremely grainy and the red looks way too saturated. I can’t fault the DVD though; this scene was actually con-structed from a previous scene since Oliver Reed died before the sequence could be filmed. Therefore, this stun-ning transfer gets my whole-heart-ed support. I would love to see more movies with this kind of transfer.

Audio: A good DVD is all about options and yet again, Gladiator de-livers. Not only does the disc in-clude a stereo and Dolby Digital 5.1 mix, but also a DTS 6.1 track, and I can’t think of a better movie to listen to in surround sound. Noth-ing demonstrates the awesome power of surround sound more than the battle in Germania. The front and rear surrounds work together to throw you into the battle. Arrows fly by, swords clash, and the roar of battle comes from all around. The subwoofer gets its share of the ac-tion, bringing punch to the launch-ing catapults and exploding firebombs.

Later, when Maximus enters the gladiatorial arena, the crowd’s roar swells through the surrounds. It’s the closest you’ll get to actually be-ing applauded by 50,000 Romans. In between the vicious fight sequenc-es, Hans Zimmer’s dramatic score envelops you. Coming from all 5 speakers and supported by the sub-woofer, it adds another strong ele-ment to the movie. Without such support, Gladiator could not have been such an entertaining movie.

Extras: As if the clear transfer and dynamic sound mix weren’t enough, you get an entire extra DVD full of supplemental features. First off, you get 11 deleted scenes. You have the choice of watching alone or with commentary by the direc-tor explaining why the scene was cut from the final film. Mostly, the scenes just add to the story’s rich-ness and character depth.

The last thing included in this section is the Treasure Chest. This 7-minute sequence is just an assem-bley of cut sequences put to Zim-mer’s score. The shots are remarkably clear and rather entertaining to watch. Naturally you have the standard “making of” documentary. It goes on for about half an hour and in-cludes a good collection of inter-views, set locations, and behind the scenes information. In addition to the documentary on the movie, you also get one on real gladiators from a historical perspective.

After that, the attention returns to the movie with a featurette on the making of Hans Zimmer’s score. Next comes a journal written by the actor who plays the child Lucius. It’s a pleasant read, as it gives a more personal touch to the film. It’s not unusual for a movie to contain sto-ryboards; however, I’ve never seen a movie with such an extensive col-lection of them. You get boards for all of the major sequences, all of the cut or never filmed sequences, and even the concept art for both.

This is also where you find the first hidden feature. Go to the de-leted sequences and select rhinofight. When the board comes up, press the up arrow and select the rhino itself. That pulls up a new menu where you can look at some text CG that would have been used if the scene had been kept. Moving on, you get tons of stills ranging from portraits to behind the scenes foot-age and back to the more standard features—the movie trailers.

Presented in Dolby Digital Sur-round sound and in glorious wide-screen, these trailers are actually worth watching. Here you can also find the second hidden feature. At the trailers menu, press left on your re-mote and select the highlighted bird. This will take you to a wonderful trailer for Chicken Run that spoofs Gladiator. Finally, there are cast and crew bios and the production notes. The film disc also includes a fea-ture-length director’s commentary with the one and only Ridley Scott. I struggle to think of anything I wanted on this DVD that I didn’t get. Frankly, it exceeded my expec-tations. I can only hope that this might be a sign of more things to come from the DVD industry. I just wish I had more time to watch all the awesome special features.
There’s music in them thar clubs!

**COTTON CLUB (152 Luckie St.)**
[404] 873-5000
1/26—Hillbilly Revue, Deanna Martin
Web site: www.tourdates.com/cottonclub.html

**DARK HORSE TAVERN (1641 Highland Ave.)**
[404] 873-3607
1/26—Billionaire, Rev 7, Precious
1/27—Demina Carter, Ghoul Town, Adam Ad
1/31—V Pitner, A Jordi Kast
2/1—Totally Savage, Mike Hartnett, The Axxes
2/2—Elephant

**ECO CLOUNGE (551 Fox Hollow Ave.)**
[404] 681-5800
1/26—AD, Donkey Punch
1/27—Slowearth, Darinche Machine, Royal 7
1/31—Souvenirs, Chris Lee Band
2/1—Johnny Hyde
2/2—Tom The Casway Way, Plastic Pan, Tel Avivs
Web site: www.ecoclounge.com

**EDDIE’S ATTIC (515 N McDonough St.)**
[404] 377-4976
1/26—Flaco Feets, Annie Lolley
1/27—Kathleen Hall
1/30—Sierra
1/31—Sawfly, Melanie Hammitt, Dow Delft
2/1—Clare Campbell & Mark Mateus, Michael Magnis, Michael Levine
2/2—Gary Jon Wilson, Kacey Jones, Sam Shaver, Tino Harlin, Mimi Thompson
Web site: www.eddiesattic.com

**FASQUIRADE (605 North Ave.)**
[404] 573-2007
1/26—Ghoul Town, 101, Skolins, “Woden”
William Sparks, Jerry only
1/27—Killingfrogs, Sunday, Noxovoice, Superstar
1/28—The Broads, Random Conflict, The Breakdowns, The Spectreman

1/28—Jinks, Clove Prave, Marc Ten, Incessence
2/1—Candy’s, Something 1, Loutlaw, Nute
2/2—Sparshawk, Hopscotch

**ROXY (3110 Roswell Rd.)**
(404) 659-9022
1/29—This Corpse Called Love, The Blast, Marsha Harding
1/30—Jill Scott
1/31—Souvenirs, Greta Lee Band
1/31—Puddin’, Helgas, Moto-Litas
2/1—Jadore Romance, Michael Levine, Massimo Vizzicaro
2/2—In Like Flynn, Sasquatch

**TABERNACLE (152 Luckie St.)**
[404] 881-9018
1/27—Orangewaves, Billy Joe Winghead
1/31—Putkin’, Helgas, Monstresses
2/1—Jack West, Jona Ivy
Web site: www.cinemaxstarbar.html

**VARIETY PLAYHOUSE (1099 Euclid Ave.)**
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**ENTERTAINMENT**

‘Planner’ offers standard bridal laughs

By Sarah Roberts

**Vanderbilt Hustler**

( U.WIRE) Vanderbilt University—Any movie with the word “wedding” in the title cannot be expected to bring about more than a few laughs and a good feeling—and The Wedding Planner lives up to this standard.

The main characters first meet when Steve (Matthew McConaughey), saves Mary Foste’s (Jennifer Lopez) life. During the rescue, the two characters experience an intense moment of connection, stirring feelings in both, Steve and the previously commitment-fee Mary.

The mutual flirtation leads to an informal movie date that seems promising at first but is cut short before romantic inclinations are carried out. This mysterious encounter promises staying with Mary, who can’t help but confess her exciting experience to her newest client, the abusively wealthy and spoiled bride-to-be, Fran, played by Bridgette Wilson-Sampras. This is where the fairy tale ends.

Upon meeting her newest client’s fiancé, Mary realizes the man she has fallen for is the intended groom for the very wedding she is planning. However, she has no choice but to stay with one of her largest accounts ever, forcing her to spend prolonged amounts of time working with Steve and Fran.

During the planning of the wedding, Mary’s supposed fiance, the eager Italian Massimo (Justin Chambers), joins the fray. Massimo fills the essential role of the quixotic friend (think Hugh Grant’s RAF mate in Notting Hill). The snobby yet likable mother of the bride brings some added humor with her atrocious singing voice and love for the good grapes of Donnyvars.

Also, there are always those times that are not intended to be funny, but could provoke a viewer to laugh regardless. This proved helpful later in the movie when the romantic comedy began to lean toward a romantic romance. Fortunately, the humor found its way back into the script by the end.

The beginning of the movie is reminiscent of My Best Friend’s Wedding. Maybe it wasn’t the spoiled mother, the unenthusiastic groom or the fact that the bride’s confidant was secretly attached to the groom.

However, despite a rather clichéd establishment of the plot, the movie manages to follow its own path in the second half. Just as the storyline begins to seem predictable, a twist in the plot leaves the audience astonished (keep in mind that this is a romantic comedy level astonishment).

Although it is always annoying when the intended lovers are incapable of realizing their true feelings or confessing their secret attraction, the plot does begin to leave one wondering whether that will be the case in The Wedding Planner.

However, despite frustrations, the movie proves to be light-hearted and humorous, leaving viewers walking out with a good feeling.

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So far, Jody is the only person who’s let me use the Dapper Dan on them. C’mom people, it’ll wash out! I think...