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MUSIC

MTV zombies sob for Everclear

Hundreds of screaming teenagers waited outside La Luna last week hoping to catch a glimpse of Everclear after its sold-out show at the Southeast Portland venue.

Young men shouted and young girls wept. Unfortunately for Everclear this is more of a testimony to the power of MTV than the power of its music.

Not to take anything away from Everclear; it is a good band. But Art Alexakis is not an awe inspiring genius who regularly brings tears to the eyes of alterna-mainstream teenyboppers. No, this is a very recent phenomenon. It wasn't until Everclear's first video, "Fire Maple Song," debuted on MTV a couple weeks ago that the fat jeans and chain wallet gang sat up and took notice.

Was it the deeply personal lyrics of the song or the MTV promotion that prompted these superhip "alternative" music lovers to make time in their busy schedules to hang out on the street outside La Luna? I don't know, but I really wish they wouldn't watch so much MTV.

As for the rest of *World of Noise*, I definitely think it's worth



World of Noise
Everclear

★★

a listen, but nothing to cry over. I really liked the heavy rhythm of the overall album.

Drummer Scott Cuthbert and bassist Craig Montoya establish the mood of the album from the beginning with "Your Genius Hands."

Alexakis' vocals and lyrics really make you feel like he is opening up to you personally.

This is the case throughout the album. Every song seems to open a window of insight into Alexakis' mind. It's this lyrical passion that makes the album stand out. Each song is extremely revealing on a lyrical level, but the music doesn't seem very refined. Perhaps the band will go the same route as Nirvana and add a fourth member (or maybe Art Alexakis will blow his head off with a shotgun), but for now the music seems to be lacking that hook that separates

the infectious bands from the average bands.

Despite the lack of musical depth I liked at least some element of almost all of the songs. The only song I didn't like was "Pennsylvania Is..." but that's probably just because I get turned off when bands get political, not necessarily because it's a bad song.

The song titles themselves give some insight into the appeal of Alexakis' lyrics: "Sick and Tired," "Nervous and Weird," "Malevolent" and "Invisible" are all somewhat familiar feelings to most people. Probably everyone has felt sick and tired at one time or another, and an equal number of people have probably felt invisible at some time in their lives.


Like many bands, Everclear is best appreciated live. So be brave. Fight the alterna-hordes and catch Everclear's next show. You won't be blown away, but you won't be disappointed. Come on, hundreds of kids with purple hair can't be wrong. Right?

— DYLAN ALFORD
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

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Simpsons debut on set of POGs

The POG craze continues with the release of *Simpsons SkyCaps* from Skybox. The SkyCaps are the SkyBox brand name for high quality, collectible milk caps.

The game originated in Hawaii, and it has recently become popular in California, Portland and even Eugene.

The 50-cap *Simpsons* set features favorite characters Bart, Lisa, Homer, Marge, Krusty the Clown, Mr. Burns, and Patty and Selma. Each six-cap pack contains one of 10 "Hypno-Slammers," each with a four-color image that creates an "awesome" illusion. The suggested retail price for a pack is \$2.49.

Van Halen finds 'Balance'

As we rapidly approach the 21st century, I am comforted to know that some things in the world remain constant — death, taxes and the guitar riffs of Edward Van Halen. Of these, the latter is the only one that really matters.

It has been nearly four years since Van Halen released a studio album. In those four years, Van Halen put out a live album, had a world tour, fought with each other backstage at the MTV video music awards, dealt with huge rumors that David Lee Roth may return and tried to reinvent themselves in the image department.

These four years of change and frustration are well told in *Balance*, the band's first studio album with longtime friend and producer Ted Templeman. For this latest effort (and to keep in line with its theme for changes), veteran producer Bruce Fairbairn (Aerosmith, Bon Jovi) was brought in. This change seems to have helped Van Halen strike the balance of sound and new attitude they so desperately needed.

The attitude is weak, but the sound is great. Looking at the back cover photo of the album, you can't tell if this is really Van Halen or



Balance
Van Halen

★★★★

Stone Temple Pilots with Eddie sportin' shades, a crewcut and "grunge gear." However, the feel of this album is reminiscent of a darker version of *OUB12*, with great songs

like "Can't Stop Lovin' You," "Amsterdam" and the current radio hit "Don't Tell Me."

The sound of *Balance* is thick. Guitar chords and walls of sound hit you in the face like a big pillow... it doesn't hurt, but it knocks you on your ass.

My favorite song on the album is "Feelin'." The song tells a story about troubled times and current events in the form of a power ballad — a troubled man looks at current events and goes through his own version of therapy.

If you are a fan of Van Halen, *Balance* is a solid album. There aren't too many surprises, but then again, what did you expect?

— STEPHEN WOODWARD
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

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