

DMX has no 'Wounds'

Rap star DMX joins Steven Seagal in *Exit Wounds*, which opened in Atlanta theaters last Friday. Page 21

Two Bits is burned out!

It's March, spring break is becoming a memory...yep, that's it—Two Bits is betting you're burned out. Page 23

'Persons' premieres

Missing Persons, a new film produced, directed, and written by Tech students Joel Whitley and Jay Zimmerman will hold its premiere on March 24 at 9:00 p.m. in the Clary Theater of the Student Success Center. Admission is \$2, and seating is limited.

The stars include students Dan Caudill, Wendy Fill, Jeff Kock, Katie O'Connor, and Liz Birmingham. For more information, visit the duo's website at <http://www.mantuaproductions.com>.

Jay Mohr performs

The Student Center Special Events Committee presents comedian Jay Mohr in the Ferst Center on Sunday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m. Student tickets go on sale Monday, March 26 in the Programs Area on the third floor of the Student Center, and are \$5 with a Tech ID. All seating will be general admission. For more information, call (404) 894-2805.

Jay Mohr began his career on *Saturday Night Live* and broke into film as Tom Cruise's rival in *Jerry Maguire*. More recently, he appeared in last fall's *Pay It Forward*.

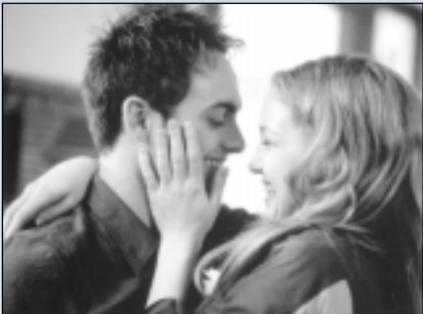
Angie Aparo appears

Angie Aparo will appear at the Ferst Center on Tuesday, April 10 at 8:00 p.m.; this event is sponsored by the Student Center Concert Committee. Student tickets go on sale Monday, March 26 at the Student Center Box Office. You can also call (404) 894-9600 to purchase tickets. The cost is \$5 with a student ID.

Aparo began his career as a musician here in Atlanta and has performed at area clubs and at Music Midtown in 1999. *The American*, his 2000 album, featured the popular track "Spaceship," and his song "Hush" was featured on the soundtrack for the recent film *Bounce*.



By Chris Helcermanas-Benge / 20TH CENTURY FOX



By Pat Redmond / MIRAMAX FILMS



By Nicola Goode / SCREEN GEMS

Also opening in theaters this week: *Say It Isn't So* (Heather Graham, Chris Klein); *About Adam* (Stuart Townsend, Kate Hudson); and *The Brothers* (Bill Bellamy).

Hewitt reigns supreme in 'Heartbreakers'

By Nolan Reese
The Daily Free Press

(U-WIRE) Boston University—It seems impossible to describe anything about Jennifer Love Hewitt as "good," with the obvious exception of looks. But—horror of all horrors—not only has she appeared in a good movie this time, but her acting isn't bad either. *Heartbreakers* is one

of those films that by all accounts should have been lousy. It's a romantic comedy about a mother-daughter con team where, in the middle of a con, the daughter falls in love.

Amazingly, *Heartbreakers* has been blessed with a solid script that avoids enough of the traps most films of its type not only fall into, but willingly jump into head first; and contains some

good laughs along the way.

Hewitt (*Can't Hardly Wait*) plays the daughter half of the con team. When the film begins, her mother (Sigourney Weaver, *Alien*) is about to wed Dean Cumanno (Ray Liotta, seen most recently in *Hannibal*), a businessman with a bit of cash Hewitt and Weaver wouldn't mind scamming. After taking him for a few hundred grand

and a Mercedes, they head south to Florida with hopes of reeling in an even bigger fish—a wealthy old tobacco mogul played by Gene Hackman (*Enemy of the State*). But, as is necessary with romantic comedies, there needs to be the love interest to create a conflict. In this case it's a bartender (Jason Lee, *Chasing Amy*) that Hewitt falls for, much to her own chagrin.

While the plot is far from revolutionary, it sets up some funny scenes and one-liners. Even the obligatory sweet, revelatory moments at the film's conclusion aren't nearly as cringe-inducing as they should have been.

Hackman's tobacco tycoon, William B. Tensy, rarely seen without a cigarette in his mouth and looking about a cough away from dying, provides for some humorous bits as he constantly wrenches from behind a cloud of smoke. This may be his best role in years, following a disappointing turn in the torturous piece-of-awful that was *The Replacements*.

Weaver and Liotta also fare well, doing what is required of them. Even Hewitt manages to hold her own, for once not getting totally upstaged by her breasts, though her cleavage is still on prominent display.



By Murray Close / METRO GOLDWYN MAYER

Jennifer Love Hewitt and Sigourney Weaver are a mother-daughter con team in *Heartbreakers*, a film with a surprisingly solid plot. It manages to avoid the pitfalls found often in other romantic comedies.

See *Heart*, page 22

Brighter Shade has some light for everyone

By Alan Back
Now pulling his 85th late shift

There are as many different ways to run a band as there are bands. Some groups are permanently wedged under the thumb of a manager who thinks he's Napoleon. Others just let everything float and take whatever gigs happen to float their way. Still others just don't know how to get along with anybody; they change managers more often than they change their socks.

And some bands, like Brighter Shade, give themselves room to stretch out—but not so much that everybody runs off. Balancing individual and group commitments is no easy task, but these five find a way to keep audiences happy regardless of who's at the microphone.

Gainesville, Ga., native John Hopkins (lead vocals, guitar) and Andy Birdsall (lead guitar) crossed paths in 1994 while both were attending Florida State University in Tallahassee. Early in the next year, after Hopkins' band Distant Relatives had broken up, the two began playing in the area as an acoustic duo. They relocated to Atlanta that summer and had the first incarnation of Brighter Shade up and running by the middle of 1996.

Drummer Marcus Petrushka and bassist Sean McIntyre were on hand for their self-titled debut album that year. Since then, a new crew has rotated in to

back up the core pairing: Wilder Embry, Eric Sanders, and keyboard man Damian Cartier.

"I've known Wilder since—I don't know, fifth grade," Hopkins recalled. "His house was three or four blocks from mine in Gainesville. In high school, he had a band that I used to come out and help with, running their PA. I had a band too, but my guys graduated a year above me, so I was kind of without a band. We got to be fast friends during that period."

Embry took McIntyre's place in 1998, and Sanders became the band's main drummer that same year. (Petrushka has sat in occasionally, as have Hopkins' brother Michael and a few other players.) The appearance of Cartier and his jazz/funk influences would have a lasting effect on the overall sound, starting with the first notes he played on *Brighter Shade* as a guest performer.

Hopkins found himself with some spare time at the end of 1994 and took a trip up to Newport, R.I., to visit a group of friends in a band there. "They needed a bass player, so I went up and played bass on their album. In that time I met Damian, because he lived there in Newport... Every time we went back to visit, we would see him and get together to hang out." Cartier moved down south in 1998 and began playing with Brighter Shade right off the bat.

"He's an all-around genius,

really, in his own right. That was kind of cool, to get him to be a part of it." The *Brighter Shade* tracks that feature him take on a slightly tripped-out jazz vibe—think Widespread Panic, but not as far out in left field. Their upcoming album, *Divine Ignorance*, finds him adding new subtleties under Hopkins' gritty vocals (Shane MacGowan, is that you?) and

the other members' harmonies.

Musically, the bulk of the album pitches a loose Sunshine State vibe against a darker, more jangly, Soundgarden-style mood. However, there are a few surprises lying in wait, particularly the audience favorite "Breakdown." Hopkins stated that the song, written during the third-

See *Brighter Shade*, page 25

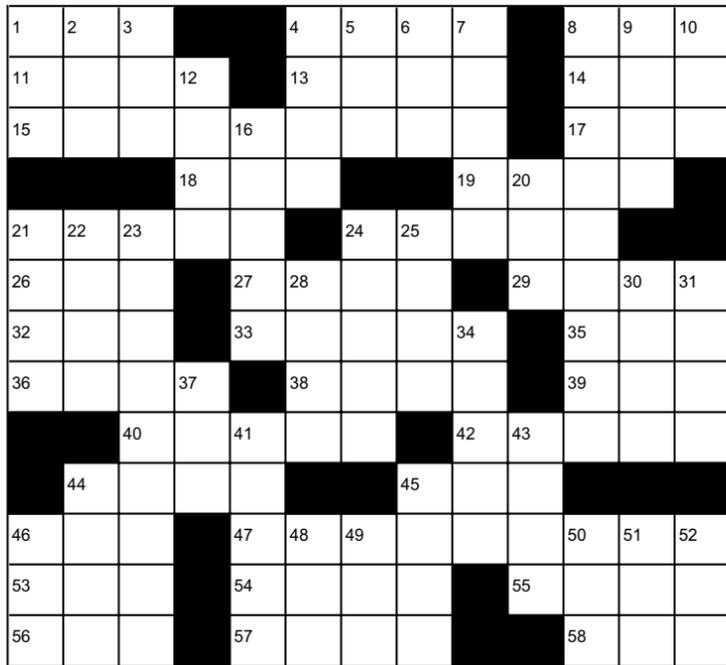


By Alan Back / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Andy Birdsall and John Hopkins lead Brighter Shade, whose new CD will be out this spring. Back: guest drummer Michael Hopkins.

Onward and Crossword

Double-Nine Nothing!



By Kit FitzSimons
All new, all different

ACROSS

1. Just a bit
4. X-Files' Scully's first name
8. _____-Mo
11. Famous Arkin
13. "Oh my!"
14. Row
15. 9 DIFFERENT LETTERS
17. Famous Thurman
18. MCI rival
19. Just a bit
21. Upbeat
24. Type of dressing

26. Listener
27. Shakespearean King
29. Trade
32. "Three" prefix
33. Bert's roommate
35. Everyone
36. Edison's middle name
38. Place to grow colonies
39. Hwy.
40. Mistreat
42. Where 1 DOWN is
44. Tread
45. Here, to Pierre
46. Hula dancer's need
47. 9 DIFFERENT LETTERS
53. Fifi's 'if

54. "_____ the Great," (kid's books)
55. Narcissus' other admirer
56. Eye problem
57. Went to the salon, perhaps
58. Boat name abbr.

DOWN

1. _____ Mahal
2. _____ carte
3. Beaver's goal
4. IOU, for one
5. In the past
6. A Bobbsey Twin
7. Put on the list (2 wds)
8. 9 DIFFERENT LETTERS
9. Dalai _____
10. _____-Gel
12. Tide type
16. Type
20. Pac. And Atl., for two
21. Critter protection agency (abbr)
22. "Goodbye, _____"
23. 9 DIFFERENT LETTERS
24. Reachable area
25. Opera staple
28. Ages
30. High prefix
31. Askance
34. Susan Lucci's character
37. Honest Prez
41. Capsize
43. Nick at _____
44. Scripted improv, sort of
45. Having frosting
46. Boat name abbr.
48. Famous Doris
49. Western Native American
50. "_____ Bin Ein..."
51. Resistance unit
52. Naysayers

Answers on page 27, back in their "normal" position. The hardest part of this puzzle is finding the answers!

With Napster facing restrictions, could Aimster fill its old niche?

By Helaine Tabacoff
Badger Herald

(U-WIRE) U. of Wisconsin—As Napster slowly fades into the background, a new music-sharing service called Aimster may become the new form of music swapping over the Internet.

Aimster, an America Online service, allows users to swap music with people on their AOL Instant Messenger buddy lists and others using online services such as Gnutella and Microsoft Networking.

Aimster allows users to target files from trusted friends on AIM, and avoid viruses, bad files and spam. Unlike Napster, the AOL program is encrypted, which means users do not have to fear they will be spied on while downloading music. As part of Aimster's terms, users agree to only share files belonging to them.

University of Wisconsin-Madison freshman Jeff Hertz said Aimster could be an alternative to Napster's diminished capabilities.

"I would use it, because it sounds reliable, regardless of the number of songs you get," he said.

However, Brian Rust, DoIT senior administrative program specialist, said UW regards the new file-sharing service as unlawful.

"Our stance is that Aimster is a program that allows accessing and sharing of copyrighted material, which is illegal," Rust said.

Although UW regards Aimster as an illegitimate service, students may feel differently. "There is nothing wrong with trading music with your friends, and if they are your friends they probably have the songs and music you want," Hertz said.

Nevertheless, Rust said file sharing clogs UW bandwidth. "Aimster will curb the use of the campus network for educational purposes," he said. "It will keep other students from getting their work done, due to network traffic. We get complaints from other students when the network is tied up due to Napster, and we can expect more complaints as soon as the students begin to use Aimster on a regular basis."

Although many people have not heard of this new alternative to Napster, it has already attracted over 3 million users, according to a recent article from CNN.com.

Aimster is similar to Napster in many ways, and may be the new choice for downloading music from the Internet. As Napster begins the process of shutting down, or at least limiting the amount of songs being downloaded, Aimster may step out of Napster's shadow and make a name for itself.

"We haven't noticed a great deal of Aimster use on the network," said Rust. "But that doesn't mean that students won't begin to use it as Napster becomes less and less available."

Help fill large sections with awesome stories. Write! Email entertainment@technique.gatech.edu.

DMX makes leap from music with a bang in 'Wounds'

By Vivian Vakili
Entertainment Staff

MPAA Rating: R

Starring: Steven Seagal, DMX

Director: Andrzej Bartkowiak

Studio: Warner Brothers

Running Time: 117 minutes

Rating: ★★★★★

Want an action movie with good acting and a plot? Look no further than *Exit Wounds*, starring Steven Seagal, DMX, and Tom Arnold. At first glance, the three actors seem to comprise a motley crew, but at second glance and thereafter, they work together brilliantly.

Steven Seagal returns to the big screen with his signature stoicism and praiseworthy martial arts moves as jaded police officer Orin Boyd. After saving the Vice President from an attack by the Michigan Militia, his boss sees his behavior as unprofessional.

Officer Boyd is thus quickly transferred from his high-profile job as a detective in the glamorous 21st Precinct to a dull series of lowly jobs in the decidedly unglamorous 15th Precinct.

Upon arrival, he is assigned to an aggression-management therapy group and then given the job of directing traffic. Obviously, Boyd is unhappy with this assignment and suspects the precinct itself of corruption.

He begins to look into the high-profile cases and at the precinct's cocky officers. This is where DMX comes in.

After seeing *Exit Wounds*, one can confidently say that the newest and most talented crossover artist from music to the big screen is definitely rap superstar DMX.

In his acting debut in *Exit Wounds*, DMX (who plays character Latrell Walker) proves that he is able to portray both villain and hero.

He convinces the audience that he is a horrible thief and ghetto thug during the first part of the movie, and later additionally succeeds in portraying himself as a computer whiz that is out to showcase police corruption during the second half.

Walker is out for revenge on the police department because his brother was arrested—due to police corruption—for a crime he did not commit. He takes it upon himself to further exploit the police department in a "lone ranger" sort of way. Eventually, his path crosses with that of Officer Boyd's and the two of them suddenly combine efforts to combat the corrupt 15th Precinct.

As for Tom Arnold, his purpose is mainly to bring comic relief to a movie that seems rather serious and to balance a main character (Seagal) that rarely shows emotion. He is first seen in the movie as a member



By George Kraychik / WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES

DMX and Steven Seagal star as a thug with a mission and a jaded cop, respectively, in Warner Brothers Pictures's new film, *Exit Wounds*. After this great performance, success in acting may follow for rap star DMX.

of the aggression-therapy group Boyd is assigned to, and later as a host for a controversial morning radio show.

Exit Wounds is unique in that it blends plot very well with action and is not at all overdone. The action scenes are not the same ones that you'd see in every other action movie.

Martial arts can probably be accredited with making the action se-

quences a notch above most others. The film definitely has an element of mystery to it, and the plot is not at all predictable.

One cannot talk about this movie without commenting on its soundtrack. It is comprised of pieces by DMX as well as other artists such as Trick Daddy, Nas, Caviar, Iceberg, and Mack 10.

The soundtrack was released last

Tuesday, and is certainly a must-have for rap fans—and especially for DMX fans.

All in all, the movie is no less than one would expect from Matrix producer Joel Silver, and everything in *Exit Wounds* is definitely above average for an action movie.

Seagal, DMX, and 'Exit Wounds' opened in local theaters last Friday.

'Enemy at the Gates' features pretty faces, so much more

By Anna Roberts
Badger Herald

MPAA Rating: R

Starring: Jude Law, Ed Harris,

Joseph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz

Director: Jean-Jacques Annaud

Studio: Paramount Pictures

Running Time: 131 minutes

Rating: ★★★★★

(U-WIRE) U. of Wisconsin—The drama and bravery of World War II make great fodder for films. Good and evil are easily definable and the emotion behind such stories comes with the package. That's not to say that every World War II film is a ready-made hit—the entire production team has to work at it.

Thankfully, *Enemy at the Gates* has one of the hardest-working cast and crews in the business, as testament to their earlier works. The result is a quality picture with a strong story that only suffers from a willingness to do too much.

Enemy at the Gates begins its story at the battle for Stalingrad. As one of the defining moments of the war, the two-year conflict was instrumental for both Nazi and Russian troops. If captured, the Nazis would have the upper hand in the war, using the crucial location to advance their power.

Defending the city with soldiers and snipers, the Russian powers were able to trap the German forces and claim victory. Among the Russians was Vassili Zaitsev, the sniper's sniper, who, due to Russian newspapers and a 1942 type of celebrity reporting, became a national hero.

Enemy at the Gates focuses on Vassili, and, when played by immensely talented and handsome Jude Law (*The Talented Mr. Ripley*), how can you not focus on him? Vassili's reputation is inflated due to the powerful pen of political officer and propagandist Danilov, played by fellow attractive acting powerhouse, Joseph Finnes (*Shakespeare In Love*).

Convinced that such a hero, even an exaggerated one, will restore hope in the troops, Vassili becomes the poster boy for Russian pride. The articles and photos have the desired effect, and not only does Vassili garner the attention of buxom beauty and

Enemy at the Gates may leave the heart a little unsatisfied, but the mind and eyes will love it.

fellow troop-ette, Tania (Rachel Weisz, *The Mummy*), but the Nazi troops as well. They send their own sharpshooter, Konig (Ed Harris, *Pollock*), to take out Vassili and help advanced the Nazi troops.

The opening battle sequence, with its dive-bombing planes, massive

shootouts, and increasing body count, makes the viewer think twice about reaching for that second handful of popcorn. As powerful as it is, it is reminiscent of *Saving Private Ryan*'s battle scenes but falls short in the awe department.

The film sets up scene after scene of cat-and-mouse scenarios. And although the key element in the sniper field is to be still, these scenes have the exciting and suspenseful elements of a chase. Both Harris's and Law's careful demeanor and seriousness in their roles contribute to the believability of the film.

Enemy at the Gates could have been a flop and a weak attempt at a courageous story. The director could have easily thrown in a few talentless pretty boys and filmed them running around in the mud. Thankfully, the day we see Freddie Prinze Jr. in a military uniform has yet to come.

Annaud's best move in this picture was his casting. Law and Finnes

are indeed of the pinup-boy caliber, yet their past efforts prove they're not just pretty faces. *Enemy at the Gates* is no different, and both actors turn in outstanding performances. Although their good-looking faces may be covered in dirt throughout the film, it is their talent that becomes the enticing thing to watch.

If anything, these stars are used to a challenge, and although *Enemy at the Gates* is a good picture, it is in no way a Best Picture. The script asks little more of its cast than to show up and give a B-plus effort. The back story of the characters is almost nonexistent, except for the token Sniper Jr. scene of Vassili hunting with his grandfather.

In fact, little is learned about Finnes's or Harris's character, and the romance between Vassili and Tania is touching at times but not much more than an afterthought. The film introduces too many ele-

See *Enemy*, page 22

Semisonic concocts album with 'Chemistry'

By Whitney Pierce
The Reveille

(U-WIRE) Louisiana State U.—Minneapolis-based band Semisonic is open once again for business with its latest CD, *All About Chemistry*. When its second album, *Feeling Strangely Fine*, went platinum with the success of the popular air-wave hit "Closing Time," Semisonic felt liberated and ready to give its fans a new album in which to revel.

"It was sometimes overwhelming to read all the e-mails we'd get about how deeply our music was affecting the fans," said guitarist/songwriter Dan Wilson. Wilson added that fans, pouring out support, let the band know that its music was helping people "make sense of their lives and times."

This, of course, was the encouragement and inspiration for the band's current album, *All About Chemistry*. The new CD is not just a product of Semisonic's songwriting and musical talents, but features various digital recording devices, sound-processing equipment, synthesizers and samplers that Wilson, bassist John Munson and drummer Jacob Slichter incorporated into the band's music-making process.

"I told John and Jake that I wanted us to produce it ourselves," Wilson said. "I figured this was a chance to get the new songs on a CD the way I heard them in my head."

With the rest of the band in agreement, Semisonic took on the role as producer as well as talent. "Since we produced the record ourselves, we didn't have to explain these weird sounds to anyone," Slichter added. *All About Chemistry* is the band's way of trying something new.

"I told the guys that I thought we'd done a great introspective album last time around, but this time I wanted to make something really

different," Wilson said. *All About Chemistry* is a concept album that takes the listener through a journey of sexual and social situations that a group of friends experience in modern-day America.

Each song is related to the chemistry between people, hence the CD's title, title track, and tracks represented by figures as they'd be viewed in a chemistry book.

"On the last album, I wrote almost all the songs as secrets being told to just one person," said the Grammy-nominated Wilson. "This time around, I envisioned a big group of friends at a great party, where everyone has done a few things they'll remember forever and everyone has done a few things that they'd rather forget."

Each of the 12 tracks tells stories about the ins and outs of love and relationships. "Get a Grip" tells of the fact that there is not necessarily

someone for everyone when the band sing "when the lights come on and the party's through, there are always a few with nobody to do." Though several of the songs seem depressing at first listen, they always lighten up with the usual get-over-it advice.

All of the songs on *All About Chemistry* are light and airy and can be classified into the pop category, but Semisonic's message is for a more mature audience than that of the usual fluff bands.

In "She's Got My Number," Wilson sings "she's got my number/I must confess one look in her eyes/and I feel undressed/she doesn't care all of the world's standing at her door/she doesn't even care what they're waiting for," expressing his fascination with a woman who doesn't give others the time of day.

"One True Love," a song of pity for oneself for being alone, was co-

written by the legendary Carole King. King not only helped write the song, but she also contributes vocals alongside Wilson.

"I think her balance of emotional power and pop brilliance is like an ideal I've always been reaching for," Wilson said. It was pretty amazing to find myself sitting in a room with her, singing ideas back and forth."

King's influence is evident as soon as the song opens and the beginning piano piece reminds the listener of her famous "You've Got a Friend."

Listeners will hear "All About Chemistry" on radio stations across the country, mixed in with songs and artists who deserve no recognition. However, *All About Chemistry* is evidence that Semisonic has beaten the one-hit wonder rap and will continue to produce good music that is easy to listen to.



By Ken Schles / MCA MUSIC

Semisonic, the band that hit it big a few years ago with "Closing Time," has just released their new album, *All About Chemistry*. The band produced the album themselves, ensuring that each track is just the way they wanted.

Heart

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Heartbreakers' real standout, however, is Jason Lee, one of the most under-appreciated actors out there. Lee, best known for his work in Kevin Smith's New Jersey films, plays a sarcastic bartender who is the perfect foil for Hewitt. His dead-on delivery of some sharp one-liners is classic, and he actually manages to show some emotional depth. Viewers are supposed to feel sympathy for his character, and he manages to elicit this without being as cheesy and obvious as many actors would have done in his position.

The release of a funny, if short of brilliant, film like *Heartbreakers* means that the "last year's trash" portion of the year is finally coming to an end. More than a few cuts above enjoyable films that should have been much better and downright awful messes, *Heartbreakers* is a clever film that should make for an enjoyable night at the movies. Aside from the fact that Jennifer Love Hewitt probably isn't interested in a 19-year-old-film-geek-college-movie-critic, there's little else that's heartbreaking about *Heartbreakers*.

Enemy

from page 21

ments of personal history and never truly explores them; it is hard to feel a part of the film because of the lack of connection to the characters.

Still, the tactics of the two snipers and the situations that have them going head to head are some of the most suspenseful scenes in the theaters these days. A sniper's best friend is his eyes, and the director plays on this, giving the viewer extreme close-ups and interesting point-of-view shots. *Enemy at the Gates* may leave the heart a little unsatisfied, but the mind and eyes will love it.

technique

Brighter Shade

from page 19

wave ska revival of the late 1990s, would probably have been left off if not for the way it went over at shows.

He commented, "When I was up in Newport for that extended period of time, [ska] was very popular up there. We were going to see the Skatalites at a bar in Providence, so I think that might have something to do with the intensity of that kind of sound coming through on a song that's basically about fighting to keep control."

The curveballs keep coming from the stage as well. Embry and his bass may start gyrating like a weather vane caught in a Force Five gale, while Cartier sometimes takes off on a few explorations of his own that recall Widespread and Herbie Hancock. Or the group might turn itself into a bar band to play a few covers; then anything goes and all bets are off.

Crowds up and down the East Coast and as far away as Colorado have had the chance to watch the group pull a few rabbits out of their collective hat. They've also put in appearances as openers for the likes of Drivin' n' Cryin', Derek Trucks, and Sister Hazel. But rehearsals, gigs, and recording sessions aren't the only things you'll find in Brighter Shade's day planner. You're just as likely to run across entries that send the members all over Atlanta—they have plenty of outside work to keep them on the go.

Cartier has done shows at the Midtown lounge Cosmopolitan; he and Sanders (and sometimes Bird-sall) also have a group that regularly plays at Nathaniel's, a restaurant in Marietta. Hopkins and Birdsall, meanwhile, still do the occasional gig as an acoustic duo, and Hopkins has played the weekly Open Mic Night series at Eddie's Attic (he's qualified for the semiannual finals in May). Embry writes songs and sings lead for the local group

Diggity.

Then there's the Go Lounge, part of what used to be known as the Atlanta Beer Garten, which gets a little Shade twice a week. Polenta is a four-piece outfit that plays on Thursdays and features Birdsall stepping to the front.

"It's not even really a band at this point," Hopkins said. "It's a group of us who are getting together to play. We're planning to do some writing in this group, and we just want to get out there and get tight together... We're looking forward to getting Andy in front of the

"We're out there hitting it, and we just keep plugging away. And we'll see how many people actually jump on the bandwagon."

John Hopkins
Brighter Shade

masses, and getting Sonny [Del Grosso, guitar] and me off to the side because we like to make fools of ourselves and not worry too much about singing."

He trades his guitar for a bass in Polenta, then switches back on Saturdays to gig with the Woodpeckers. With basically the same roster as Distant Relatives, the group quickly won a following of its own among Tallahassee's cover-hungry crowd. "The Woodpeckers today are three of four from that group. There are so many Florida State people here in Atlanta that we've had good responses from playing the same cover songs at the [Go Lounge]... Basically, we're going

there to party and have a good time, make a little cash and goof off."

But do all these other gigs sometimes get in the way of Brighter Shade? "Without question," Hopkins admitted—but for five guys who play on a full-time basis, it's not unusual. "We get together when we can to rehearse new songs and get ready for shows. Basically, we're out there doing it to make a living. At this point, in anticipation of the CD, we've been playing about once a month."

He continued, "Being on the road for two years and booking it all yourself is kind of draining. We're hoping to pick up some sort of support system that'll help us achieve a more extensive touring schedule without having to break our backs in the office ourselves."

According to his estimate, *Divine Ignorance* should be ready for release sometime within the next two months. Until then, and beyond, life goes on much as it has for the past six years.

"We're out there hitting it, and we just keep plugging away. There are no guarantees or promises, but at the end of it all there's going to be a bunch of records that we put together and really had a great time doing. And we'll see how many people actually jump on the bandwagon."

Whatever band members happen to be onstage a given time can be counted on to deliver a few trick shots for listeners. Track them down and see what they cook up next.

John Hopkins plays with Polenta and the Woodpeckers at the Go Lounge on Thursdays and Saturdays, respectively. Call (404) 261-9898 for more information. Damian Cartier regularly plays at Nathaniel's. Call (770) 955-1464 for details. To check out Brighter Shade online, visit <http://www.brightersshade.com>.

Lots of music, no green beer...

CJ'S ISLANDING (270 Buckhead Ave.)

(404) 237-7657
<http://www.cjsland.com>
3/23—Greta Lee, Buffalo Nickel
3/24—Ethan & the Ewox, Lickety Split
3/28—Remi, Ethan & the Ewox, 9 From 10
3/29—Tree Sound Studios: Songwriters in the Round
3/30—Ghost Town

COTTON CLUB (152 Luckie St.)

(404) 688-1193
<http://www.atlantaconcerts.com/cottonclub.asp>
3/23—Sick Speed, Steep
3/24—Stereomud, The Feds
3/28—Our Lady Peace, American Hi-Fi
3/30—Drill 187

DARK HORSE TAVERN (816 N. Highland Ave.)

(404) 873-3607
3/23—Cornbread, The Wood, Falling Up
3/24—Acres, 9 From 10, 6 Against 7
3/28—Slackdaddy, VortexX, Marc English 800
3/29—50 Cent Assassins, Velour, Hundred Dollar Day
3/30—Supafuzz, Drednot, Sing Sing Prison

ECHO LOUNGE (551 Flat Shoals Ave.)

(404) 681-3600
<http://www.echostatic.com/echolounge>
3/23—Drive-By Truckers, Honky, Amy Pike & Anna Kramer
3/24—Bend, Darling Machine, Universal Joint
3/26—Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks, Kingsbury Manx
3/29—Amy Ray, The Butchies
3/30—pH Balance, Tria di Luna

EDDIE'S ATTIC (515 B N. McDonough St.)

(404) 377-4976
<http://www.eddiesattic.com>
3/23—Jennifer Daniels, Billy Cerveny
3/24—Michelle Malone, Daniel Lee
3/25—Straight Up Green, John Lester, Keith Naylor & Asiam
3/28—Grant Livingston, Ed & Rick, Vicki V.
3/29—Commonbond, Karen Reynolds
3/30—Billy Pilgrim, Talia Paul

MASQUERADE (695 North Ave.)

(404) 577-2007
<http://www.masq.com>
3/23—Sepultura, Hatebreed, Flybanger, Puya

3/24—Connected, Roger Sanchez, Aphrodite, Darren Emerson, DJ Klever
3/25—Sloppy Meat Eaters, Whippersnapper, Nuclear Saturday, Clocked In, Stranger by Day
3/29—Nothing Inside, Nekura, Stuff Kittens, Slitch
3/30—Jucifer, X-Impossibles, Syrup

ROXY (3110 Roswell Rd.)

(404) 233-7699
<http://www.atlantaconcerts.com/roxy.asp>
3/28—They Might Be Giants, OK Go

SMITH'S OLDE BAR (1574 Piedmont Ave.)

(404) 875-1522
<http://smithsoldebar.citysearch.com>
3/23—Big Sky, Lithp
3/24—Tommy Thompson Band, Bradley Cole Smith, Mike Plume Band
3/26—Paine's Promise, Crown Electric, Uncle Sideshow
3/28—The Clarks, Brown
3/29—Kevn Kinney, Chuck Carrier
3/30—Cigar Store Indians, David Franklin

STAR BAR (437 Moreland Ave.)

(404) 681-9018
<http://www.doun.com/starbar.html>
3/23—Countdown Quartet, Johnny Dowd
3/24—Mastodon, Bully, Edgewood
3/28—Skylarks, Train Black, More Noise to Go
3/29—Atomsplit, Nillah
3/30—Flash to Bang Time, Alastor, Yum-Yum Tree

TABERNACLE (152 Luckie St.)

(404) 659-9022
<http://www.tabernaclemusic.com>
3/23—Papa Roach, Alien Ant Farm
3/24—Vertical Horizon, Pat McGee Band
3/30—Pantera

VARIETY PLAYHOUSE (1099 Euclid Ave.)

(404) 521-1786
<http://www.varietyplayhouse.com>
3/24—Lee "Scratch" Perry & the Mad Professor
3/27 and 3/28—Djavan, Tropicus 22
3/30—Acoustic/Electric Jazz Is Dead

Check out the *Tourdates* Web site (www.tourdates.com) to see where your favorite bands will be appearing next.

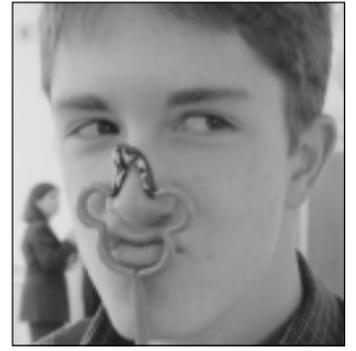
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well i haven't rambled in a long time, so i guess it's appropriate to have another box. or not. we fill this paper with so many random things, it makes me laugh. so let's see. last weekend i went to michigan, next weekend i'm going to boston, and sometime after that, i'm going to palo alto. i still have no idea what i'm going to do next year. anyway, michigan was dang cold. it snowed something like three inches. everyone kept saying they wish i could've had better weather for my visit, but i found the snow fascinating. it was falling! it was sticking! you could make snowballs and snowmen and snow angels! northern people don't realize how amazing this is to a person who has never lived north of charlotte, and who spends her summers in the insufferable heat of houston. now i worry that i am rupturing my eardrums with the volume level of my headphones. i can't hear anyone else even talking. they must've said something funny though.

Genay is in the office! Yay!

**technique:**

come write for us. or take pictures for us. or take pictures *of* us. either way, we'll put all the unflattering ones in the paper. and the scary thing is, you'll learn to love it.



'Human' has no pulse

By Jamie Schulz
The original invisible man

Artist: Rod Stewart
Album: *Human*
Label:
Genre: Rock/Pop
Tracks: 11
Time: 43 minutes
Rating: ★

I previously complained that I didn't like CDs that are excessively short; please now allow me to retract that statement. The time spent listening to this Rod Stewart's *Human* could have been spent much more productively. The entire CD is the same—love song after love song, each with at least one wail or whine from Stewart (as in "Loveless," where he repeatedly screams that he's, well, loveless). The CD also covers a mix of styles, from a calypso beat to some kind of dance track so horrible it seems like even 98 Degrees rejected the track.

It should be noted that this is the first album from Stewart since he had throat surgery. Maybe Rod should have done one of two things—

either spend a little longer rehabilitating, or working on the lyrics. You can only work with what you've got, and Stewart can't work too well with this tripe that someone considers lyrics. "I'm your streetcar Romeo." Be still, my heart.

It seems like Stewart is stuck in a time warp. The songs all have a heavy, 1980s R&B feel to them, complete with cheesy bass and poor keyboard execution. Each song relies too heavily on background vocals, with the singers sighing the last several words that Stewart tried to croon. Therein lies another problem—while Rod's raspy voice may have been sexy in the '70s and '80s, it really doesn't impress anymore.

Only a duet breaks the monotony of this CD. "Don't Come Around Here" features Helicopter Girl, née Jackie Joyce, a self-taught singer and songwriter. It obviously shows, as neither this Girl nor Rod make the song exceptionally easy to listen to. The lyrics are bland, the music is uninspiring, and there is nothing that stands out in the CD. This may be a blessing in disguise, given that no one would really want to remember it anyway.



By Tony Duran / ATLANTIC RECORDS

Rod Stewart is back from a long absence with his new album *Human*. Unfortunately, he still relies on musical stylings from twenty years ago.

"he is in jail."

Have fun with 'Bad Fur Day' for Nintendo 64

By Jamie Schulz
The great mighty who?

Game: Conker's Bad Fur Day
Category: Platform
ESRB rating: Mature
Rating: ★★★★★

From Rare, famous for "Goldeneye" and "Perfect Dark," comes a game that breaks Nintendo's long-held tradition for having cute and non-offensive go hand-in-hand. Think about it: "Mario 64," "Banjo-Kazooie," "Kirby," all of these featured cutesy creatures jumping and running and being, well, cute. True, "Conker's Bad Fur Day" has cute characters, but the cuteness ends there.

Graphics: They follow Rare's normal benchmarking ability. The colors are all vibrant, textures are great, and there is very little frame-rate slowdown. One of the things that will definitely catch the eye is shadowing. Anyone who has played "Banjo-Tooie" knows that there is a well-defined shadow following the bird-and-bear pair. This is the same in with Conker, but even more so.

As his position or the lighting changes, the shadow moves with the light, more than one light will cast several shadows on the ground. The lights even cast their respective colors; in one club scene, green and red disco lights illuminate the surrounding area. Each character is lip-synched to their speech, with his or her own array of facial expressions, and Conker gets the royal treatment. He has an array of expressions, from disgusted to drunk to worried. As one notices in other Rare games, there is often humorous idle action, and Conker has many, from playing

with a yo-yo to pawning through a, er, skin mag (the game is rated "M," after all).

Gameplay: Control is pretty standard across the board: "B" to hit, "A" to jump, "C" pad to move camera angles. My big complaint is in the camera control—it usually tracks behind Conker, and is difficult to choose camera depth. Weapon choice is restricted to a frying pan to clobber enemies, but different situations will allow Conker to arm himself as seen fit.

What also is standard is the world layout, with an over-world connecting the several different levels, each with increasing difficulty (I'm still trying to get through the stupid "war" level).

But what really shines are the cut scenes, and there are many of them. The game doesn't play out like one huge cut scene; there are often large chunks of game play between cut scenes. Yet the scenes are long and often informative, offering insight to the objective in a certain situation. And, of course, there are many spoofs of famous movies.

Weirdest of all is the *Wizard of Oz* homage, but there are many others, ranging from *Saving Private Ryan* (in a glorious beach landing scene, complete with slow-motion camera work) to a quick *Exorcist* parody. These scenes introduce the wide array of characters, from a rather well-endowed flower to a bipolar cog to a baritone mound of excrement.

Sound: The player has the choice of Dolby Surround, stereo, or mono. Once again, Rare shines with its orchestrations, rivaling that of Konami in the eerie music department. In the "Spooky" level, the music centers

on strings and keyboard, with the odd selection of children's laughs or cries in the background, which mainly adds to the creepiness. The music changes to fit the surroundings throughout the game, and always comes through crystal-clear, causing me to stop game play just to listen.

Another aspect of the game is that all speech is actually spoken! This is probably the biggest reason that the game play is so short (about 15-16 hours), but this is just another thing that makes "Conker's Bad Fur Day" different. Each character has a unique voice, keyed to the appearance of the character (the pitchfork has a country accent, or one close enough).

Multiplayer: These modes are about what you'd find in other games—capture the flag, a race, and death mode. Two-player mode is fine enough, but adding a third or fourth will severely hurt the frame rate. Fun, but nothing to write home about.

Overall, it seems that this may be the perfect swan song for Nintendo. Sure, another *Pokemon Stadium* is around the corner, but there doesn't seem to be that much for the Nintendo 64, since it seems that the Gamecube is soon to bow-possibly as early as this fall.

While the game passes much too quickly, it won't soon tire the player, as he or she will want to go back to catch things that may have been missed the first time played. If the lewd and suggestive language and graphic violence that gives the game its "M" rating are overlooked, what lies beneath is a truly stellar game that stands out as a sample of what the Nintendo designed the 64 to showcase.