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Heavyweight champion James "The Grim Reaper" Roper spars with his opponent, Terry Conklin. COURTESY PHOTO

'White Hype' good only for cheap laugh

By Damon Houx
 Freelance Reporter

The *Great White Hype* opens with two scorpions fighting each other. Both end up getting crushed by a car.

This sums up how I feel about *The Great White Hype*.

The story is about boxing — at least, that's what we're lead to believe. Because white America will pay more to see a white man fight a black man than to see two black men fight, a big Don King-like promoter, played by the talented Samuel L. Jackson, tries to find a white boxer so he can make more money.

He finds a retired boxer, played by *Chicago Hope* star Peter Berg, who once beat "The Champ," played by the ever-talented Damon Wayans.

Berg's character has dedicated himself to being a musician, but Jackson's convinces him to go back into the ring for the sake of "the homelessness situation," which he hopes to eradicate.

Now, I think boxing is ripe to make fun of; not only is it the most brutal and destructive professional sport I can think of, but it spotlights loonies like Don King.

Plus, America's fascination with two men brutally beating each other says a lot about who we are, how we have evolved as a society and why we still like

Roman gladiator-like violent theatrics.

The film could be a study of Jackson's character, whom the reporter calls "as evil as Satan," (although he never really lives up to that).

It could be about Goldblum's character, who ends up working for the promoter after being corrupted by him.

It could be about corruption in the boxing industry, or about race relations in America, since the fight itself plays on these ideas. However, I got the impression that the filmmakers were afraid to actually address this issue for fear of the Spike Lee-stigma of reverse-racism.

These are a couple of the possibilities for this film, but it doesn't successfully deliver on any of them. It's hard for me as a reviewer to dislike a film for not living up to it's potential, but *The Great White Hype* was disappointing in this area.

The film does have one saving grace, however.

The cast is a gathering of some great talent. Wayans made *Major Payne* watchable, and Jackson has been great in everything

MOVIE REVIEW

The Great White Hype

Rated R

Starring: Damon Wayans and Peter Berg

★★

from *Pulp Fiction* to *Do the Right Thing*.

If you haven't seen his brilliant performance as a crack-addict in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, you're missing one of the best performances in the past ten years.

And the supporting cast includes Jon Lovitz, Cheech Marin, Jamie Foxx and several others.

Even though it has a great cast, however, the film only amounts to a couple of good jokes. The funniest moment for me was when the champ warms up by watching *Dolomite*.

In the end, much like the fighting scorpions, all that can be said about two grown men trying to beat each other unconscious in front of live studio audience is they provide cheap laugh.

I did laugh, but I forgot about the film shortly after I watched it.

Much like a McDonald's meal, *The Great White Hype* will fill you up, but you won't really enjoy it. And you won't think about it when you're done, except maybe to regret that you could have eaten something better.

Archers of Loaf release 'brilliant' compilation CD

By Les Zaczek
 Freelance Reporter

The Archers of Loaf must feel really successful. A few years ago, they were just another fuzzy guitar band from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, playing beer-soaked parties at their.

Since then, however, they've released two brilliant LPs, an EP and a bunch of singles. Recently, members of REM came up to Seattle just to see them perform.

The Speed of Cattle is not really a new album, but a collection of previously unreleased material, alternate takes, B-sides and Peel Sessions recordings. While this record is not as cohesive as the group's other albums, it offers a great collection of songs that shows why Archers of Loaf is such a great band.

Starting with the alternate take of "Wrong," the listener is enveloped by their intense sound, which includes crisp melodies, noisy guitars, catchy hooks and plenty of feedback. The best comparison for the sound of the Archers lies somewhere between the more melodic material of Sonic Youth and the energetic pop-punk of Superchunk.

What makes the Archers' music so unique is the

MUSIC REVIEW

The Speed of Cattle

Archers of Loaf

★★★ 1/2

guitars. Somehow, they create melody and structure out of chaos and feedback that twists and swirls into a tasty stew. Add Erich Bachmann's intense voice, thumping drums and some bass licks, and you've got yourself one hell of a music casserole.

"South Carolina," starts off sounding very much like Dinosaur Jr. The raw version of one of their best songs, "Web in Front," is almost better than the more polished one on *Icky Mettle*.

"Bathroom" exposes the band's noisy side with distorted vocals and a blaring guitar solo. "What Did You Expect," shows off the Archers' trademark high notes on lead guitar that provide the general groove.

"Don't Believe the Good News," starts off quietly but keeps the album's intensity, thanks to Bachmann's vocals and the buildup of guitars in the chorus. This song is worth getting the album for.

Another Archers of Loaf classic is "Smoking Pot in the Hot City." This one comes from the John Peel Session. "Mutes in the Steeple," has a dark sound to it that is enhanced by a piano.

"Bacteria," is somewhat of an epic song for the Archers, clocking in at almost seven minutes, but it keeps your interest.

With 18 previously unreleased songs, this album is a worthwhile endeavor for any Archers of Loaf fan.

If you haven't discovered these guys yet, this is a good time as any. What are you waiting for?