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ENTERTAINMENT UPDATE

NEW YORK (AP) — Ellen DeGeneres is following the formula for comics who want to write books. She got a TV sitcom first.

Her book lacks a title and is due out in fall 1995, said Irwyn Applebaum, president and publisher of Bantam Books. It's Bantam's third signing of a comedian-turned-sitcom star, counting Jerry Seinfeld and Paul Reiser.

DeGeneres appears on ABC's *The Friends of Mine*.

"I hope to follow in the tradition of Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway and Jackie Collins," DeGeneres said through a publicist. "I've never really read a book but I read a

lot of magazines."

CLEVELAND (AP) — Billy. Elton. Only you could can a concert in the future home of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

Fans stood in line for hours to buy tickets for the Joel and John show July 14 in Cleveland. A Belkin Productions official said Wednesday it was canceled "due to the lack of ticket sales in the Cleveland area and logistical concerns."

Barry Gabel, a company senior vice president, wouldn't say how many tickets were sold for the

show at Cleveland Stadium.

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — John Denver is performing in Vietnam next month because "it's the right thing to do," his manager says.

The singer flies into Hanoi on April 30, the 19th anniversary of the communist victory.

Denver will perform May 1 and 2 at Hanoi's Opera House and May 4 at Hoa Binh (Peace) Theater in Ho Chi Minh City.

"It's a money loser," said manager Bill Thomas. "We're doing it because he and I believe it's the right thing to do."

OVERKILL

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The band has just finished a stint as the opening act on Pearl Jam's recent tour. Beyond the fact that both bands kind of have a guy named Eddie ("Eddie" King Roeser is Urge's bassist. Pearl Jam has a guy named Eddie too, which is weird. Who else in the entire world is named Eddie?), few similarities exist.

Urge, with Roeser, singer/guitarist Nash Kato and drummer Blackie Onassis, has covered everyone from Glen Campbell and Neil Diamond to Donovan. Their sound owes more to a traditional pop/rock lineage, with The Rolling Stones ranking as a primary influence.

The band's latest album, *Saturation*, debuted in June 1993. Fellow Chicagoans Liz Phair and Smashing Pumpkins also gathered attention with their albums later in the summer. It was enough to have some critics speculating about whether Chicago was on the way to becoming the next Athens/Minneapolis/Seattle/this space for rent by your city's Chamber of Commerce. (The only surprise in this is that people were surprised that a city the size of Chicago has three good musical acts.)

Urge Overkill doesn't fit any convenient musical category. It doesn't defy them all, either. The band has been pegged as alternative. It has a small-label pedigree and had gathered critical raves long before it drew popular attention with *Saturation*.

However, there isn't much of the band that

doesn't fit the standard pop/rock mold. Its songwriting pays homage to the pop craftsmanship of the 1960s and 1970s. It writes hooks that stick in the heads of its listeners.

Urge's guitar sound isn't grungy, but to some ears it sounds just as good. The band blends its sound with a sense of humor, a fun-loving attitude and tons of irony.

Social issues creep in from time to time, but Urge isn't on a soapbox.

"There are people who are trying to make being in a rock band not fun: 'You have a social responsibility to save the world,'" Onassis told the *Montreal Gazette* last month. "Frankly, I don't really think that's the case. We have a social responsibility to make good rock music."

Idiosyncracies and complexities abound. Song titles on *Saturation* include "Crackbabies" on the one hand and "Erica Kane" (the band claims the song is a ploy to get it a guest part on *All My Children*) and "Heaven 90210" on the other.

As for irony, Urge played Las Vegas and received billing on the same marquee as Fabio. Any questions?

And then there're the threads. The band has played gigs in everything from matching velvet suits to monogrammed turtle-necks to all-white 1960s modernist jumpsuits.

The latest fashion coup appears to be athletic jerseys with giant letters. Together, the letters spell out U-R-G-E. Leather vests, no shirts and large medallions are also popular.

The trio has added a fourth band member for its live performances. Then again, maybe it just needed somebody to wear that "E" jersey.

CINEMA

Continued from Page 7

As the title suggests, writer Richard Curtis designs the film around *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, a format that works almost perfectly.

Curtis' writing, combined with director Mike Newell's keen

camera work, lends a high level of energy to the film. This kind of energy is seldom seen in Hollywood.

Grant is turning out to be the surprise actor of the year, his subtle comedy mixes well with McDowell's ever-fresh approach to acting.

The most memorable moment:

where McDowell explains in great detail to Grant her past experiences with various lovers. That piece alone is worth the price of admission, but *Four Weddings and a Funeral* fortunately serves up much more than that for the audience. Quality writing, directing and casting equals a quality movie.

REVIEWS

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cy in vocal sound, but not with singers. Tony Martin is Black Sabbath's third vocalist in the last three albums.

For the hard core "If it ain't Ozzy, it ain't Sabbath" people, *Cross Purposes* will give you a chance to get out of the past and see what changes have taken place since the days of that other guy.

As a whole, *Cross Purposes* is not a bad album. Tony Iommi and Geezer Butler keep the "gothic"

Black Sabbath sound together, with a bit of a harder edge.

"Back to Eden," track seven on the album, directs real hard edges with a steady groove, and an interesting political statement. "Immaculate Deception" and "Psychophobia" bring back memories of acid trips (not mine) and "Iron Man."

The real downer about *Cross Purposes* is that the album doesn't keep up the steam throughout. The lead track "I Witness" starts you off with a pretty cool vibe, but it is lost, found, and lost again with each successive song. Out of the ten tracks on the album, only half can really keep your attention.

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