

& Ampersand

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New Contributors

KEN BEEGLE (On Disc) is a 22-year-old Denverite who migrated 25 miles to Boulder to get his education in the ways of the world. Among other things, he likes pizza.

LORRAINE BOSWELL (Photo, On Tour), 21, is an Animal Science major at the University of California at Davis.

SAM EMERSON (Photo, & Out the Other) is a hotshot Hollywood photographer who's snapped so many famous faces he probably doesn't remember them all.

BECKY SUE EPSTEIN (On Disc) received her M.A. in Middle English from the University of Bristol, England. There being little need for Chaucerian scholars in Los Angeles (now they tell her!) Becky spends her time listening to music, reading books and writing.

PAUL HELFORD (In Print) is a late-night TV movie host and sales director for KOZY-TV in Eugene, Oregon.

THOMAS MARTIN (In Print) is a 30-year-old journalism major at Central Michigan University. Before that he ran a record store.

JOEL PATTERSON (On Tour) is a 20-year-old creative writing student at San Francisco State; he also plays guitar in a "sort of reggae" band. "We started as punks," he says, "but we've matured."

JAYSON Q. WECHTER (On Tour) is a San Francisco freelancer whose work has appeared in *Cracked*, *Sick* and *Crazy* as well as the more off-beat *New West* and *Boston Real Paper*.

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IN ONE EAR...

Aw, Give the Kid a Break

As Jeffrey Hudson puts it in your March issue, can't you find some better material with which to frame your advertising? *Ampersand*, for all its sophisticated packaging, would seem to be written for less than bright groupies. I hope that your opinion of college students is a little better than that.

Your March cover implies that there is a lengthy article on Martin Mull inside: the article, taking up much less space than the two photographs of the subject, was disappointing. Who cares if Martin Mull and his girlfriend "neck publicly," and that Hank Nuwer thinks they must have a lively love life? Did Nuwer run out of serious information from the interview, or did he think he was writing for *Playgirl* again?

Chris Clark's album reviews are even sillier. He (she?) evidently knows something about current music, but seems too interested in his own proud state of jadedness, slinging names and far-fetched metaphors at random, and being cutesy and clever, to talk about music. Come off it, C.C., your mental idiosyncrasies aren't that interesting, and your bombastic prose stinks. Better watch the dumb cracks about "thilly thavages," too.

Most of your regular feature are eminently forgettable at best and downright bad work otherwise. "& Out the Other" borders on viciousness, but maybe that's inherent in gossip columns. Jacoba Atlas' review of *Coming Home* was well done, and Ed Cray was informative on Bach — couldn't you have spared him a little more space for such a large topic?

Over all, the blatantly commercial nature of your ... magazine? is offensive. I'd suggest that if you want us to keep looking at your big slick ads for albums you should bribe us with a little more intelligent writing. If that's impossible then at least prominently label your publication as an advertisement, lest someone briefly mistake *Ampersand* for an attempt at journalism.

MELODY IVINS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL

I'm writing in response to two glaring injustices done by one Chris Clark in your March issue. The first was his review of Jackson Browne's latest album; the other was his use of "cheap substitute" regarding Rush, among others, in his *Starz* review. Something should be said in defense of these two musical entities. Jackson Browne is the epitome of self-expression through music. He writes with gut feelings, emotions with which we have all come into contact. He deals with real life at the individual level — as a man, a lover, a musician, a human. Rush base many of their lyrics on literary works, some of which are undisputed classics. They show intelligent reflection on our society. Science fiction epics, like *2112*, warn us of what is in store for us, should our world continue on its present course. As for the music, both Rush and Jackson Browne implement basic major and minor chords for a specific reason — the vast majority of our

society can best identify with these structures. Music isn't supposed to be so esoteric so as to appeal only to Tibetan gurus; music is for people.

Rush and Jackson Browne are making valid, accessible musical statements about our society and its people. The artists are craftsmen, professional in both attitude and approach. Their music has a point, and is distinctly their own. Perhaps Mr. Clark might even *listen* to the music which he critiques; then he might understand what is being said. If he *still* doesn't understand, then Jackson Brown and Rush must demonstrate wisdom which Mr. Clark cannot fathom, due to total incapability on his part. He shows an insensitivity to musical expression, and an inability to critique as well. He should be demoted to a position he can handle, like supine.

LARRY MACCHIONE

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

After extracting double fistfuls of hair, my first coherent thought was to sue Chris Clark for intentional infliction of emotional distress. I had just read Clark's review of *Rabbit Test* in the April issue of *Ampersand* and my teeth are still clenched.

The film was about to open in Austin and, being a fan of Joan Rivers, I looked forward to seeing it. I began reading Clark's review out of curiosity about the movie (having little concern for an unknown critic's opinion) and I finished it in a maniacal rage.

That (expletive deleted by the writer) Clark not only revealed what I take to be the comedic climax of the film but gratuitously threw in a few of the presumably funnier gags. To add insult to injury, he interspersed his travesty of a critique with questionable word choices, grotesque metaphors and no less than 10 alliterative phrases, three in the last sentence.

Among all the Woodward and Bernstein disciples who are glutting our journalism schools (UT's included) surely you can find a better contributing critic than this clown. Clark should have his season theater pass shredded and be relegated to hawking the *National Star* on street corners.

RICHARD FINEGAN

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P.S. Your graphics are great. Encourage more contributions and you can edit more tightly and not have to use junk fillers. All in all, a surprisingly (make that refreshingly) good publication.

Chris Clark snaps back: "Gee thanks, guys and gal, I love being reduced to a cultural stereotype. Randy Newman once said that being mellow is like being senile, meaning Jackson Browne has been six feet under since the first Eagles album. How he's milked the same three chord progressions for five albums, I'll never know, and I wasn't aware of Rush knowing any chords at all. And as far as supine is concerned, don't knock it 'til you've tried it. You get the best view of the personalities of your detractors from this angle."

Thank You

I am sick and tired of the rain of stupidity that has gushed forth from some of your

readers who obviously don't have the slightest clue as to what good critics are made of and what they have to do. In order for one to offer professional opinion or criticism about any subject, it is necessary for that person to point out what is *wrong* with it; what the flaws are, what needs improvement. That, dear friends, is a critic's job! It would be foolishly easy for anyone who knows how to use a typewriter to praise and laud the Rolling Stones or Led Zeppelin, or any moderately famous rock group, and get no guff about it at all. But for anyone to state unpopular opinions about such supergroups simply because he or she happens to feel something was wrong or lacking takes guts and professional conscience. No, I don't agree with Miss Manor about the Stones, but I admire her courage to say what she thinks need to be said. If all the readers want is someone to tell them how beautiful everything is, then they don't want a critic, they want a milktoast coward who'll never print anything of any value or interest at all.

I hope you continue to print Miss Manor's views, and if you are the kind of magazine I think you are, you will. There are those of us out here who want to hear the truth, without the sugar-coating. The rest should be reading high school newspapers.

SCOTT LAURENCE BAIN

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

In Here

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ON THE COVER

Illustrator, cartoonist and bon vivant, Darryle Purcell is in his late 20s, single, and has a business card that reads, "Artist, Cute."