Melissa Ferrick releases album with a performance feel

By Robert Hill
Contributing Writers

There are two ways in which a singer/songwriter can touch her fan base: in the studio or on the road. Although Melissa Ferrick has proven herself to be an accomplished studio artist, having worked with both Atlantic and WARC records, it is through the intimacy and intensity of her live music that she has formed her identity as an artist. Her music demands to be heard live. Those that had not heard her live performances were only getting half the picture. Up until now, that is.

Ferrick’s latest album, Listen Hard, combines the passion of a live performance with the engineered polish of a studio album. Listen Hard is the second release on her independent label, Right On Records, but it is hardly a sophomore endeavor. This offering joins Ferrick’s collection of seven studio and two live albums, and proves to be the most technically ambitious and lyrically mature release to date. Listen Hard flickers with quicksilver purpose and bridges issues of vulnerability, heartache, anger and self-assurance that speak of an artist who has found her identity as a performer. She recently took time out after her Birmingham, Alabama, show to speak with the Technique about her latest album, touring the country with a guitar and concert schedule and her life as an independent artist.

Technique: In May it will be a year since Listen Hard was released, quite a while for an indie artist to hold onto an album. How are you approaching the promotion and touring for this album differently than with previous albums?

Ferrick: I’m intentionally trying to hold on to the album longer than usual without releasing anything, anything new. Record releases should last about a year or a little more, so I’m giving it time to get passed around. Listen Hard has a definite edge and sounds a lot more like a live show than previous studio albums. Has this evolution in your sound been intentional?

Ferrick: It’s definitely intentional because playing live is my greatest strength. Vocally, the album is all one-take performances because I was trying to close the line between live shows and studio work.

Technique: Listen Hard has a definite edge and sounds a lot more like a live show than previous studio albums. Has this evolution in your sound been intentional?

Ferrick: I’m proud of the one thing all of my albums have in common is that I think I’ve consistently gotten a little better with each one. I don’t feel like I’ve ever put out a lesser album than the previous one.

Melissa Ferrick, an indie artist, recently released her second album off of her own label. The album is a mix of live performances with a studio finish. She will be performing in Atlanta on April 5 at the Red Light Café.

Bridgetown offers Caribbean flair without leaving the country

By Vivian Vakili, Meg Monaco
Contributing Writers

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Contributing Writers

Name: Bridgetown Grill
Address: 689 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: (404) 873-5361
Website: www.bridgetowngrill.com
Price: $$
Rating: ★★★ out of 5

Bridgetown Grill, Jamaica itself... or so one might be led to believe upon indulging in the delectable cuisine. Bridgetown not only offers perfectly scrumptious food, but also offers a lovely atmosphere as well as a pleasant and accommodating staff. After parking at the Georgian Terrace (since Bridgetown validates parking there), we sat along the window and had a view of the Fox Theatre across Peachtree Street. Bridgetown has a few locations around Atlanta, but the closest to Tech is on Peachtree Street, very much within walking distance. Because of its proximity to the Fox, it would serve as an ideal after-show restaurant as well.

The restaurant itself is very colorful and decorative with something of a Calypso Caribbean atmosphere. The lights are dim, but not too dim, and the reggae music adds to the island feel. The restaurant wasn't necessarily what sparsely populated upon our arrival, so we were consequently approached and seated immediately.

We ordered the appetizer sampler, which included fried calamari, conch fritters, and jerk wings. Do not fret, vegetarian! The pineapple bread appetizer is great as well (we’ve had it before).

For those of you traumatized by the fact that you are somewhere other than El Amigo on a Friday night, be comforted by the fact that they offer nachos as an appetizer as well. And for those of you who are just never satisfied, they offer about eight other appetizer choices as well. Other side items include the Black and White soup, which we enthusiastically recommend.

As for drinks, we ordered limeade and a Caribbean soda (mix of tropical fruit juices). Both were very delicious, but keep in mind that refills are not free, and soft drinks are over $2.00 each. For the main course, the carnivore ordered the Jamaican Burrito ($11.99), the vegetarian ordered the Guava Barbecue Ribs ($13.99), and the herbivore ordered the Vegetarian Burrito ($9.99). The herbivore wants to take a moment to let you know that the vegetarian selection is very exciting and accommodating. Also, nearly every meal comes with black beans, rice, and either plantains or island salad.

Pricy, yes, but plentiful and genuine—very good. And if your entry does not come with it, you should make sure to order a side of plantains. The desserts are rather decadent. We ordered the Voodoo chocolate cake, but seeing as the meals are quite filling and the desserts are a little pricy, you can probably still get a full meal ordering the standard cuisine.

All in all, we have to concur that it was a lovely meal, in a lovely atmosphere, on a lovely day, enjoyed by a lovely trio. This is T Rex, Stegosaurus, and Brontosaurus signing off... until next time... reminding you that gluttony is not one of the seven deadly sins, but rather one of the seven heavenly sins.
INCOHERENT SCRIBBLINGS by Matt Norris

SO ANNY - WHY DID YOU GET INTO MALORDER BRIDGE?

IN RUSSIA, THE MEN ARE NO GOOD. MEN DRINK VODKA ALL DAY, WATCH TELEVISION SCREENS, SCRATCH THEIR BUTTS. THEY DO NOTHING! I WANT SOMETHING MORE FROM LIFE - THIS IS MAYBE WHAT FOREIGN AMERICAN MAN CAN GIVE ME...

HEY, MAGNUS, I SAY WE DO SHOTS AND GET GOOD N’ TRASHED BEFアーE WE GO TO BOB’S LAN PARTY TONIGHT!!!
**Song and dance fill the cinema of India**

By Eric Christ

The Lantern

(U-WIRE) Ohio State University—The international film sections of most video stores are often the most overlooked by American audiences, evident by the thin layer of dust which clings to the skippable selection of videos filed in the foreign section at mainstream video stores such as Blockbuster Video.

But as the popular cinema of India, known as Bollywood, begins to gain international popularity, this may soon change.

Cinema in India started with the traveling film shows of the Lumiere brothers, innovators of the motion picture, who brought the medium to the attention of a number of countries, said Dina Bangdel, visiting associate professor at Ohio State University. Bangladesh is teaching a course dealing with issues of identity in Bollywood cinema.

“Film for India has always sort of been at the cutting edge, and presently they make more than 900 films a year,” she said.

Ron Green, professor of film studies, said the film industry in India is serious business.

“It is the second largest industry in the world, and has been for decades behind the U.S., so it is an enormous industry,” he said.

**Film for India has always sort of been at the cutting edge...they make more than 900 films a year.**

Dina Bangdel

Professor, Ohio State

Indian films must contain a mixture of elements, such as musical dance numbers and action sequences, to properly create the formula of a popular Bollywood film, Bangdel said.

“The other thing that’s really interesting about Indian cinema is it has to have a certain, what they call, formula or ingredients, and the term that popular films use is what they call masala. And masala means the spices that one uses in cooking,” she said.

A major difference between the Western moviemarket experience and Indian moviemarket experience is the audience reaction to the films.

“It’s definitely a different environment,” Aparna Dutta, president of the Indian Students Association, said. “It’s a lot rowdier; people make a lot of noise. It’s not like you have to be quiet the whole time like theaters here. It’s more than just laughing out loud or something. It’s like whooping at a pretty girl or making comments about what just happened, loud comments so everybody can hear it. It’s a lot more enthusiastic, I guess.”

Bangdel said during action sequences, the audience often cheers and interacts in a way that would be unusual to the Western filmmaker.

Several important characteristics of Indian films set them apart from American films.

“Even before the films come out, the soundtracks are released so everybody knows the songs,” said Chris Stults, curatorial assistant in the film and video department at the Ohio State Wexner Center. “Then it’s a much more interactive experience when you’re watching the film, since everybody’s kind of familiar with the songs already.”

Western filmmakers might be turned off by the singing and dancing and far-fetched scenarios, but these things are what give the films their entertainment value.

Kerry Brown, a graduate student who is taking Bangdel’s cinema class, said she was initially turned off by the idea of Bollywood films because of the singing and the dancing, but after one film she was hooked.

“There’s always a happy ending. There’s always this sort of escape from reality,” she said.

Brown said Bollywood cinema focuses on escapism and not on the graphic depiction of reality, as it often is in the West.

Genevieve Reiner, a graduate student in art history, said a Western viewer must suspend disbelief to enjoy this kind of entertainment because of the fantastic scenarios and non-sequits in the films.

“They’re not made to reflect reality; they are made to make you forget your life and to forget the everyday. We tend not think like that,” she said.

This approach to filmmaking has a value beyond a simple escape from reality, Stults said.

“A lot of Westerners, they think of it as really hokey, cheesy fun, but there’s more to it than that. It’s another type of filmmaking and with a good film it can just be a rapturous, transcendent experience where it doesn’t obey the formal boundaries that a Western film would. It’s just completely unchained,” he said.

In the past, it was difficult to find subtitled versions of the films, making them inaccessible to a non-English-speaking audience.

With an increased number of Indians living abroad, and DVD technology, this problem is vanishing, Stults said.

American audiences seeking Bollywood films can find the more popular titles in most video stores, but those seeking the less popular titles can try Indian markets and the library, Brown said.

The films at Wexner are a welcome change to some people.

“We all get swept up in what Hollywood expects us to watch, and society tells us what’s good or bad,” Reiner said. “Every now and then if you go outside of the box, you’ll find a gem of a movie.”

**By Joseph Jeong**

Contributing Writer

“The circus is in town, the circus is in town, but this is not your father’s circus anymore!” If Cirque du Soleil wanted to use a cliché slogan, that could be it. But Cirque du Soleil is anything but tired, hence it doesn’t have to resort to using gimmicky catch phrases to capture its audience. Its colorful and extravagant acts do that well enough without any help from marketing.

The latest production by Cirque du Soleil is called Varekai (proounced ver-ay-kie), which means “wherever” in the Roman language of the gypsies. Written and directed by Dominic Champagne, Varekai is the story of a young man named Icarus, who falls from the sky and finds himself in the extraordinary world of Varekai, a place deep within a forest, at the summit of a volcano, where the extraordinary can be ordinary. It is here that Icarus discovers a whole new world of possibilities and even loves.

Varekai is an extravagant and colorful experience that pushes not just Icarus’ mind to the limits, but also the audience’s. The moment one enters the trademark blue and yellow Grand Chapiteau, it is as if one is transported to a whole new world of color, sound and even physics. Amazing acrobatics defy gravity, while the color and sound assault one’s senses to their limits in the world of Varekai.

Varekai is split into 15 acts, seven before the intermission and eight after, and it is bookehorned by the two best acts: “Flight of Icarus” and “Russian Swings.” “Flight of Icarus” is a subdued opening act that introduces the protagonist. It is a stunning display of aerial acrobatics that defies the fall of Icarus from the heavens. “Russian Swings” is, of course, a more vibrant and colorful finale that celebrates the rebirth of Icarus in the world of Varekai, but its aerial acrobatics are just as breathtaking and amazing.

Cirque du Soleil will be in town until April 13 before moving on to New York City. There is one performance on Tuesday, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and two performances on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. There are no performances on Mondays. Unfortunately, there are no discounts for college students. Tickets are priced from $45 to $65, and they can be ordered online at www.cirquefaces.com or by phone at 1-800-678-5440.

If you have never been to a Cirque du Soleil performance, you should try to catch this unique act before it leaves town. It’s an experience worth the price of admission and then some.

**By Jean-Francois Gratton / CIRQUE DU SOLEIL**
By Joey Katzen
Staff Writer

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acw, I’ve written more honest songs. I don’t play many of the songs from that album live because they are bare-bones songs and very personal. On “Listen Hard there are songs like “Marie in the Middle” and “Fighting Chance” that are real and written honestly.

The only song that doesn’t really fit in is “Back in Love” because it’s more of a quintessential pop song. It’s on the album, though, because of the great line of: “Can you love me til I’m strong enough, can you love me for the both of us?”

It all sometimes takes is a great line and a great chorus for a song to work. Succeeding in making an album with 11 or 12 songs you’re completely happy with is hard to do—there’s hardly any CD that you listen to from beginning to end without skipping a song.

Technique: What do you do in the van when you are driving all over the country? What kind of music do you listen to?

Ferrick: We listen to all sorts of stuff—all kinds of music. We also play a lot of video games because we have PlayStation 2. We watch a lot of movies and I like to drive most of the time so I like to listen to the movies.

We sometimes have a friend that opens for us so it’s nice to have someone new in the car besides just me, Jen (the road manager), and Brian Winton (Ferrick’s drummer). Right now we’re touring with Anne Heaton and we were with Stephen Kellogg in Birmingham.

As far as records go, we listen to Lyle Lovett a lot and Ani DiFranco and some other artists. I am releasing a live CD this year for the fans. I also signed a licensing deal in Canada, and they are going to release Listen Hard, and the first single will be “All for Me.” Part of that deal is that I won’t release anything new for a year to give the album time to get radio play.

Technique: Any venue horror stories?

Ferrick: Most venues are great and there are just too many great ones that we try to hit every tour to name. I’m looking forward to being back in Atlanta, and I’ve heard the Red Light Café is a great venue.
Echo Lounge (553 Flat Shoals Rd.)
[Email: echo@echoatl.com]
3/14 LARVAE/Chris Can/T DJ Mafioso
3/15 Mr. Money/Sandik/T he Raveemotos
3/16 Turboinco/Asphalt Bacter
3/18 Persian Booka
3/20 The Auden Set/The Qualis/Hello
3/22 Off By One/My Hard Year/United

Clf’s Landing (Backbeat Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 237-7657]
www.clfdpling.com
3/14 Bean Bonds Theory/Julius Bragg
3/21 Crashing at Dawn
3/22 Hard Virtue/Exactus

Smith’s Olde Bar (1530 Piedmont Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 975-5222]
www.smithsbar.com
3/14 Hot August Knights/Y.O.U.
3/15 The Bradley Cole Smith Band
3/16 The Clarke/Perry Schmidt
3/17 Recoveride Drive/Stuart Douglas Band
3/18 David Ryan Harris/Mindy Smith
3/19 Dan Bemo/Kerry Snyder
3/20 Kevin Kennedy Band/Honey Child
3/21 Mason Jennings/Crooked Fingers
3/23 The Pleasure Club/Lesmore/Edgewood
3/25 HEM/Atlanta/Pierz
3/24 The Suggestions/Monticello Road/Sol

Variety Playhouse (1099 Euclid Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 321-7186]
www.variety-playhouse.com
3/19 Cat Power
3/20 Kathleen Edwards & John Eddie
3/21 Project/Object
3/23 Jump, Leslie Childen
3/23 Aaron Neville Quartet
3/25 Macy Gray

MaconEats (509 North Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 577-3907]
www.maconeats.com
3/17 The Fire Theft
3/20 Hate Eternal/Dying Fetus/Kataklysm

Cotton Club (352 Luckie St.)
[Phone: (404) 688-1295]
www.atlantaconcerts.com/cottonclub.asp
3/15 Swirchfoot
3/17 The Dismas
3/18 The Soundtrack of Our Lives
3/23 Duncan Shilt

Star Bar (457 Moreland Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 681-9018]
www.starbar.net
3/14 Tom Collins/Go Lucky/Arripecker
3/15 Laree/K
3/19 Bad Wizard/The Witnesses
3/20 Ware River Club/Blues
3/21 Jimmy and the Teasers/The A-Sides
3/22 Cigar Store Indian/Staccato

The Earl (488 Flat Shoals Ave.)
[Phone: (404) 522-3950]
www.theearl.com
3/14 Mispal/Mantissa/Pagoda
3/15 Blue Eye/Spoozalious/Bong
3/16 Oxos/Cdn McGombs
3/17 Eron Mandell/Davey Rayley
3/18 Bob Leg/Bob/Boeke & Serge/Drunkhorne
3/19 Viagran Falls/The Suntanista
3/20 Tod Luck/Pharmacine/The Oranges Band
3/21 Cape Vance/New Brunswick
3/22 The Features/The Yum Yum Tree

Tubarock (352 Luckie St.)
[Phone: (404) 589-0022]
www.atlantaconcerts.com/tubarock.asp
3/21 Earl Scruggs

I had one morning when I was co-sleeping and walking to the good ole Matta station at about 6:00 a.m. Because of where I live and because of all the construction around, I take a number of shortcuts to the station. One of these involves walking along a dirt path that is in full view of a major road. Well, this particular morning, there was a bum walking maybe 25 yards ahead of me, and when he got to the dirt path, he stopped. I thought this was a little odd, so I slowed my pace and approached cautiously. The man was just standing in the middle of this dirt path. What could be going on, I wondered? Is he meditating on the situation with bin Laden? Or worried about how the tax break will affect his peddling? Or is he just waiting on a drug exchange? The answer soon became obvious. The sound was small at first, but grew to an undeniable roar. It started as the sound of a light rain, but grew to the noise of water from a hose pounding the ground. You guessed it—this bum had stopped to make a urinal out of my path to work. Part of me wanted to laugh, part of me wished I had a video camera, and another part wanted to give him a nice little nudge in the back. What did I decide to do? Well, I was pretty sure he didn’t know I was behind him, and I was not going to pass up an opportunity to embarrass such a noble citizen, so I decided I was going to walk past him (way off the path of course, because I was not going to walk in the mud) and ask, “How’s it hanging?” Obviously, this surprised the creature (I call him creature because no man that has ever taken advantage of his ability to drain lizards standing up would react the way that he did). When he noticed there was someone infringing on his blissful state, he started walking forward to stay ahead of me! In fact, he started almost running, without ever stopping the flow of the water works! I don’t want to know how wet his clothes got. But there is a lesson to be learned here: no matter how much you shake and dance, the last few drops are going in the pants. So please, take advantage of the wonderfully amusing abundant resource we have in Atlanta, commonly known as welfare recipients, and then, when you are looking back on your free entertainment laughing hysterically, remember you have your friendly neighborhood Two Bits man to thank.