

CHEAP DATE

Make the most of your dollar and enjoy the great outdoors

Run around in the park for a while, munch on picnic food and then wrap it up with an inexpensive movie at Movies 12

By Jessica Blanchard
Oregon Daily Emerald

Being a poor college student on a budget can make it difficult to find affordable places to go on dates.

The key to getting the most bang for your buck, I've learned, is to be creative. This week's idea: A less expensive alternative to the traditional "dinner-and-a-movie" date is a picnic dinner at a local park while watching the sun set, followed by a late-run movie at Movies 12 at the Gateway Mall.

Spending a sunny afternoon at a park offers the opportunity to get to know your date better — even if you've been going out for a while. Without having the distraction of a television, or of your friends from the dorm constantly coming by your room, you really have a chance to connect with your date. It's also something that can work for all ages — not just the over-21 crowd.

Haven't been to a park since you were a little kid? Reconnect

with your inner child and let your date see the kid in you by playing on the playground equipment at an elementary school. Or, if you know your date won't go for that scenario, take a different tack: Stroll through a city park and admire the scenery as you attempt to impress your date with your grasp of current events.

As far as parks go, I like East Alton Baker Park, next to Autzen Stadium, for the variety it offers — couples can go for a bike ride, explore the bark-dust trails, sit on benches by the dam and relax to the sound of the rushing water, feed the ducks, lay on a blanket and catch some rays or play frisbee ... there are tons of possibilities.

Pack a picnic and choose a sunny, secluded spot to dig into your feast. (Just remember to avoid perishable foods — giving your date food poisoning is definitely not going to score you points.) Late afternoon sunlight bathes everything with a golden glow — the perfect time to have your picnic and gaze at your date.

For those who don't have the culinary prowess to prepare and pack a gourmet meal, there's always the fast-food standbys: Taco Bell's under-\$1 menu, McDon-

The lowdown

Total cost (for two): \$3, plus the cost of food

Romance factor (out of five): ♥♥♥♥ (♥♥ if you get fast food)

Best bets: East Alton Baker Park, Movies 12 at the Gateway Mall

Dress: casual

Don't forget: sunscreen, bug repellent and a blanket to sit on

ald's 29¢ hamburger Wednesdays and 39¢ cheeseburger Sundays or Burger King's Chick'N Crisps (99¢ each). (Warning: Buying your date fast food instead of actually taking the time to prepare a meal can drastically lower the romance factor.)

After finishing your meal and watching the sun set, pack up your gear and head over to the Gateway Mall and Movies 12 — probably the best movie deal in town. For \$1.50 each, you can see movies that are late in their first run. Current offerings at Movies 12 include "The Beach," "The Talented Mr. Ripley," "Any Given Sunday" and "Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo," as well as some Academy Award nominees such as "The Sixth Sense" and "The Insider."

New Cat Power album a blend of cover songs and individuality

Chan Marshall has what it takes to truly recreate the classics

By Rory Carroll
Oregon Daily Emerald

The primary reason to listen to Cat Power is Chan Marshall's stark, haunting voice that blends the tempered despair of Nick Drake with the distinctiveness of Polly Jean Harvey.

The new Cat Power record opens with a version of the Rolling Stones' "[I Can't Get No] Satisfaction," but you might not recognize it. That's because on "The Covers Record," the tired tune is stripped of two elements that best define it as a classic rock anthem: Keith Richard's rhythm guitar riff and Mick Jagger's harrowing chorus are noticeably absent. As a result, attention is focused on the verse lyrics, a folksy guitar line and Chan (pronounced Shawn) Marshall's wonderfully droll voice. This reinterpretation creates something entirely new from the old while capturing a fresh and honest sentiment of dissatisfaction that the original never held in the first place.

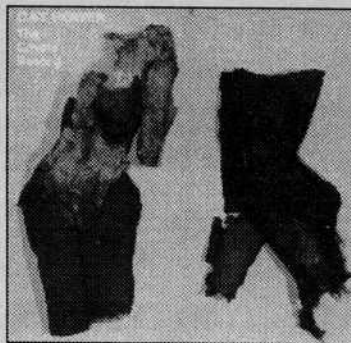
From there, Cat Power — Chan Marshall's pen name — proceeds

to rewrite songs in a similar way, breaking them down and rebuilding them from the ground up. Highlights include a chilling version of Michael Hurley's "The Devil's Daughter" and a brisk take of the Velvet Underground's "I Found A Reason." Marshall saves the best for last with a glistening rendition of Phil Phillip's "Sea of Love."

Although past Cat Power records have featured members of Sonic Youth and the Dirty Three backing her, "The Covers Record" relies almost entirely on Marshall's supple guitar strokes and ivory tickles to create the platform for her voice. That voice is the jewel that makes the almost relentless melancholy bearable.

This album is like a collection of minimalist black and white photographs. Seeing in entirety comes at a single glance, but a fixed stare is inevitable anyway. Marshall proves that it doesn't take an abundance of musicians to remake the classics, just an ensemble of soul, which she has in spades.

Marshall's approach toward covers is making them her own, not to simply mimic a song just as it has already been recorded. Covers records, like tribute compila-



tions, often miss that basic idea and drudge over beaten paths. Cat Power reduce instruments without diminishing the song.

"The Covers Record" is an album best enjoyed as it was performed: solo. For Marshall, music is a dish best served cold. But it is her stoic southern drawl and total unpretentiousness that sets her apart from her sultry, breathy peers.

But be warned — this album is the antithesis of party music, and anyone not intrigued by the likes of Leonard Cohen and Elliott Smith should either steer clear or investigate Cat Power's last, more textured album, 1998's "Moon Pix" [Matador]. It doesn't look as if Marshall is going to cheer up anytime soon, and her fans quietly applaud her for it.

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