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'Addams Family' chock full of gags, jokes

★★ 1/2
FILM: The Addams Family is currently showing at Cinema World and the Springfield Quad. Rated PG.

It's a battle of the ages that has raged since the middle of the 1960s. It's pitted friend against friend and torn families asunder. No, it's not the Vietnam War, women's rights, civil rights or the lack of power by the Democratic Party in the executive branch. It's that all-important dilemma — who's better: *The Addams Family* or *The Munsters*?

I've always been a *Munsters* man myself. But when you think about it, the surreal, macabre family created by the late Charles Addams in his long running series of *New Yorker* magazine cartoons does lend itself to a feature film. The fault of the film is the fact that the gags and one-panel cartoons aren't necessarily enough to carry 90-plus minutes of screen time. Screenwriters Caroline Thompson and Larry Wilson try to concoct a story to go with the plethora of jokes. The problem is that the plot, involving a false Uncle Fester pilfering the family of its millions, is as dull as the Addams are exciting.

Barry Sonnenfeld makes a visually impressive directorial debut after distinguishing himself as the cinematographer of such visually exciting films as *Raising Arizona*, *Throw Mamma From the Train* and *Miller's Crossing*.

The camera moves swiftly with exciting, point-of-view shots like the resident disembodied hand, Thing, scurrying across the floor. The audience gets to take a ride on a golf ball as it flies through the air and crashes into a neighbors' window and into a cereal bowl. Fans of Sam Raimi's brilliant camera work on the *Evil Dead* movies might appreciate this fluid and energetic style most.

The casting is the best seen in



Anjelica Huston, Raul Julia and Christopher Hart's hand mix and mingle in *The Addams Family*, a tale that boasts gags more than it does plot.

recent memory. Raul Julia as Gomez and Anjelica Huston as his beloved wife, Morticia, make a beautiful screen couple. They're more concerned that their children grow up with a sense of fun than with respect for their elders. Huston is intriguing, languid and alluring, while Julia is playful and carefree. Christina Ricci does a great job as Wednesday, the young, slightly sadistic daughter. She makes a character that could have easily been cold and distant beguiling and impetuous. The house looks like an isolated Gothic, Victorian manor. It's dark, vast and tall, reaching high into

the sky. The mass of ivy and vegetation on it seems to conform with the corners and, indeed, the entire shape of the house. Inside, the place is not frightening. Instead of dark, depraved behavior, all the inhabitants are engaging in mischief — ghoulish mischief. Thing cheats at chess with Gomez. The bearskin rug nips at the heels of intruders and Wednesday plays a game with her brother that involves an electric chair. The internal goings-on of the house sustains interest and laughter for a while. The real fun, however, comes when the Addams are

forced to vacate the premises and go out into the real world. Unfortunately, this happens about half an hour after the house has started to feel confining. It would be easy to criticize *The Addams Family* on the basis that it lacks a focus. I would say, though, that the mistake is made in trying to create a focus. The plot works so poorly and the gags work so well that something as simple as *A Day in the Life of the Addams* would have been more entertaining.

By Lucas J. Gutman
 Emerald Contributor

Eagle Park Slim to play tunes at Beer Garden

By Mia Bertelsen
 Emerald Contributor

Everyone on campus has heard, at least once, the smooth blues and rock 'n' roll tunes from Eagle Park Slim and his guitar — the tunes that fill the air on 13th Ave., just in front of the University bookstore.

"People love to listen," Slim said. "Don't tell your friends about me, just bring them out with you and listen."

And this Friday offers students the perfect opportunity to do just that. Slim will perform from 5-7 p.m. in the EMU Fountain Court as part of the University's weekly Beer Garden.

Slim has been a familiar sound in Eugene since 1980. He started his musical career playing with a teen-age band in his father's club. Johnny Wright was his childhood idol because he "was as good as Chuck Berry," Slim explained. "I wanted to be like him; he had good showmanship."

Wright gave Slim his guitar because he was always trying to play it, Slim said. At that point, his mother doubted if he would keep on playing, but he proved her doubting mind wrong. He was born and raised in Eagle Park, Ill., and got his first big thrill at age 16 when he played with Chuck Berry at his father's club.

"Chuck Berry came one night in a big ol' white Cadillac — dressed to kill," Slim said. Berry knew his father, Slim explained, which led to the star's appearance at his father's club. Eagle Park Slim has over 30 years of writing, traveling and performing behind him. He now calls Eugene his home base and he's coming back to town "because I love it here," he said.

"I need a lot of work," he

added, so he has to travel to keep the bills paid. In his career, Slim has traveled throughout the Western states. "I play around coffee houses, delis, markets and fairs," he explained. "My favorite place to play is at the Pike Place Market (in Seattle) because there I can put my case down and make \$30 to \$40 a day." He added that the crowds love the music and he enjoys all of the tourists.

Performing in Eugene is Eagle Park Slim's only opportuni-

'Don't tell your friends about me, just bring them out with you and listen.'
 — Eagle Park Slim

ty to play with his band. When he travels the country, he does it alone. About five years ago, his career hit what might be called a slump. He wasn't as popular as usual and he found himself "fading away." But times did get better, slowly but surely, and today he boasts a work schedule that's full through 1993.

As for the Beer Garden tonight, why not sit back after a busy dead week and enjoy the original songs of Eagle Park Slim. "I don't get many chances to play with the band," he added, so he is excited to entertain the University and get them to dance a bit too. The Beer Garden opens at 4 p.m. and entrance is free. No one under the age of 21 will be admitted.

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