

## Bambino's legend lives in new 'adult' biography

Babe—the legend comes to life  
Pocket Books  
\$2.50

My father first taught me about baseball when I was a kid growing up in Brooklyn. He was, of all things, a Yankee fan. That is miraculous when you consider that we were living only a short subway ride from the mecca of all Dodgerdom: Ebbets Field.

So my baseball childhood was slightly different from others around me. I was told little stories about Joe DiMaggio and Phil Rizzuto, Gehrig and Dickey—Ruth. I had automatic, built-in pride. I was a Yankee.

Of course, I'd admit to friends that Willie Mays was a better fielder than Mickey Mantle, and that Duke Snider could swing a pretty good stick. But, at heart, I was a Yankee.

In junior high school, I read stories about the lives of all the

Yankee stars to satisfy my book report requirements. And it was not until now that I even considered reading another one. But this time I didn't read the biography of Babe Ruth. I read the diary of America.

Great scholars may someday devote their entire lives to the study of American culture. We have a neon suddenness that canonizes traditions easily—traditions from ideas which occurred to us only yesterday.

Our game is predicted on speed. In fact, in 200 short years, we have accelerated not only our own growth process, but that of the whole world as well.

If we may compare the life of our young nation to that of a child, we see that we have already gone through our most painful period of growth. We have lost our sense of wonder. We are no longer innocent—and you may say that is all for the better if it weren't for one drawback:

We have lost our heroes. In fact, in these post-Vietnam/Watergate doldrums, most of us have forgotten what they are. And that is why it is difficult for us to understand that stature that Babe Ruth occupied for the American public.

His power extended far beyond the baseball diamond. He became the living embodiment of the aspirations of a whole generation. He had money—big money—during the Depression. He rebelled against authority and was totally undisciplined. He drank to excess and seldom went to bed just to sleep. He never had to train. And yet, all the while—well, you already know what I'm almost too embarrassed to say. He was one of the greatest players of all time.

How big was Ruth? In 1928, in a pre-inflation era of mild income taxes, he was paid \$80,000 a year to play right field and keep the cash registers ringing. When he made his salary demand to the management, the owners said "Babe, do you realize that's more money than the President of the United States is paid?" Ruth thought for a moment. "Yeah, but I had a better year than he did," he replied. And in retrospect, he may have been right about Hoover.

Creamer is an able biographer.



## Big bands slated for WOW Hall

### Saunders heads list



Larry Coryell

A bevy of bands will be coming to the Community Center for the Performing Arts, 8th and Lincoln, over the break. Those in town may wish to pay heed.

First on the list is the Merl Saunders Band. They will be performing on Sunday, June 6, for two shows. Saunders has been renowned for more than a decade for his virtuoso keyboard work, first as a popular studio musician, then, after signing a contract with Fantasy Records in 1968, as a recording star in his own right. He has released five records for Fantasy, the latest of which is entitled, "You Can Leave Your Hat On," featuring Saunders' son, Terry, on bass.

Saunders is perhaps best known for his association with the Grateful Dead. He has "sat in" with them in concert as well as appearing on a number of their albums. Jerry Garcia, lead guitarist for the Dead, and Saunders have released an album of collaborative works on Fantasy Records, called, "Live at Keystone."

Saunders brings with him to Eugene a six-piece band and an evening of dancing on the largest dance floor in town.

Tickets are \$3 in advance, available at the Sun Shop, the Crystalship, Everybody's Records, or the Performing Arts Center. Tickets will be \$3.50 at the door.

Showtimes for the two shows are 8:30 and 10:30 p.m.

Next on the list is Larry Rasperberry and the High Steppers. Their performance is at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8.

"In The Pink" is recorded on Backroom Records, the group's own label.

This date marks the first time the group has come to the Eugene area. They promise an evening of exciting music and heavy dancing.

The prices and ticket outlets are the same as above.

On Friday, the 11th of June, Eugene's own Wheatfield will boogie from 9:30 to 1 a.m. Tickets are \$1.50 in advance and \$2 at the door.

Larry Coryell, a rather innovative guitarist, and his group The Eleventh House will do two shows on Monday, June 14th.

Coryell had what might be termed a classic jazz education. He grew up listening to several musical idols of his younger years which amounts to a massive list of guitar all-stars, the acknowledged masters of that instrument from the last forty years.

As Coryell's following has developed, along with his career, his music has provided a bridge for the mass audience that has only begun to show an interest in crossing over from rock to jazz.

After playing in groups with Chico Hamilton and Gary Burton, it took Coryell several years to get his current group, The Eleventh House, into a viable recording and performing situation. Coryell spent some time recording in various musical settings before establishing that he would indeed have to have a group of his own to define a firm identity.

After playing with Herbie Mann on "Memphis Underground," he recorded an album under his own



Merl Saunders

name entitled "Spaces." That album featured the talents of John McLaughlin, Chick Corea, Miroslav Vitous, and Billy Cobham. Hailed as "one of the most beautiful, perfectly realized instrumental albums in a long while" by Bob Palmer in Rolling Stone, the record went unnoticed until recently when the individual successes of each of those musicians sparked a re-discovery.

Coryell and Eleventh House have released their first album for Arista, "Level One." It was produced by Skip Drinkwater at Electric Lady Studios in New York.

Coryell feels that he and the band have gained valuable experience working together over

the past couple of years and that now the group is on the brink of broad public acceptance.

"Now," he says on the press release, "especially when young people are a whole lot more sophisticated, I think people are looking for enlightenment, not escape. There's a big difference between creating and performing, and I feel the really great jazz performers feel it their duty to create. The Eleventh House makes me concentrate on the total musicality of the product rather than just a guitarist for a backup group.

Their performances are at 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. for \$3 in advance and \$3.50 at the door. See above for ticket outlets. / by Bob Webb.

## MFA thesis exhibits 'outstanding'

The MFA thesis exhibit that opened at the University Museum of Art Sunday has some excellent art, and many of the works in the 16-person show are outstanding.

One of the most immediately attractive aspects of the exhibit—which incidentally is very handsomely installed—is the amount of three-dimensional work included. Four fine sculptures by Steve Gillman stand in the foyer. They are worked from local basalt, reportedly a very stubborn stone. But Gillman manages to develop a fine, satiny finish which he juxtaposes effectively with passages of rough stone.

Frank N. Young also uses polished stone, but introduces organic materials as well. Of his three pieces in the north gallery, "Dream" is particularly tense and compelling: a great dark polished stone within a free-standing brass frame, swinging gently by a slim cord over a fragile glass-topped case.

One more sculptor shares gallery space with Young: John Shreve, whose work, mostly in marble, shows a preoccupation with curvilinear forms in space. There is more on the walls: prints by Brynn Jensen and Steven Dombi. Jensen isolates and dramatizes natural forms like onions, and natural forces like the tree-swirling, curtain-lifting wind, in the black and white medium of lithography. Dombi experiments with arrangements of point and line in several print media: engraving, etching, and color lithograph.

In the corner of the gallery is one of the treats of the exhibit: the work of the jewelers and the porcelain potter. Gayla Faustman has executed a number of striking "Large Necklaces," mostly in silver. They are heavy, almost baroque works, hinged in back and designed to circle the neck and lie grandly on the chest.

John W. Hinrichs' pendants seem more precious, both in design and in the use of gems. His work is engagingly titled: "Anti-Rape Ring," "Medusa with Garnets," "Pendant with Sense."

The ceramics artist is Rona Nager. She shows a row of hand-built plates and cups with beautiful translucent glazes and fluid natural motifs. At each end she displays porcelain and mixed-media dolls: "Sun Doll," "Nijinsky Dancing the Afternoon of the Faun," and a touchingly stiff and open-faced "Family."

Gallery IC across the way is dominated by Charles Johnson's "Polyplexus I." Johnson includes a drawing and a statement with his walk-in construction of mirror-faceted modules.

In another corner is George Jacky's "Screens," four connected panels with prints on the front, a surprise in back, and a message: "You destroy the illusion. What is left—an illustration. Garbage! Junk!"

John Vinklarek's "Still Spirals" are variations on a single form: a sort of double-axis shape rendered large and with totemic presence in a variety of woods—and metal, in the case of the largest—in interaction with a variety of bases.

Gary Buckendorf's big, expressive paintings and drawings round out the gallery. It's interesting to compare his oil paintings of a pool hall scene, with their angry colors and impasto treatment, with the charcoal study of the same subject.

The last gallery of the MFA exhibit is also a mix of monumental sculpture and big canvases. Susan Jewett's giant "Interus" is a huge tripod form of marvelously textural orange sisal.

James Coates also contributes sculpture to this gallery; a witty devolution of form in "Burning Bulbs," a sort of breeding screen of hexagonal wood shapes in "Hex Growth," and an elaborately crafted "Star Gazer" which invites you to look in one star and out another.

Allison Asbjornsen's large oil composition uses bold flat pattern and a relatively subdued palette of browns, greens, yellows.

Jennifer Agnew's design elements, on the other hand, are small patches of acrylic and crayoned line; from her dither of high color emerge large geometric forms, such as the circle in "Spring 76" or the broad curve in "Visions of Vascular Bundles."

Reviewers are often accused of emphasizing their favorites. I will confess mine, but compensate by placing him last.

Each of David Rich's large oils is of a single standing figure, developed almost architecturally from blocky, static forms. Each is still and literally faceless in a dense, closed space.

The MFA show will be up until June 13, and it's worth the time.

They said it couldn't be done. They said a two-hour movie that attempted to explore the complex personality of W.C. Fields could not help but be shallow, a glossy sit-com that would focus on symptoms rather than causes. They said that no actor could capture the real Fields, and that any who tried would end up appearing to do a two-hour impersonation. They said that some quality performances could win sympathy and perhaps grudging respect from the audience, but in the end the whole affair would end up rambling and pointless.

They were right. The root of the problem of "W.C. Fields and Me" is that the image that each of us has of Fields is of him waddling around on a television screen, black and white, nine inches tall, and flickering. Theoretically, a skillful actor who was similarly shrunk, de-colored and flickered might have a chance of pulling off the impersonation, but when Rod Steiger's made-up face is blown up to 17-foot color feet from flabby chin to receding hairline, it ends up looking more like Rod Steiger's made-up blown-up face than anything else.

But even if one overlooks the fact that Steiger's visual impression is more reminiscent of "In the Heat of the Night" than "The Bank Dick," the problem of how to write a movie script of Field's life still presents a puzzle. It is an insoluble puzzle, apparently, for the script of "W.C. Fields and Me" is a mish-mash of loose ends and trite sayings that aims at outlining the relationship between Fields and his mistress Carlotta (Valerie Perrine) and ends up with such useless scenarios as four, count 'em, four urination sight gags. Perrine as Carlotta does her best to weave around such inane redundancy, but in the end she comes across as trapped not so much by Field's possessiveness as by a lousy script. Add to this the character of Field's son, who was apparently thrown in simply to show that Fields had a son, and the result is a collection of scenes and people who seem slightly embarrassed at finding themselves in the same movie together.

There are a few bright spots. Director Arthur Hiller does a masterful job of period-grabbing, and puts together some scenes so scrumptious that one is tempted to eat them with a fork. Perrine also manages to squeak through with a few bright moments, especially in her opening scenes. And Steiger, though the mercenary color-transmitting camera eye of Cinemascope makes success impossible, does as well as anyone could have done under the circumstances. But the obstacles were just too great, and those who said it couldn't be done have earned their right to be smug, because this film, try though it might, just doesn't do it. / by Brad Lemley.

# CINEMA

Two opinions

## 'W.C. and me' succeeds...

If you write off viewing the movie "W.C. Fields and Me," now playing at the Valley River Twin, because you expect it to simply be another movieland attempt to cash in on our misguided nostalgia cravings, you'll miss a fine picture. You don't need to be a diehard Field's freak to thoroughly enjoy the movie either. It's got something for anyone who likes a flick filled with a lot of belly laughs, some sensitive performances, and even a few tears—and who doesn't love a movie like that?

Rather than creating a picture that is simply a cardboard caricature of Hollywood and its greats, like the recent "Gable and Lombard," director Arthur Hiller has combined a virtuoso performance by Rod Steiger as Fields with an authentic recreation of America in the 30's and 40's to emerge with what's sure to be a big money-maker.

Steiger could easily be a gigantic flop in his attempt to capture Field's tremendously complicated and contradictory personality, but his portrayal is so convincing that after 15 minutes or so you forget that it's really not the genuine Fields on the screen. We see

both sides of Fields—the alcoholic male chauvinist child-hater, as well as the extremely intelligent, super-insecure human being worthy of our compassion. Sometimes the audience doesn't know whether to laugh or cry at Field's ego-protecting wall of humor. In the end, though, you can't help loving the good side of the man more than the bad.

The supporting cast in the movie also does a fine job. Valerie Perrine as Field's "mistress" compliments Steiger well and Jack Cassidy as John Barrymore redeems himself from the stomach-turning image he's made as a regular on the daytime game show circuit. And the drinking party scenes with Fields, Barrymore, and friends are among the films funniest—and most pathetic—ones.

All in all, it's a picture easily worth the admission price. Seeing Fields standing on a second-floor balcony in a Mexican border town and watering down a visiting American politician (I don't mean with a hose either) has got to be worth a couple of bucks to anyone in this election year. / by Mike Stewart.

## ...except when it fails

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Chinese bookie...

## Cassavetes uses maverick style

John Cassavetes has been making films since 1960, when he pioneered a new style of filmmaking. His pictures employ long scenes, ragged camera work and improvisatory acting to bring complete honesty and realism to the screen. His latest film, "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" will play on campus this weekend.

Cassavetes' best films, like "Husbands" and "Woman Under the Influence" have explored relationships. Where "Woman" was the story of a woman coming apart, "Chinese Bookie" describes a man suffering the same fate, for different reasons. It is the story of Cosmo Vitelli, skillfully portrayed by Ben Gazzara, in what many critics have called his best performance.

Vitelli is a nightclub owner. The elements of running the club: glamour, money, and a particular kind of power lead to an indivisible attachment between club and owner. This intimate relationship, as meaningful as any marriage, is presented by Cassavetes with

realism that strikes uncomfortably close at times.

Cassavetes' unique style springs from his ability to "stage" reality. He sets up situations, encourages the actors to develop their scenes, and films them in the style of a snooping cameraman. He also breaks things up because he wants the viewer to feel, not read, what's going on. This jagged technique, characteristic of all his movies, has brought sharply divergent opinion. He is the kind of director you either love or hate.

This approach to storytelling has made Cassavetes somewhat of a maverick. He finances his films himself, without help from Hollywood studios, and draws his actors from a repertory company which includes his wife, mother, father, and best friends. The result is a film that resembles truth far more closely than the carefully structured, slick fictions of conventional Hollywood cinema.

"Chinese Bookie" has a

hypnotic effect on an audience. It is difficult to identify with the often bizarre characters and situations. Cassavetes uses them to show that there is humanity in even the strangest of specimens. He doesn't rely on sex or violence to titillate an audience, but rather to show the dead-end life style of Vitelli, living on the knife's edge of a world of loan sharks and hired killers. Cassavetes is not a finger pointer. He shows, he does not tell.

Cassavetes has created a work that is second to none in the crucial topic of why people act the way they do. Some viewers may be disturbed by the lack of light pacing and straightforward drama, but Cassavetes' triumph is in his ultimate honesty.

"The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" will be shown this Friday, June 4, at 180 PLC at 5, 7:30, and 10 p.m. Admission is only \$1, which is the best deal you're likely to come across before vacation. / by Ken Warren.

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