



At the movies

Film fails to spark interest

"Basileus Quartet" begins with credits lazily appearing at the end of a performance given by the famed quartet. Designed to spark interest in the upcoming story, this opening sequence does just the opposite.

The concert is interesting but constantly is intruded upon by the credits, which come at too slow a pace to generate interest in themselves. The effect is a split in focus, which renders both elements less interesting.

Maybe that criticism seems like nitpicking, but this sequence is representative of the film as a whole. "Basileus Quartet" is, simply put, a dragging, unfocused film.

The Basileus Quartet is a world-renowned classical quartet which split up after the death of its lead violinist. This breakup period is short, however, because a confident, almost cocky young violinist named Eduardo (Pierre Malet) proves in an audition his claim to have the ability to fill the violinist's shoes.

Edo, as they call the newcomer, affects them all. His youthful charm infects them, while his sexual energy contrasts markedly to their slower pace.

One member, Guglielmo, fancies himself the boy's surrogate father, but his love is largely unreturned. To complicate matters, Guglielmo begins to mistake paternal love with homosexual love, ironically turning the strongly heterosexual Edo away.

The film loses its way soon after this point. This detail is not as much solved as it is dealt with and then dropped, and soon the film is off in another direction, sometimes more than one at a time. Very few of these aspects are ever satisfactorily wound up, and some just disappear.

This is the first time writer-director Fabio Carpi demands careful attention from his audience. Important plot points are only hinted at, and Carpi makes confusing jumps in time and plot. The entire time we are expected to follow



Photo courtesy of Libria Cinema 5

Fabio Carpi's Basileus Quartet attempts to begin where history left off, but like the famed classical musicians, fails to come together in the end.

along and decipher Carpi's complex, confusing film, but the effort doesn't seem worth it.

Despite some interesting moments the film is a disappointment. Much of it doesn't make any sense — an abrupt romance with a terrorist that is just as quickly dropped is a key example — and none of the segments is ever followed through. What emerges is a mishmash of ideas that never comes together and a narrative that is as confusing as it is meaningless.

Coming in at just under two hours, "Basileus" seems much longer. The film is plodding, directionless, and Carpi always is interested more in the strange narrative breaks that confuse the story than the story itself. He has provided us with an overly self-indulgent film that winds up saying very little at all.

Basileus Quartet is now playing at the Bijou.

By Sean Axmaker

Springsteen's latest far from his greatest

The initial waves of nausea have receded, and left in their place are a sickly sweet taste in my mouth and a profound sense of emptiness.

The cause of my discomfort is Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A.," released last month to near total acclaim. It is a stripped-down, accessible record that chronicles these troubled times, done by rock's self-styled guardian of the American Dream, and backed by the impeccable E Street Band.

There is, however, a difference between "simple" and "unimaginative" that the critics seem to have overlooked.

Most of the songs this time around sound a little shopworn, except for the ones, such as "Glory Days" and "Dancing in the Dark," that are completely un-Springsteenlike to begin with. The now familiar themes of girls, cars and work are back once again (as expected), but some of the tunes themselves are even recycled.

"Bobbie Jean" is "Be True," only sadder and a little older; "My Hometown" recalls the inevitability of "Wreck on the Highway;" and the guitar solo in "Cover Me" sounds like it was lifted right out of "Adam Raised a Cain."

The question of whether to judge "Born in the U.S.A." by contemporary-music's standards or by those of Bruce's previous work has received little consideration in the accolades that have come pouring forth from the media since the

release of the record.

We've come to expect more from Bruce Springsteen than most other bands since his "Born To Run" album and its title single, blasted into our consciousness back in 1975.

This latest effort, though, seems more an attempt to take on Michael Jackson and The Police than to extend the frontiers of his music.

Conspicuously absent are the stunning melodies and demotionally original hooks that permeated Springsteen's work prior to "Nebraska," and the lyrics — simultaneously the disc's strongest and weakest points — fail to take up the slack.

The E Street Band is one of the hottest, tightest and most talented groups of musicians making rock music today, but its considerable virtuosity is given no opportunity for expression on this record. Bruce takes all the solo work for himself, with the exception of a few woefully predictable sax breaks by E Streeter Clarence Clemons.

The addition of synthesizers and monotonous up-front snare drums does not indicate that Springsteen is "imaginatively coming to grips with the new rhythms and textures of 80s popular music," as was asserted in The New York Times. Instead, it suggests he is lowering himself into the alligator pit to snap and claw for the big bucks like everyone else these days.

By Kevin Frank

Picnics Continued from Page 1

open at 3 p.m. with time trials at 5 p.m. and racing at 6 p.m. There will be a fireworks display at dusk, and you can dance on the track amongst the demolition derby debris to the music of the Rick Miller Country Band.

•Want to get out of the city and celebrate independence with the country folk? The town of Harrisburg is planning a real hoopla of a day with skydivers, live music, a circus, a parade and an art show. The events begin tonight with a dance at the city park and continue tomorrow morning at 6 a.m. with a firemen's breakfast, also in the park.

Long-time local residents Bess and John Tweedt will be grand marshals for the parade, which starts at 11 a.m. with the theme "The Way It Was." There will be a barbecue lunch and three performances by the

Candyland Circus in the afternoon. At 7 p.m. there will be music down by the Willamette River and fireworks at dusk.

•"Headlines in History" is the theme of Springfield's parade, which will wind through town to Island Park where a whole afternoon of old-fashioned games, including a greased-pole climb and a haystack hunt, are planned. The games will go from 1 to 4 p.m. and there will be a fish barbecue put on by Veterans of the Vietnam War in the afternoon.

Those who wish to celebrate the Fourth of July with illegal fireworks are reminded that the Eugene Police Department will seize such items, and any person possessing them will be subject to a municipal-ordinance violation. Such a violation carries a maximum \$500 fine but no prison sentence.

Minutemen band plays tonight

By Chris Hazen
Of the Emerald

An average 90-second Minutemen song packs more tension, more creativity and more emotion than perhaps some bands produce in their whole career.

A highly advanced punk-funk group, Southern California's Minutemen will play Project Space, 39 E. 10th Ave., tonight as part of their "Campaign Trail" tour. Admission to the all-ages show is \$3.50 at the door.

The Minutemen, together since 1980, have received critical acclaim for their seven previous albums from Southern California publications as diverse as Creem and the Los Angeles Herald Examiner.

With riffs inspired by blues, funk, fusion, jazz and punk,

guitarist and vocalist D. Boon, bassist Mike Watt and drummer George Hurley perform songs that can be "funny, but to the point," Boon says.

Their first album, a seven-song, seven-inch record called "Paranoid Time," was the second record on Black Flag's label, SST records.

The Minutemen released their first full-length 18-song album, "The Punch Line," in 1981, also on SST, with no song exceeding one minute.

"We can't hang the longness anymore," Watt explained in a recent interview in Musician magazine.

With 1982 came another 18-song album, this time called "What Makes a Man Start Fires." Though the speed of their first efforts diminished, the Minutemen made up for it in creativity, both musically

and lyrically.

In the past year, the Minutemen have released two more albums, "Buzz or Howl Under the Influence of Heat" and "Politics of Time."

The band will release a double album called "Double Nickels on the Dime" on July 5. Containing 45 songs in all, their new album will include Minutemen versions of songs by Steely Dan, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Van Halen.

Despite positive reactions from critics, the Minutemen's albums haven't sold much beyond the break-even point. The band attributes this to independent distribution and lack of radio airplay outside of college stations.

The Project Space show will begin at 8:30 p.m. with performances by Eugene's E-13 and Portland's Final Warning.

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