

ENTERTAINMENT

'Leningrad Cowboys' take a different road

★★★
 Film: *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* is currently showing at the Bijou Art Cinema. PG-13

Are you tired of the same old buddy/road movies that have polluted our movie screens for a while now? Of course you are. *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* does what should be done with such a cliché: It turns it on its ear. This is primarily due to the decidedly un-Americanized viewpoint from which the story is told.

The plot is as simple as they get. The leader of a Finnish polka band decides that the only way to fame and fortune is to go to America — a country they only know of through TV. So they're well-prepared.

They go to a cousin in New York City in hopes of landing a gig. Initially, he has plans that they will play at Madison Square Garden and Yankee Stadium. After hearing them, he tells them that he has a cousin in Mexico whose wedding they can play at.

They realize that the ticket to success lies in the ability to play rock'n'roll. Imitating the great ones, off they go to Mexico in search of fame, fortune and perhaps some American beer along the way. Yes, this is the formula you've grown up with, but with a good deal of charm and wit, the jokes are pulled off.

At once, you know these aren't your typical guys from another country. They all have hair which is brushed toward the front in a huge bundle which looks as much like an enormous raven's head as anything else. Their shoes look like leprechaun's booties gone nuts. They're about 3 feet long.

At its heart, this is very much an absurdist comedy. After all, it features a dead band member who is frozen at the beginning of the film and thawed out once they reach Mexico so he can play in the band again.

The camera often remains stationary for long periods of time, simply recording events as they happen. This serves to bring the audience closer to the action and more involved. It's interesting how these techniques usually



Neat hairdos and cool shoes are just two reasons to go see the new foreign film *Leningrad Cowboys Go American*.

employed to express realism play against the fantastic and impossible situations being filmed.

The movie is consistently engaging and insightfully funny in its examination of American society. As with many foreign films set in this country, it brings a sense of wide-eyed innocence and enchantment of the United States that is lost in many of our domestic films.

Although only 80 minutes

long, the movie does begin to repeat itself, and the band members are virtually indistinguishable from each other, making any specific character development impossible. But this charming film deserves to be seen if only to take money away from the similarly plotted Hollywood flicks which seem to be churned out like sheets of \$20 bills.

By Lucas J. Gutman
 Emerald Contributor

MUSIC

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Years of playing together have earned them a loyal following in the Northwest and beyond. Their fan base numbers over 100,000 and the rest of the country has started to catch on, as their latest album spent time in the College Radio Top 20.

The group records for their own label, Red Rum. "When we started out in college, no one knew or cared about us. So we borrowed some money and started our own company. We've done quite well," trombonist Tim Tubbs said.

Because their music is so eclectic, and because the band refuses to compromise their art to fit into certain expectations, the Crazy 8s have yet to sign a

contract with a major record company. But they are hopeful that someday they will find the right people to work with.

They've even written a song about it, called "Can't Knock Me Down," where the lyrics admonish "Don't tell me how to write it!"

The Crazy 8's live shows are said to be legendary, complete with a polished stage routine of gags and theatrics. But the

band would rather have people come to the show and see for themselves what their antics are all about.

"It's going to be a great show, especially when Eugene hasn't heard what our two new members have to offer," said Smith.

Opening for the Crazy 8's is Portland based rock band The Cleveland.

MARIA

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the FMLN. Once we've made her acquaintance, felt her impact and been given a sense of her constantly roving and highly dangerous daily life, filmmakers

Monona Wall and Pamela Cohen follow her on a visit to her hometown, Arcatao, which becomes a journey into the past that allows us to see how a farmer's wife was transformed into a rebel.

"We hope to raise campus awareness of the situation in El

Salvador through this documentary," said Jenny Root, a member of the UO/UES Sister University Project, a University student organization who are sponsoring the film.

Proceeds will benefit the University of El Salvador and CISPES Freedom Fund.

By Ming Rodriguez
 Emerald Interview Reporter

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Bertice has a Ph.D in sociology from Kent State and is a former professor who happens to be funny and scholarly. Her comedy routines reflect her academic background. She keeps her audiences howling with jokes that convey positive images about living happily together and loving each other.

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Bertice Berry is:
 (a) A Kent State Ph.D. graduate in sociology who happens to be funny.
 (b) A comedienne who happens to be scholarly.
 (c) A former teacher with a humorous approach in the classroom.
 (d) A comic with a serious message on stage.
 (e) ALL OF THE ABOVE AND MORE.

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